



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for September 27th

14 Sept - Chelsea Manning says she's shocked her gender reassignment surgery was approved

The United States Army agreed to provide Chelsea Manning access to gender reassignment surgery days after she launched a hunger strike to force the military to provide the medical treatment she needs. Read about that and other updates below.

MORE:

by Tess Owen (*VICE*)

Chelsea Manning said she's "shocked" that her doctor's recommendation of gender-reassignment surgery was approved by the US Army.

"This is a big deal," Manning said in response to emailed questions from *VICE News*. Manning dictated her answers by phone to a volunteer who manages her Twitter page. "For my whole life I have fought for dignity, respect, and adequate medical care," she said from prison in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Knowing that she'll be able to transition while serving her 35-year sentence in military prison, she added, is a "huge weight off my shoulders."

After receiving the news, the imprisoned ex-army intelligence analyst and whistleblower ended the hunger strike she began five days ago to demand treatment for her gender dysphoria. The surgery was recommended to her in April.

"As hopeful as I am that the surgery will move forward, I know it won't move forward instantaneously," Manning said. "I anticipate I will see a surgeon. I know it won't happen overnight. I just don't want it to take years. Until then, I must live with the humiliation and pain." Manning's lawyer confirmed that she received and personally responded to *VICE News's* questions.

No transgender inmate in any US state or federal prison facility has ever had gender reassignment surgery. The army's decision to comply with the medical recommendations of Manning's doctor signals a concession to a long battle between Manning and her lawyers, and the state.

Manning was taken into custody in 2010 and later convicted of espionage, among other charges, for leaking thousands of sensitive military documents and material to *Wikileaks*, including the "Iraq War Logs" and a video showing a US airstrike on Baghdad. She's currently serving a 35-year sentence in the United States Disciplinary Barracks in Fort Leavenworth.

According to a gender dysphoria treatment plan recommended by her doctor, Manning should be able to express her preferred gender identity, by doing things like growing her hair long. But because she is being held in a facility for male inmates, Manning has been forced to keep her hair short.

"I wonder: Why is it a security risk to have long hair?" Manning said. "I feel like they're not respecting me as a woman."

Earlier this summer, Manning attempted to take her own life. Chase Strangio, a staff attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union's LGBT and AIDS Project who has been handling Manning's legal challenges, told *VICE News* that the suicide attempt was related to the lack of progress with regards to her condition and doctor's recommendations. The US Army had seemingly "lost the recommendation in some

sort of administrative black hole," Strangio said. "That was a big reason for her escalating mental health deterioration."

The Army later announced that it was investigating Manning's attempted suicide as potential misconduct. If substantiated, Manning could face indefinite solitary confinement, be moved to maximum security or be given additional time on her sentence. The disciplinary board hearing to discuss misconduct charges is scheduled for September 20.

The looming date of the hearing somewhat overshadowed the good news Manning received this week.

"It's hard to focus," Manning said. "The charges are related to my suicide attempt. The irony being I fell apart because I wasn't getting treatment. In less than a week, I could be thrown into solitary confinement."

Advocacy group Fight for the Future is circulating an online petition to keep Manning out of solitary confinement.

According to a 2014 survey carried out by UCLA, 41 percent of transgender respondents had attempted suicide, compared to 4.6 percent of the overall US population. More than two-thirds of the trans respondents who had attempted suicide say they were refused the medical care they needed.

Manning's victory on Wednesday doesn't necessarily mean she'll be getting the operation any time soon, as evidenced by the case of Shiloh Quine, a transgender inmate who made history last year when California settled a lawsuit and agreed to pay for her gender-affirming surgery.

Quine, who has been serving a life sentence for the last 35 years, is still waiting for the surgery.

After Quine's settlement, California became the first state (and remains the only state) to change its policy to say that transgender inmates should be permitted to receive gender-reassignment surgery following a doctor's recommendations. Strangio said that while the two cases set no legal precedents, Manning and Quine's victories could help lawyers argue similar cases in the future.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics estimated in 2012 that there were 3,200 transgender inmates in state and federal prisons. The federal government released guidelines in March saying that prisons should consider an inmate's gender identity and safety concerns, rather than just their biological sex, when deciding where to house them. While the guidelines are not legally binding, they do spell out the federal government's position on housing transgender inmates.

"There are many of us who are unable to speak for ourselves," Manning said. "We will keep fighting these battles and try to be treated properly and recognized for who we are."

September 19th - Yes, I'll get gender surgery. But I may still be punished for my suicide attempt

by Chelsea Manning (*The Guardian*)

Last week I was given the "good news" that the Department of Defense will grant my request to see a surgeon for treatment related to my gender dysphoria. Although I don't have anything in writing, I was shown a memorandum with my name on it that confirmed the military is moving forward with my request. Everything that they have presented to me leads me to believe that they are going to provide the care that has been recommended by my doctor. I have requested this for nearly a year. That same week, I was also given "bad news": I may be punished for a suicide attempt in July.

For the past week, I have been busy preparing for my disciplinary board. This administrative board has the power to sentence me for indefinite solitary confinement. Preparing to defend yourself for a disciplinary board is time consuming. It takes time to research, collect evidence, and organize a defense. The process is rather stressful. I am facing this alone. I am not allowed to have a lawyer or anyone else with me.

Last week I was escorted to view the evidence before the board. There are now nearly 100 pages. I do not have easy access. I do not have a copy. I could only see it for an hour. Looking through the evidence and taking notes in a hurried manner was very stressful.

