



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for June 6<sup>th</sup>

## **18 May - The Federal Government Is Trying To Imprison These Six Water Protectors**

*In February, a federal grand jury issued indictments of four Standing Rock water protectors on charges of Federal Civil Disorder and Use of Fire to Commit a Federal Crime.*

### **MORE:**

by Will Parrish (*Shadowproof*)

The federal investigators accused the four men—James White, Brennan Nastacio, Dion Ortiz, and Brandon Miller-Castillo—of involvement in setting three highway barricades on fire, which obstructed police during a highly-militarized October 27 raid of the “Front Line Camp” just north of the Standing Rock Sioux reservation.

Another water protector, Michael Markus, was indicted on identical charges on January 24, and his case has been combined with those of the other four men. Prosecutors are also pursuing three federal felonies against a 38-year-old Oglala Sioux woman named Red Fawn Fallis. They accuse her of firing a gun during her arrest, even as multiple police officers had her pinned face-down on the ground. Fallis’ arrest also occurred on October 27.

These cases likely mark the first time that United States authorities have pursued felonies against individuals involved in demonstrations against fossil fuel infrastructure.

All six people facing the charges are indigenous. Under sentencing guidelines, Red Fawn Fallis faces 25 years or more in prison. The other federal defendants—Markus, White, Nastacio, Ortiz, and Miller-Castillo—face up to fifteen years.

Starting in August of last year, indigenous people and their allies devoted months to attempting to block the construction of the 1,172-mile Dakota Access Pipeline, which runs through four Midwestern states near North Dakota’s Standing Rock Sioux reservation and underneath their main water source, Lake Oahe.

The project sparked opposition in communities spanning the pipeline route, including in Iowa and Illinois. In North Dakota, police carried out over 700 arrests. State prosecutors have since brought felony charges against more than 100 people.

But the federal cases are arguably more serious, since they entail prosecutions by some of the U.S. government’s most elite attorneys and may result in lengthy prison sentences. The cases are also likely to exert a chilling effect on indigenous-led resistance to resource extraction and fossil fuel infrastructure.

In fact, in each case, the U.S. Attorneys for the District of North Dakota filed a most unusual charge: federal civil disorder.

“Nobody I’ve worked with previously has ever seen that charge,” the Water Protector Legal Collective’s Sandra Freeman, an attorney for Michael Markus, said in an interview. “It comes from a law that is usually only invoked when the federal government decides to prosecute people involved in resistance.”

The National Lawyers Guild’s Bruce Ellison, the lead attorney for Red Fawn Fallis, agrees. He says he has only encountered federal civil disorder charges “a few times” before, including during federal prosecutions

of American Indian Movement (AIM) activists who reclaimed Wounded Knee as part of an armed stand-off with federal and local police on the Pine Ridge Reservation in 1973.

Ellison is a long-time attorney for AIM political prisoner Leonard Peltier.

Records obtained via an open records request indicate high-level operatives within the U.S. domestic security state were involved in coordinating the enormous law enforcement mobilization against Standing Rock “water protectors” from last summer through early March of this year.

These records, which will be the subject of future stories, show officers from numerous federal agencies—the FBI, Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Marshal’s Service, and the U.S. Attorney’s Office for North Dakota—coordinated with state and local police as part of an inter-agency “intelligence group” that monitored Standing Rock protests in real-time, with a focus on ferreting out “instigators” and “leaders of the movement.”

Among those who helped orchestrate this multi-agency intelligence effort was National Security Intelligence Specialist Terry W. Van Horn of the U.S. Attorney’s Office—the same entity now prosecuting Fallis, Markus, White, Nastacio, Ortiz, and Miller-Castillo.

The intelligence-gathering operation in which Van Horn participated appears to have been coordinated by the State and Local Intelligence Center, one of numerous law enforcement “fusion” centers set up by the US Department of Homeland Security in the wake of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center.

Supporters of the six federal defendants, as well as others facing possible prison and jail sentence, say that their court cases are a major front in the struggle for indigenous self-determination and against resource extraction.