In the evidence, I saw a photograph of myself shortly after my suicide attempt. Seeing this photograph has haunted me for the past week. It has disturbed me. It sends a chill down my spine. This hurt me more than any physical injury or hardship I have lived through. This process has forced me to relive one of the worst moments of my entire life.

I saw the face of a woman who had given up. I saw the face of woman who, for years, has politely asked, formally requested, and desperately begged for help.

I am not alone in my struggle. Suicide pervades the trans community. The risk among our trans siblings with no or inadequate treatment is staggering. In comparison with the general population, the risk is a full order of magnitude higher. While a specific suicide rate among trans prisoners is not available, it is estimated to be significantly higher than among the community outside.

I lack the words to describe how concerned my family and friends are about this board. I lack the words to express how deeply pained I am about this board and the fact that the government is pursuing my punishment so aggressively. How am I supposed to explain this to my family? How am I going to explain this to future generations when they look back and ask how I could have been punished for my own desperation? I have absolutely no idea. I have no idea how to explain it at all.

September 23rd - Chelsea Manning Sentenced to Solitary Over Suicide Attempt

by Charlie Savage (*New York Times*)

An Army board has decided to discipline Chelsea Manning, the former Army analyst, with two weeks of solitary confinement in connection with her suicide attempt in early July at the prison barracks at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., her lawyer said Friday.

One week of that punishment is suspended, but would be reinstated if she got into any other trouble in the next six months, her lawyer, Chase Strangio of the American Civil Liberties Union, said in an interview.

Mr. Strangio also said Ms. Manning, who is serving a 35-year prison sentence for leaking archives of secret military and diplomatic documents via *WikiLeaks*, would appeal the Army board's decision. He sharply criticized solitary confinement, saying it was very likely to exacerbate problems for "someone struggling with very recent suicidal ideation."

At the time of the leaks and her court-martial, Ms. Manning was known as Pfc. Bradley Manning. Mr. Strangio said his client's suicide attempt was linked to her mounting despair that she might serve many more years in prison without being able to proceed in her gender transition.

In a statement released through Fight for the Future, a group that is supporting her, Ms. Manning wrote: "I am feeling hurt. I am feeling lonely. I am embarrassed by the decision. I don't know how to explain it."

A military spokesman said it "would be inappropriate for the Army to comment at this time."

Ms. Manning's lawyers have confirmed her suicide attempt, saying she was found unresponsive in her cell. She faced three disciplinary charges stemming from that episode: resisting a guard force team that entered her cell; conduct that threatened the orderly running of the prison barracks; and possessing prohibited property — a book about the hacker collective Anonymous.

Ms. Manning's statement said the board acquitted her of resisting the cell force team, but convicted her of the other two charges. The disciplinary hearing took place on Thursday, and its results were announced Friday morning.

During Ms. Manning's trial in 2013, it became clear that she had been struggling with gender dysphoria during the period when she downloaded the documents. At the time, she was deployed to the Iraq war zone and military rules still made being openly gay grounds for discharge.

After her conviction, she announced that she wanted to be known as Chelsea and referred to by female pronouns. In 2014, she legally changed her name. In February 2015, the Pentagon approved her request for hormone therapy, although the prison barracks has continued to require her to cut her hair to male standards.

This month, Ms. Manning announced that she was on a hunger strike. She resumed eating after five days, saying the military had decided to let her proceed with gender reassignment surgery.

In late June, Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter lifted the Pentagon's ban on service in the armed forces by openly transgender people. Mr. Strangio said Ms. Manning's decision to end her hunger strike came after a military official told her that the new rules, under which the military will cover surgical costs for gender transition, would apply to her.

Ms. Manning's 35-year sentence is the longest ever imposed for providing government secrets to the public. The documents she disclosed included diplomatic cables from American embassies around the world, incident logs from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, intelligence dossiers about Guantánamo Bay detainees, and a video of a helicopter airstrike in Baghdad in which two Reuters journalists were killed.

WikiLeaks made them public, working with various news organizations, including *The New York Times*.

15 Sept - Two important legal motions filed in Mumia Abu-Jamal's case

Following Judge Mariani's denial of the Preliminary Injunction in "Abu-Jamal vs Kerestes" on August 31, Bret Grote of the Abolitionist Law Center and Robert Boyle filed new motions on September 14.

MORE:

The motions are the Motion for Reconsideration of the Denial of the Preliminary Injunction and the Motion Supporting the 3rd Amended Complaint which adds Secretary Wetzell and Dr. Paul Noel to the list of defendants. This is the next step in getting Mumia and all prisoners in Pennsylvania lifesaving medical care.

International attention has focused again on Mumia Abu-Jamal's quest for immediate life-saving medical care and freedom.

In Philadelphia, activists held a press conference at the Department of Public Health and marched to the Governor's office. In New York City, organizers held an event on September 12th featuring Pam Africa and updates on Mumia's legal case.

September 16th - Health Hazard–Mahanoy Prison

Prisoners are calling home complaining that the water at SCI Mahanoy is brown and it stinks very badly. They cannot drink the water. Many prisoners are scared they will die. This is an environmental hazard to the health of all as water is needed to sustain life. There are reports that this has been the case for three days. They are threatening the prisoners with lockdown so they cannot call and report what's going on. Please immediately call.

We will provide more information as it becomes available.

PLEASE CALL/EMAIL

DOC SECRETARY WETZEL– 717.728.4109

Talking Points

- There are reports of stinky, brown water that is undrinkable at SCI Mahanoy
- This is unacceptable and an environmental hazard

DEMANDS

- Give all prisoners a supply of bottled water immediately for drinking
- Give prisoners access to clean water for showering and personal use

GOVERNOR WOLFE– 717.787.2500

Talking Points and Demands

- AS ABOVE

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA) - 800.438.2474

Talking Points

- There are reports of stinky, brown water that is undrinkable at SCI Mahanoy
301 Morea Road
Frackville, Pennsylvania 17932
- This is unacceptable and an environmental hazard

DEMANDS

- Immediately investigate these reports
- AS ABOVE

15 Sept - NYC Anarchist Action Communique: A Fire That Cannot Be Contained

The September 9th prison strike noise demo in New York City reinvigorated the revolutionary movement and demonstrated the strength of our new organizational forms.

MORE:

We saw independent groups, committed to prison abolition, congregating in the streets to escalate actions against state repression. However, this was not simply a matter of anarchists leading the march; rather, it was independently formed revolutionary groups militantly resisting against oppression and raising the standard of rebellion in the city. As we well know, the stakes of resistance are a matter of life and death. The choice between movement or mortality, dignity or slavery, and life or death, was reflected by the

actions of those in the prisons. In the streets we wished to display our commitment to destroying elite society and our actions shed light on the growing anarchist movement in NYC which is preparing itself for the revolutionary challenges ahead.

The connection between the hundreds gathered outside of Brooklyn's Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) and those imprisoned inside was palpable. As chants were belted, banners were unfurled, and everything from frying pans to car alarms were used to make music of liberation, those on the inside pounded on metal, flicked light switches, and displayed cellphones in an impassioned response. Demonstrators banged in reply on a metal roll door, echoing their rhythms. A few cops attempted to quell the crowd with their car megaphones but their pathetic tools of pacification were no match for the fire of the people. The booming sound caused by both the inmates and those outside completely dwarfed that of the cops and they quickly gave up. It was soon made even more clear from the meager outpouring of guards that they were overwhelmed and outnumbered.

As the demonstration morphed into a march, the passion of that moment erupted in the streets. Immediately an American flag was burned, barricades were rolled out, and flares were lit. Passers-by echoed chants of 'Fuck the police' and young people joined the march. At one point, a roll door swung open and people inside a gym clapped and cheered as protesters passed. These acts of solidarity further fueled the energy of the crowd, with only one set of detractors capable of bringing the energy down remaining: the liberals. However, the usual complaints of liberals in the crowd such as 'You'll get us in trouble!' and 'This is a shame!' were completely disregarded. The rampant liberalism that has dominated NYC marches for so long was totally eclipsed and the 'peace keepers' quickly found themselves without their usual ability to dominate and stagnate. As expected, the militant discourse and action resonated directly with the prisoners and those who need no explanation of modern slavery.

In addition, the police were baffled to an embarrassing extent. The two squad cars that showed up at the noise demo were completely disrespected and the force couldn't pivot fast enough to keep up with turns of the march or defeat the barricades. The Brooklyn-Queens Expressway (BQE) was taken for over twenty minutes before a squad car finally caught up, which was easily sidestepped with a swift exit. In the end, everyone made it home safely to continue the celebration of resistance.

a match lit for the flame

How did this happen in a city notorious for its standing army of 40,000 police and its wealthy, stultified leftist liberals? On the one hand, over the last few years multiple anarchist and other militant groups have been building deliberately and concertedly: some cutting their teeth in the streets, others in discussions and organizing projects. Regardless of the strategy, the important point is that these groups are all coming up under the banner of revolution: their purpose is to act on whatever front is available and most efficacious in the moment, towards the final goal of total annihilation of the status quo. On the other, the state itself is digging its own grave. With every egregious act of violence and every dismissed conviction of a killer cop, they affirm to those watching that their sole purpose is the maintenance of oppressive relations and institutions. The wider acknowledgement of the irredeemable nature of the contemporary plantation was evidenced in the recent occupation of City Hall Park, which was held under the banner of police abolition, rather than the typical liberal promotion of reformation.

With the prison strike underway, a historic event initiated by the Free Alabama Movement and anarchist prisoners inside, we have a unique opportunity for action. The challenge we face today is how to make the contemporary underground railroad. The prisoners inside are calling for the end of prison slavery, and putting their lives at risk, not just for themselves, as Lucasville prisoner Keith Lamar pointed out, but for all the people swept up in the state's dragnet, struggling towards the goal of a liberated society. Still, the question remains, where do we as a revolutionary anarchist movement fit into this puzzle?

until the smoke clears

It is clear that we have the advantage of being able to operate outside prison walls. Any solidarity and support we can give is exponentially magnified inside. As anarchists of New York, we will intensify our support for the Free Alabama Movement, the Free Ohio Movement, IWOC, and all those groups directly working with the rebels inside. This intensification may come in many forms, from direct discussions to direct actions. The only constant will be our fierce dedication to the war against the state and its ultimate death.

Being in the unique position of having a political position that has advocated for social organization without the state, we have the opportunity to make deliberate and well-considered proposals for a society without police. In NYC we intend to put our organizing efforts towards this purpose: creating the foundational groups that can help people evade prison society, while building resources based on mutual aid outside the state apparatus. For example, some of us are in the process of creating a Rapid Responders Network for people who can't or don't want to call 911, in turn removing their reliance on the authorities that hurt them when they are most vulnerable.

We will build our connections with each other based on principles and strength of character that cannot be broken by counterinsurgency of reactionary forces less acute than us. We will esteem each other's efforts publicly while also engaging in critical thinking about the repercussions of our actions. This will allow us to continually evolve and in turn resist recuperation by the state and its lackeys.