“The government is looking at how to deal with calls for indigenous self-determination and resistance to resource extraction nationally, and the people facing these charges could become symbols of their ability to carry out that repression,” Ellison contends.

### **The October 27 Raid On Front Line Camp**

The six federal prosecutions all stem from a highly-militarized October 27 raid of the “Front Line Camp,” or “1851 Treaty Camp,” which occupied some of the last remaining ground in the pipeline’s construction.

The camp was located on unceded Dakota territory, which was affirmed in the 1851 Ft. Laramie Treaty to be part of the Standing Rock Reservation. It was later stripped away under an 1889 statute from Congress.

Over 300 police officers—some carrying M16 rifles and clad in flak vests—advanced down North Dakota Highway 1806 toward Oceti Sakowin camp, the main nerve center of the water protectors’ resistance to the pipeline.

The police were flanked by a MaxxPro Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle (MRAP) designed to withstand bombing attacks in Iraq and Afghanistan. A Long-Range Acoustic Device (LRAD), an extremely loud device used for crowd control, was mounted atop the MRAP. Snipers occupied positions on surrounding hills.

In the course of the raid, the police police fired tear gas and concussion grenades and peppered the water protectors with rubber-tipped bullets and bean bag pellets, causing dozens of injuries.

Four officers broke from the line to tackle and arrest Red Fawn Fallis, a Denver resident and lifelong member of the Colorado chapter of the American Indian Movement, whose family hails from the Oglala Sioux reservation at Pine Ridge in South Dakota.

As Fallis struggled under the weight of her arresting officers, at least two gunshots went off alongside her. According to an affidavit filed by the Pennington County Sheriff's Department in North Dakota, a deputy "saw a gun in Fallis' left hand and wrestled it away from her."

The Pennington County Sheriff's Department claims Fallis was arrested for "being an instigator" and "acting disorderly."

According to attorneys for protesters, "instigator" and "camp leader" have emerged as keywords in both state and federal prosecutions.

Fallis was initially charged with attempted murder, but a state judge removed that charge from the docket, and she is now being accused of three federal felonies. They include "possession of a firearm by a convicted felon" and "discharge of a firearm in relation to a felony crime of violence."

According to numerous accounts, Fallis was a widely-respected coordinator at the Sacred Stone Camp, another major gathering place for prayerful opposition to the pipeline, and had played an instrumental role in the movement as a whole.

"Red Fawn was the kind of person who was down to help with anything at any time," says one camp participant who asked not to be identified. "She was integral to the camp."

Many water protectors and members of Fallis's family have organized a support campaign for her. They stridently maintain her innocence.

Glenn Morris, a leader of the Colorado chapter of the American Indian Movement, released a statement on behalf of Fallis's family this past November, saying she is "an intelligent, informed and determined Oglala Lakota woman, who has defended the rights of native peoples and nations, in multiple circumstances."

### **Water Protector Facing Federal Felony Charges For Disarming DAPL Contractor**

One of the other people facing federal felony charges, Brennan Nastacio, became a hero to water protectors for his dramatic role in disarming a DAPL security worker, who had entered Oceti Sakowin camp—a base of prayer and opposition to DAPL—wielding an AR-15.

The security guard, Kyle Thompson, drove into the camp and claimed to be a water protector, according to a camp security guard. He had a long-nosed semi-automatic rifle and a 30-round clip seated in the passenger seat of his truck.

Nastacio spent nearly a half hour pleading with Thompson to abandon the weapon while also calming other "water protectors," who were clamoring around him. Thompson, who works for Texas-based Leighton Security, finally handed the gun over to Bureau of Indian Affairs officers, who arrested him. Soon after, Thompson's truck was driven to a barricade and set on fire.

North Dakota prosecutors declined to charge Thompson instead charging Nastacio with felony terrorizing of Thompson because he briefly walked toward him with a hunting knife during the incident.