Most importantly, we will never yield and never be cowed by state intervention/intimidation or reactionary forces vying for power or reform. It is clear from the general trends in anti-prison/police organizing that those involved in social movements are moving in a more liberatory direction, and thus a more militant one. Meanwhile, those subjugated by the most oppressive forces of the state and capitalism are ready to buck the system. As anarchists, the current outlook calls for us to turn our convictions into action and our ideas into reality.

Burn down the american plantation!

16 Sept - Computer Activist Lauri Love Loses Appeal Against US Extradition

Love, 31, who has Asperger syndrome, could face a 99-year prison sentence for hacking into missile defense centers.

MORE:

by Owen Bowcott (*The Guardian*)

Lauri Love, the student accused of hacking into the computer systems of the US missile defence agency, Nasa and the Federal Reserve, has lost his appeal against extradition to America.

Judge Nina Tempia said the 31-year-old, who has Asperger syndrome, could be cared for by "medical facilities in the United States prison estate" and implied that he should answer the "extremely serious charges" in the country where the damage was inflicted.

Love, who lives with his parents in Newmarket, Suffolk, was granted permission to appeal against Friday's ruling and given bail pending further legal action. The battle over his fate could eventually reach the European court of human rights in Strasbourg and last several years.

There were gasps in the courtroom as Tempia read out her ruling, which followed a full case hearing in June. Love's supporters, who stormed out of Westminster magistrates court in London shouting "kangaroo court", fear he could face up to 99 years in a US jail if convicted on all counts.

Delivering her judgment, Tempia said: "Mr Love faces extremely serious charges for offences of computer hacking over a period of one year, from October 2012 to October 2013.

"I accept Mr Love suffers from both physical and mental health issues, but I have found the medical facilities in the United States prison estate, on arrival and during any sentence if he is convicted, available to him, are such that I can be satisfied his needs will be comprehensively met by the US authorities.

"I am satisfied Mr Love's extradition would be compatible with his convention rights and I send this case to the secretary of state for her decision as to whether or not Mr Love should be extradited."

The home secretary, Amber Rudd, has until mid-November to consider the case. If and when she decides to authorise Love's extradition, he will have 14 days to appeal against the ruling.

Love embraced friends and family, who appeared shocked and angered by the decision. "If you have come for justice then you have missed it," Love told a crowd of press in the courtroom afterwards.

He added that he had not yet read the judgment and would "delay processing it until he was in a safe place". He added: "It may simply be that this is such an important case that it has to be settled at a higher court."

His father, the Rev Alexander Love, said: "I don't criticise the judge. She has just acted on a law that is flawed.

"I always used to believe that to be born in this country was to win the lottery of life. But it's not fair or just that a boy who has mental health issues should be taken away from his family and support by the US that is determined to exact vengeance on him.

"We have recently had a big debate [in the referendum] about who can come into this country. We need to have one now about who can be taken out."

Outside the court, Karen Todner, Love's solicitor, said she was very disappointed by the district judge's ruling. She pledged to appeal against the decision, initially at the high court and, if necessary, at the supreme court and eventually the European court of human rights in Strasbourg.

"I feel awfully disappointed," Todner said. "I thought we had done enough. I'm hopeful that the higher courts will consider the human rights issues. This is not the end of the road ... I was in and out of courts for 10 years with [the extradition case of the computer hacker] Gary McKinnon."

At one stage supporters blocked the road outside the court, bringing traffic to a standstill. They chanted "no love for the US gov" before being moved on by police.

Ahead of Friday's hearing, Love said he held little hope of justice if he was extradited, and suggested a jail term in the US could cause his health to deteriorate and would lead to a mental breakdown or suicide. The electrical engineering student also suffers from severe eczema and depression.

He and his family want him to face justice in the UK rather than the US, which he said “coerces” people into pleading guilty to get reduced sentences.

The case was considered to be the first substantive test of the “forum bar”, which was introduced by Theresa May when she was home secretary to allow courts to block extradition if it is in the interests of justice to have a person tried in Britain instead. May’s reforms also narrowed any home secretary’s discretion to intervene in such highly charged cases.

Love’s home was initially raided by National Crime Agency officers in October 2013. Asked why it had not prosecuted Love in the UK under the Computer Misuse Act, the National Crime Agency confirmed that it had never sent a full file of evidence on Love to the Crown Prosecution Service.

Sarah Harrison, director of the Courage Foundation, which runs Love’s defence fund and support campaign, said: “This is a very disappointing ruling, not just for Lauri and his family but for everyone who was angry about what happened to Gary McKinnon.

“Clear assurances were given that legal changes would prevent the McKinnon situation from happening again and frankly, if the forum bar can’t help Lauri Love, it’s very difficult to understand how it could ever help anyone. This is not what the public was led to believe at the time and it’s not something we should stand for.”

Bella Sankey, director of policy for Liberty, said: “Where unlawful activity is alleged to have taken place in the UK, those suspected should be tried on UK soil – especially in cases of vulnerable people like Lauri Love.

“Gary McKinnon’s case rightly led to a change in the law which aimed to stop extraditions in cases like this. If that new law cannot be interpreted in a way which does that, the law needs changing again.”

Among the US agencies and firms Love is alleged to have targeted in his cyber-attacks are the US Federal Reserve, US army, US Department of Defense, Missile Defense Agency, Nasa, army corps of engineers, Department of Health and Human Services, US Sentencing Commission, FBI regional computer forensics laboratory, Deltek Inc, Department of Energy and Forte Interactive Inc.

Love, who describes himself as a political activist, is accused of stealing personal information and disseminating it online, causing, according to Tempia’s judgment, “millions of dollars worth of damage”. He has denied exaggerating the severity of his medical condition.

One positive point from the judgment is that the issue of Love’s health was acknowledged. The court found that he is at high and severe risk of suicide because of his serious conditions.

18 Sept - In It For The Long Haul – An Important message for supporters all around the world!

It has been almost a month since Eric King arrived at FCI Englewood, a low security federal prison in Littleton, Colorado. In that time Eric has begun to adjust to the facility where he could potentially be held for the remainder of his sentence.

MORE:

Eric has been making friends and finding his niche.

In order to help ensure that he will stay at FCI Englewood and not be transferred, We are requesting that supporters take great caution in what they write and send to him— avoiding inflammatory rhetoric that could potentially have consequences. Here's why:

FCI Englewood is only 30 minutes from where Eric's partner lives and an even shorter drive from several solid friends and comrades in Denver. Being in such close proximity to his friends will undoubtedly help him through these next 6 years. It is also a low-security prison, meaning that the conditions of his confinement are generally better than they would be if he were transferred to other federal prisons.

But Eric's position there may be somewhat precarious, currently he is very close to the maximum level of points for a low security prison. He could easily be transferred to a higher security prison (even a Communications Management Unit) or he could be transferred far from his friends and his partner, making visits difficult and less frequent.

We ask that you help keep Eric safe and not send him mail or reading material that may draw undue attention to him. If you are writing to Eric for the first time, please keep his current situation in mind and avoid topics or news that relate to his current charges or political actions surrounding prisons. We are also asking anyone who is a part of a radical publication, no matter how mild or extreme it may be, to please get in touch with his support crew at [erickingsupportcrew \(at\) riseup.net](mailto:erickingsupportcrew@riseup.net) before sending anything to Eric.

As always, please continue to organize letter writing nights and fundraisers for EK. We want to proceed with caution, but we will not relent. We hope you'll do the same.

19 Sept - The Center for Constitutional Rights Challenges AETA

On September 21st, in U.S. v. Johnson, the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) was in court arguing that activists who free animals from fur farms are not terrorists and that the federal Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act (AETA) is unconstitutional.

MORE:

Kevin Johnson and Tyler Lang served jail sentences on state charges after liberating thousands of mink from fur farms. Then they were charged again in federal court, under the AETA. After a lower court rejected their challenge to the constitutionality of the AETA last spring, they pleaded guilty, but reserved the right to continue challenging the law. On Wednesday, Senior Staff Attorney Rachel Meeropol will argue their case before the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals.

The AETA punishes causing damage or loss to a business or other institution that sells animals or animal products, but makes no distinction between loss caused by criminal acts and loss caused by boycotts and other constitutionally-protected activity. While Johnson and Lang's protest was not constitutionally protected, they are arguing that the law chills the protected speech of other activists, and provides too much discretion to law enforcement to single out animal rights activists for stiff sentences. And, in any event, CCR argues in Johnson, punishing non-violent activity as 'terrorism' is an unconstitutional denial of due process.

CCR has been challenging the AETA and its predecessor statute since 2009. Early on we recognized this attack on an unpopular group of activists for what it is—an effort to silence advocates of an emerging issue of justice, to single out, vilify, and criminalize as terrorists those who engage in robust speech or civil disobedience in their efforts to stop violence against animals.

September 21st - For those cheering CCR's challenge to the AETA, let's challenge our own comfort
by Kevin Olliff

Three years ago, my friend Tyler and I crept onto a squalid and cramped fur farm in northern Illinois and released two thousand mink from their cages to save their lives. Approximately a year later, a man in Fresno, California, crept onto a Foster Farms broiler facility and bludgeoned nine hundred chickens to death with a golf club. As this man was sentenced to 120 days in county jail, I sat in federal prison facing ten years.

This is all the more remarkable because, aside from my nonviolent activism, I lead a relatively simple life. I live a half hour from the house where I grew up. I am the proud parent of a shelter dog. I have ongoing dinner plans with my mother on Thursdays. Yet according to the FBI, the USDOJ, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and any employer or landlord who does a simple google search, I am a terrorist, convicted under a piece of designer legislation called the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act.

This morning, I stood beside Center for Constitutional Rights attorney Rachel Meeropol as she challenged the constitutionality of that law before the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals. The AETA plainly encompasses, and was in fact clearly crafted to repress, speech. But, being someone who prefers action over words, I note another, equally disturbing problem with this law. The government has federalized a property crime and labeled it terrorism based solely upon the content of the defendants' social and political beliefs. I have a vested interest in the matter, but this should be a concern for us all, irrespective of one's feelings about animal rights.

That said, there is a reason why it is animal rights activists who are deemed such easy targets. People often ask me how freeing minks and foxes from harm could be considered so serious a crime. To be honest, I don't think this question can be answered without looking at the message that actions like this seek to transmit.

Animal advocates pose questions that go beyond the profits of a particular industry. Questions that strike at our conceptions of ourselves as human beings and of the societies we have built. Questions that challenge some of the most intimate aspects of our daily lives, right down to our food choices. When we grasp that animals are unique individuals with their own thoughts, feelings, fears, and attachments like ours, should we continue to assign them the legal and social status of property? Should we – may we – continue to participate in the ugly and unspeakable violence inherent in raising billions of them to die for us each year?

The AETA does not exist because the government is deeply concerned about the danger posed by releasing small mammals from captivity. In discrediting and marginalizing those who take action for animals, it ultimately seeks to marginalize and invalidate the ethical concerns that prompt such action.