In a January YouTube video, Nastacio noted his goal was “the protection of everybody at the camp,” and that he was concerned Thompson himself would be shot by the police. Thompson claims he came to the camp to investigate vandalism to a DAPL vehicle.

Ironically, on the same day as Nastacio helped disarm the Dakota Access security worker, a security firm hired by Dakota Access collected the aerial surveillance photos that now form a major basis for federal prosecution of him, as well as of Miller-Castillo, Ortiz, Markus, and White, court records show. (\*Note: This public-private “fusion” model of law enforcement that played out at Standing Rock will be the subject of future stories.)

Ellison, Fallis’s attorney, is attempting to introduce evidence that demonstrates the dubious role the FBI has played in the charges against Fallis.

Terry VanHorn of the U.S. Attorney’s Office did not respond to a request for comment.

### **The Role Of The FBI In Suppressing Opposition To The Pipeline**

Police in North Dakota went to enormous lengths to portray many anti-DAPL protesters as violent criminals for their role in the protests.

More recently, the allegations against Fallis, Nastacio, Markus, White, Ortiz, and Miller-Castillo have become fodder for domestic security agency warnings about potentially violent threat posed by protests against other fossil fuel infrastructure.

A Department of Homeland Security report, published by the conservative Washington Examiner on April 18, spells out the possibility that “environmental rights extremists” and “anti-government militia” may muster up attacks on the in-construction Diamond Pipeline extending from Oklahoma to Tennessee.

The report states that “[p]rotests surrounding the DAPL have resulted in the arrest of hundreds of individuals for allegedly committing criminal acts,” and that “[o]ne individual was charged with attempted murder for allegedly discharging a firearm at officers during removal efforts.”

But water protectors and their advocates point out that the real criminals at Standing Rock were the police and the oil companies’ private security firms, who consistently used violent repression to sabotage constitutionally-protected political activity.

Meanwhile, the federal government has failed to hold the police accountable for a single act of violence.

On a single night in November, the police injured more than 300 unarmed and generally highly-restrained protesters by spraying water on them amid freezing temperatures and firing rubber bullets and concussion grenades.

A police officer struck 21-year-old Sophia Wilansky with a concussion grenade that nearly severed her forearm. A fellow water protector named Steve Martinez drove her to the hospital, where she underwent emergency surgeries in an effort to save her arm.

On the day after Wilansky nearly lost her arm, seven FBI agents—including two clad in Joint Terrorism Task Force jackets—came to her hospital room and collected articles of clothing and shrapnel freshly dislodged from her arm. They also subpoenaed hospital visitor logs and videos of her room.

The JTTF visit “created a chilling atmosphere where anyone who’s a protester is under suspicion of being a terrorist,” Sophia Wilansky’s father, Wayne Wilansky, says.

The same grand jury that has indicted Fallis, Markus, Nastacio, White, Ortiz, and Miller-Castillo on felony charges subpoenaed Steve Martinez soon afterward. The subpoena implied that a federal investigation of the extremely far-fetched claim that Wilansky’s injury was caused by an improvised explosive was underway, and that Martinez was a subject of that investigation simply because he had driven Wilansky to seek medical attention.

It ordered Martinez to produce, among other things, “photos and SD cards; written statements; and any other information in [his] possession.”

Martinez appeared before the grand jury on January 4<sup>th</sup> and was asked a single question: “When did you arrive in North Dakota?” He immediately invoked the Fifth Amendment and refused to testify.

In a written statement, Martinez, who is partly of Pueblo and Apache ancestry, called the grand jury “a fishing expedition to find out information about the water protector movement, and organizations and people related to it,” and asserted that “to comply with this subpoena would violate my spiritual duty to protect my loved ones.”

Martinez was expected to begin a jail sentence for contempt of court on March 1, but in late February, the U.S. Attorney’s office unexpectedly withdrew its subpoena of him, meaning he’s free for now. About 20 supporters nevertheless gathered in front of the courthouse on March 1 holding up banners with slogans, such as “The Frontlines Are in the Courtroom.”