But industries always wish to marginalize those who call attention to injustice, and, I imagine, would love to craft anti-terrorism laws for each movement of concerned individuals that they find threatening. We all know that agribusiness, pharmaceutical companies, and fur farmers – those who drafted and lobbied for the AETA – are most comfortable when the questions posed by animal advocates are pushed to the side. But the reason it has been easy to impose measures as harsh as the AETA is that the majority of people feel most comfortable that way too.

So for all of us cheering on CCR's challenge to the AETA, let us do our part and challenge our own comfort. Undertaking the action that landed me in prison, I sought not only to save individual animals, but also to challenge the comfort that allows all of us to ignore the billions of other individuals who remain trapped in the same systems. That action was my challenge to my own comfort and complacency as well.

And the experience had a profound impact on me. I have seen humpback whales breaching in the Antarctic summer and wild horses frolicking in the high desert of Utah. I have watched the sun rise on Yellow

Mountain. But I have never in my life witnessed anything as beautiful as those minks feeling their feet touch the earth for the first time on the night of August 13, 2013. I hope that among those who avoided recapture and made it, their children have had children, and I am long forgotten. But I will never forget them, or that night, for the rest of my life.

The appellate hearing this morning means many things to many people, but to me it will always be for those individuals who gave me that gift.

21 Sept - Anything is Possible: Continuing the Discussion of Anarchist Space Travel with Casey Brezik

Read the latest from anarchist political prisoner Casey Brezik.

MORE:

I realize it's been a while since I've posted anything. That's my fault. Hopefully, you'll forgive me.

In my last post, I made a plea for Anarchists in Space. Since then, I've received letters from people who support the concept and even some just speaking about the concept. I think this is good. It's a start. However, it's not an end. I want to develop a means to an end to transform my and others' dream into a reality.

To do this I recognize I/we need momentum to carry us forward in our pursuit of progress. Without momentum the project will simply die off and reside forever in the dark corners of our minds as a forgotten memory. I don't want that to be the case.

When I wrote my last post (Anarchists in Space) I was simultaneously presenting the idea and taking responsibility for its development. The idea is out there now. We (all who are interested) need to make it happen. Here are my thoughts:

1. Carbon-fiber nanotubes: These are stronger than steel and they weigh far less. Why shouldn't we incorporate them into our design? I mean, how hard is carbon to come across? We breathe it out of our lungs all the time, right? They also conduct electricity.

2. Water: Water is made out of two hydrogen molecules and one oxygen (H₂O). Electricity will separate the two gases into their base elements. Rockets are utilizing liquid oxygen and liquid hydrogen. I'm not sure, but I believe the process is known as "electrolysis" (separating the gases by using electricity).

Further, it's my understanding (I'm trying to look into this) that enough pressure added to a gas will turn it into a liquid. If that's the case...We could utilize water to get our gases and use them as you would with a hot air balloon, which I'm reading can go pretty high

In fact, I'm reading Richard Branson's Reach for the Skies and supposedly a Hungarian-American engineer named Theodore von Kàrmàn rose to 62.1 miles. The amount of fuel we'd save by utilizing the gases (specifically hydrogen despite its being highly flammable) is significant. We don't have any millionaires supporting us. J LOL.

My idea to add pressure to the gases comes from the Chinese finger traps. I'm not nearly as well versed in geometry as I am in algebra. So, the design is something I need to work on still. I'll get to it though. Anyway.

3. The Rosetta Spacecraft: This is the one that recently (about 2 ½ years ago) chased down a comet traveling over 75,000 mph. It achieved this speed by using other planets' gravity wells. Such as Earth's, Mars' and Jupiter's. This slingshot maneuver is used to gain momentum without burning fuel. It strikes me that we could use Earth's gravity well to get us into orbit around the moon. We may not even need to reach Earth's escape velocity (25,000 mph) because the moon is still within Earth's gravity well. Okay. Now we're getting somewhere, right? Things are beginning to appear manageable. There's more though.

I don't have access to the internet. I need your help in getting articles through the mailroom. There are two ways I can receive articles or even lectures. The first is to have long articles/lectures sent to me directly from a publisher/distributor/ or even a zine distro. The catch is that they must be void of any personal correspondence. They have to be sent separate of letters. Which brings me to the next means: personal correspondence can be received with up to five inserts (clippings/printed article pages). Also, pictures must be sent separately as well.

Okay, now's the time to tell you about my decision. Hopefully, no one's upset with me, but I've realized as much as I want to begin taking correspondence courses for college credits, they just cost way too much. A thousand dollars goes a long way if spent strictly on textbooks. I can get further with my time by studying on my own. Then, when I'm released I can utilize what I've learned in order to take CLEP tests (a means to opt out of a course while still receiving credit for it by taking a test over the material). It's no doubt a more manageable and efficient use of my funds. I apologize for my indecisiveness. I just want to make sure I pick the right path. I know this is it. I don't have to pinch my pennies this way.

Lastly, pictures. On the off chance that you want to send me pictures, it must be done separately from any correspondence. Pictures must come in an envelope by themselves. No limit to how many, though. And I love receiving pictures. So, thank you in advance!

I believe we can achieve this "fueling station" on the moon and even build an ARC (Anarchist Resistance Craft) to take us anywhere. However, I can't do it alone. I need your help. If any of you could print off articles for me I'd be extremely grateful. Especially concerning the three topics I listed off. I'm on the limit as to how many books I can possess. So, please hold off on books. What I'd really enjoy is discussing the ideas/concepts I've spoken on whether or not you're for or against Anarchists in Space.

That's all for now comrades. Thank you for hearing me out. I intend on attempting to write the code for an Anarchists in Space website where we can discuss more amongst each other. Two heads are greater than one! It'll take me a minute though. Please be patient with me. Thank you so much to everyone for all the various ways you are showing me support. 'Til next time, take care of each other comrades!

22 Sept - U.S. Prisons to Begin Offering Vegan Entrées in October 2016

For vegans serving time in federal prison, among the biggest challenges has long been access to plant-based foods.

MORE:

by Mark Hawthorne (*Striking the Roots*)

It's especially hard on animal activists and ethical vegans, for whom consuming even small amounts of dairy products or eggs is anathema.

Well, the U.S. Bureau of Prisons will be quietly rolling out its new menu on October 2, and I am pleased to tell you that every day, every meal – breakfast, lunch, and dinner— will offer a vegan option for its main entrée.*

“The Bureau of Prisons’ National Menu is reviewed at least annually to assess responsiveness to inmate eating preferences, operational impact, product pricing, and nutritional content,” Justin Long, spokesperson for the Federal Bureau of Prisons, told me. “The Bureau seeks to provide a variety of options, including vegan options, which also support religious dietary accommodations.”

That’s the good news. The bad news is that this dramatic menu change only impacts the 102 federal prisons in the United States, not the inmates prisoners [edit NYC ABC] serving time in the 1,719 state prisons, where veg options vary by location.

This change is the direct result of inmates and their advocates speaking up and demanding that the Federal Bureau of Prisons offer vegan food. Now let’s try to do the same state by state.

Note: I am well aware that our country’s prison industrial complex is corrupt and rife with problems, including racist policies (as I discuss in A Vegan Ethic), and I am not suggesting that we give them a big pat on the back here; I am merely passing along some good news for vegans.

*I cannot vouch for how strict the food preparation will be, however.

25 Sept - #BLACKLIVESMATTER in prison too: An Update on Political Prisoner Seth Hayes

Greetings Everyone, here's an update on Seth's health from his amazing Daughter Crystal.

MORE:

I just got off the phone with my father, who's health is a constant roller coaster. This month alone, he was sent to the infirmary overnight for observations twice and to an outside hospital for emergency treatment. Every time he returns, all of his belongings are gone -- pictures of family, food that helps him manage his diabetes so that he doesn't have to eat unhealthy state food, letters, clothes— everything just gone!

One of his friends told him that he asked prison personnel why were they taking my father's stuff, and they responded, "he's not coming back, he's going to die anyway."

They take his stuff & clear out his cell in anticipation of his death because they know that they're trying to kill him. They mess with his meds, food, et cetera every time as if he's not a person with actual rights!

Prisoners have rights, but I know we aren't dealing with the kind of system that sees us as human anyway.

He just told me not to worry, but that's not possible. I am going to worry, because I know that if we don't get him home soon they will not stop until he's dead. They do it, just like police shootings, because there's ZERO accountability.

I am calling the prison tomorrow to complain. It won't really do anything, except that it's a reminder to them that he has family who loves him and that we're all watching them.

We need to stop talking "reform" and talk abolition of this entire criminal justice system. There's NOTHING humane or just about this system. They treat the US Constitution like a suggestion when it involves Black and brown people, poor people, people in prison, et cetera whether or not you're in prison.

We have no rights, legal or otherwise, that they feel obligated to respect.

This was a hard week, but to learn of my dad's illness and how they took all of his personal items just to mess with him when he's already vulnerable and sick, only further confirms what I know to be true— this system needs to be abolished! It's cruel, inhumane, and degrading. Prisoners have rights! We ALL have rights.

They don't get to arbitrarily decide who lives and who dies! We need to remind the world that #blacklivesmatter in prison, too!

I know some people will read this and ask "but don't we need the police and prisons to be safe?" Really? White people already live a life of prison abolition. Go into any predominately white middle-class community and I will show you what prison abolition looks like. It means a life free from constant police harassment, arrest, and incarceration. It means a life where there are resources like excellent schools with well-paid teachers, and healthy food. It's a life where you have safe parks where kids get to play without fear of being shot by the police. Don't tell me prison abolition isn't possible when white people are already living it!

We need to combine our call for #BlackLivesMatter with a call for prison abolition and freedom of political prisoners! Until we connect these dots, not much is going to change.

COINTELPRO made sure that prison was going to be the state-sanctioned way to end dissent. This isn't a pipe-dream. Either we abolish this prison/police state now or we just need to accept that these street style police lynchings will never stop nor will we ever get to a place where we shift resources from punishment to human rights strategies that address our social problems. We can't demand better healthcare and education, but then send poor people to prison!

Seth is scheduled to see an endocrinologist in the near future and feels the current doctor is trying to address his medical needs. We will keep people posted as the results and if there is any need to advocate on his behalf. Thank you for all your support and please send Seth a letter of encouragement and support and/or include funds.

25 Sept - Three New Poems by Political Prisoner Jalil Muntaqim

Jalil's Writings and Poetry are available on his website: freejalil.com

MORE:

The Same

Living in the shadows of a
Great Nation? Feeling the
inspiration of a Great People?
The poor survive on aspirations,
food stamps and homelessness,
mass incarceration, in prison
mess halls a sea of Black and
Brown faces, poor Whites and
Asians, Indigenous Nations—
non-citizenry, immigrants, the
mosaic of the Star Spangled Banner.

The Eagle flies on Fridays, and

The Masks

Shouldn't we strip off Masks
like casting away a cast after
a limb has healed; revealing
the person inside unadulterated?

Can *you* hear me?

Unmasked, void of disguise,
no secrets, no lies, no
place to hide, the façade
decomposed like road kill
at the end of a masquerade,
where the shade fades and

Wall Street celebrates with the champagne of imperialism.