The Water Protector Legal Collective, the Freshet Collective, and other volunteer-driven collectives have provided legal support and advice for the water protectors now slogging through various court cases.

Notwithstanding the temporary victory in Steve Martinez’ case, members of the collectives say they intend to continue support for those whose sacrifices made the water protector movement possible in their various courtroom-related struggles.

### **The History Of The Federal Civil Disorder Charge**

The civil disorder statute used against the six federal defendants can be traced to Martin Luther King, Jr.’s assassination in 1968, which spurred Congress to pass the US Civil Rights Act one week after his death.

It was passed in the aftermath of riots across the country in protest against substandard living conditions in segregated Black communities. The best known section of the act is Title VIII, known as the Fair Housing Act, which was designed to end residential segregation and promote racial integration. But a little-remembered section of the bill, Title X, is known as the Civil Obedience Act.

U.S. Senator Russell Long of Louisiana, an avowed segregationist, was the amendment’s main author and offered it as a quid pro quo for his support of the legislation as a whole.

The amendment created stiff penalties for such activities as “interfering with law enforcement officials during the course of civil disorder.”

Long previously offered up the Civil Obedience Act as an amendment to a bill that would have specified punishments for violence against civil rights workers in the Deep South.

Biographer Michael S. Martin recalled in his book, “Russell Long: A Life in Politics,” a speech Long made to the Senate floor, in which he described the pro-civil rights worker legislation as “a bill to aid and abet H. Rap Brown and Stokely Carmichael,” in reference to leaders of the Black Power movement. He also claimed the people the bill supported were “known to stir up hatred and ill will among people of their race and put cities to the torch.”

In response, Long proposed the Civil Obedience Act as a means to “strike the very thing which really concerns the people of this country: the rights and the safety of 200 million Americans whose property and whose very lives have been seriously endangered.”

Nearly a half-century later, the federal government is using this same racially-charged legislation to pursue felony charges against six indigenous people at Standing Rock.

Ellison recalled one of the few previous times he encountered Federal Civil Disorder charges was during prosecutions of AIM activists in the 1970s. He experienced first-hand the murderous FBI-coordinated counter-insurgency campaign against AIM at Pine Ridge, he noted, whereby a paramilitary organization known as the Guardians of the Oglala Nation (GOONs) went on a rampage of beatings and assassinations of AIM leaders and supporters.

Federal prosecutions are viewed as one aspect of an escalating effort by domestic security agencies, police, politicians, and fossil fuel industries to break the spirit of resistance movements nationwide.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) said more than 30 separate anti-protest bills were introduced since November 8, representing “an unprecedented level of hostility towards protesters in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”

“The government is looking at how to deal with protests nationally, and these federal prosecutions are certainly a part of that,” Ellison concluded.

## **22 May - Support Anti-Racists Arrested in Graham, North Carolina**

*Dozens of southern anti-racist activists organized a counter protest on May 20, 2017, at a so-called “Confederate Memorial Day” rally organized by the white supremacist organization ACTBAC (Alamance County Taking Back Alamance County). Three were arrested and given serious charges and high bail – the highest was \$15,000.*

### **MORE:**

The Alamance County Sheriff is a notorious racist. According to witnesses, Alamance police were seen shaking hands with known Klan members. We need your support to support these anti-racist fighters. Please make a donation to the Freedom Fighter Bond Fund at <http://durhamsolidaritycenter.org/bondfund>

### **What Happened**

On May 20, 2017 anti-racist activists from across the south came at the request of local residents to challenge the so-called “Heritage Not Hate” event in Graham, NC organized by ACTBAC, a local

“southern heritage group” dedicated to protecting Confederate monuments and who have been putting up large Confederate flags along major interstates. Around 75 people turned out for the event. Among those who gathered were skinheads and members of white supremacist organizations like Blood and Honor, Combat 88, and known Klan members.

Over 50 anti-racist activists from IWW’s General Defense, Louisville, KY’s Anti-Racist Action, and others assembled to protest the events with signs and banners that read: “Take Back from Who?” “Biscuits Not Bigots” “End White Supremacy” and “Black Lives Matter.”