Bombs go bursting in air—Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria, Apartheid Israel prays for freedom from Arab assaults, while confining Palestinians in walled reservations, as Europe builds walls and fences to keep the Brown and Black swarm from escaping U.S. imperialism/Zionist prayers.

The Eagle flies on Fridays, and Wall Street celebrates with the champagne of racism.

Oh! Say can you see by the daunterly light as Jihadist dawns challenging scholars and war strategists, as their schisms and sects scar the face of Islam, making it ugly to the world's peoples.

The innocent suffer 500 pound bunker bombs, as drones blast with misguided missiles and car bombs sever souls from bodies absent discrimination, with the flash of light, the heat of hell, the clash of political ideology and theology forces us all to rethink the beneficence of Divine Providence.

The Pope laments Mullahs fatwas while Presidents and Prime Ministers wring their hands, befuddled in the quest to impose Democracy void of equality as international corporations reap enormous profits, while the climate deteriorates at such a pace in 50 years Miami will be the next Atlantis or Lemuria.

The Eagle flies on Fridays, and Wall Street celebrates with the champagne of exploitation.

Our common humanity screams for justice, but the plutocracy does not

and the light of day pervades.

Can you see me?

I am not like them, those who disguise their Lives in technicolor, peacocks without purpose, purposely posing as petulant's but are merely phantoms of a phenomenon.

Can you feel me?

My needs exceed man-made creeds, subject to a lover that never retreats; a faith that leaves no avenue for escape; an appetite neither a gourmet chef nor a nymph can satiate, I wonder can you relate, for this is more than an adventure—it is a way of life. No convention can contain like a sociological construct, not like the proverbial sheep of citizenry to be controlled, they living the lie in fear of freedom, knowing freedom is not free?

Can you pay me?

The liberated soul beholds the bold, audacious, absent mendacity, lack of crassness, yet, I dare to swear like an inebriated wordsmith with a twist of lime, shaken and stirred, since time is of the essence, my essence cannot be complacent although I know the I in We ... A Mask!

So, please say yes!

hear us, taking it to the streets,
to increase the volume of our
speech. Muslims, Christians, Jews,
Atheists, Anarchists, Socialists, is
it not true we are conceived and born
in the world the same; nourish our-
selves the same; love our children
the same; desire love the same;
feed off the land the same, why
not deny the differences—celebrating
that which is the same?

Just thinking out loud, if you know
the answer—tell me?

Stardust—DNA

The quantum physics of my
existence is like neutrinos
passing through space and
time, knowing no rest,
withstanding the test.

An odyssey always verging
and emerging, the light of
Dark Matter, a snapshot
of Sunrise and Sunset in
a blink of an eye, captures
the collective consciousness
of cosmic order in a time
capsule never filled...

An intellectual cornucopia,
an abundance of freedom
fighters like fire ants
in a pasture of dinosaurs
with the capacity to incapacitate
a maelstrom of oppression.

Our resistance is the big bang,
exploding the kaleidoscope of
humanity, traversing our universe
searching for liberty, the elusive
absence of repression, where bias
and prejudice falls like an Arctic
ice shelf, sunflares and cosmic rays,
the joyous rapture of a nebula,
defying the nuclear death star.

Our revolution like the orbit
of the Blue dot spiraling in

the Milky Way, like the rings
inside an Evergreen is the DNA
of our existence, persistent,
consistent with the choice,
the dialectics of opposites,
we side with the oppressed.

The genome engraved on eternity,
the helix with its infinite wisdom
obscured in the silence of ignorance,
being decoded, unveiled incrementally,
as our struggle restores humanity in
preparation for the generation of
universal cosmic consciousness.

Since thoughts precede action,
what are you thinking?

9 Oct - Freedom Convocation for Oscar Lopez Rivera

WHAT: Convocation and Cultural Celebration

WHEN: 12:00-3:00pm, Sunday October 9th

WHERE: Lafayette Square Park Washington, DC (buses leaving from NYC)

COST: \$0-20 for bus tickets (see below)

MORE:

Buses departing from NYC: October 9th at 7:00am

-*Hostos Community College*– 149th Street and Grand Concourse, Bronx (Contact Ana at 646.229.5133

-*El Maestro Cultural Center*– 1300 Southern Boulevard, Bronx (Contact Ponce at 646.299.6507)

-*Iglesia Evangélica Española*– and Mothers on the Move – 800 East 156th Street, between Tinton and Union, Bronx (Wanda Salaman, Salaman266@gmail 917.586.5372; Mili Bonilla 347.901.1049)

-*El Puente Cultural Center*- 250 Hooper Street, Brooklyn (Contact Luís G. at 718.387.1125)

-*Grand Army Plaza*– Brooklyn (Contact Elspeth at 347.393.7012 or Toby at 917.371.3558)

-East Harlem— PS 109 - Manhattan 215 East 99th Street (Contact Miguel at 347.731.4744)

-East Harlem- 116th Street, between 3rd & Lexington Avenues (Contact Melissa at 718.404.7174 or Camilo at 646.841.5476)

9 Oct - Demonstration Opposing Turkish Aggression in Rojava

WHAT: Protest

WHEN: 2:00pm (sharp), Sunday, October 9th

WHERE: 3rd Avenue and 49th Street (near the Turkish consulate)

COST: FREE

MORE:

Be on time. NYC-based members of the paramilitary “Grey Wolves,” a neo-fascist organization that has historically served as a death squad for the nationalist far right in Turkey, have threatened past protests. For more information about the anarchist revolution happening in Rojava, check out supportrojava.org