Toward the end of the parade, three activists were thrown to the ground and violently arrested. They have been given bogus but very serious charges, such as assault on a government officer and assault on a law enforcement officer. Bail ranged from \$1,500 to \$15,000.

This is clearly designed to create a chilling effect on those who are challenging white supremacy wherever it rears its head.

Alamance County Police and Sheriff are notoriously racist, protecting white supremacist residents and targeting Black and Brown folks, particularly Latinx immigrants.

1. Alamance County Sheriff Terry Johnson was investigated by the Department of Justice for racial profiling and using the 287(g) program to target immigrants.
2. An analysis of traffic stop data showed that Latinx drivers were 10x as likely as non-Latinx to be stopped for routine traffic infractions and twice as likely to be arrested.
3. Alamance County is a known hot-spot of white supremacist activity and organization.
4. After Trump was elected, there were multiple reports of cars having “Victory Parades” flying confederate battle flags and shouting “white power!”

We salute those who gathered in hostile territory to stand up to hate. We will continue to monitor the situation and share updates. For now, please donate to help cover the costs of the bonds for these three anti-racist freedom fighters.

### **27 May - Leonard Peltier update - Lockdown at Coleman and other news**

*Comrades from Leonard Peltier’s support committee wanted to update you on Leonard’s situation at Coleman and the prison’s lockdown.*

#### **MORE:**

The lockdown has been going on for over 3 weeks due to “gang activities” and will continue for the foreseeable future according to prison officials. So we are back to the old ways of communication, a letter!

Leonard says he is doing well and wants to let everyone know that he appreciates your cards and letter. We have made arrangements for a Florida lawyer to visit him and hopefully he will be able to finalize a decision regarding his request for a transferee to a lower security facility closer to his family. As soon as he puts in the request we will let you know where and how to send letters of support for his request.

In the mean time we are working to re-build Leonard’s support base and want to thank you for the wonderful letters of support for the office that we have received.

We have a new t-shirt designed by Leonard that will be on our new sites (which should be ready by early June) called LP Special Edition -\$30.00 +s/h that you can order now.

If you are hosting a booth at a Pow Wow or fair and need merchandise please let us know as soon as possible so we can be sure to get you the merchandise in a timely manner.

### **28 May - Marius Mason Update**

*Marius requests that friends hold off on sending him books for now. He is still struggling with his transfer and having a difficult time settling in.*

#### **MORE:**

In his new unit he has a lot less personal space and a harsher limit on the number of books he can keep.

Please send mail in the meantime! Personal letters and articles mean so much to him. If you see something interesting about animals, nature, science, community organizing, queer culture, or music please print it out and send it his way. He cannot receive newspaper or magazine clippings but copies are fine.

He also wanted to thank everyone who has sent him a book. He does not always know who sends what but he is always grateful. Please consider writing him so he can thank you personally.

### **29 May - Rage, humiliation, testosterone, youth and the politics of liberation**

*Please read the latest from Russell Maroon Shoatz!*

#### **MORE:**

by Russell Maroon Shoatz (San Francisco Bay View)

Steve Bloom, a comrade and veteran activist, asked me several questions regarding my contribution to "Look for Me in the Whirlwind." The questions delve into aspects of our political struggle against oppression back in the 1960s and '70s and are still pressing concerns.

**Steve:** Today, looking back almost 50 years, what do you think of the idea that in the 1960s "revolution had come" and it was "time to pick up the gun?" What is your present-day assessment of the choice by a wing of the Panthers and the BLA (Black Liberation Army) to engage in an armed offensive against the established state power in the USA, starting in the last half of the 1960s? What were the consequences? What was achieved? What failures or setbacks were suffered as a result? What balance sheet would you draw for us today?

What would you say to me today about the manner in which the Oakland Panthers chose to announce that decision to the world?

**Maroon:** From my vantage point as an individual who joined what Malcolm X defined as the struggle for human rights, 50 years ago, in 1967, I co-founded Philadelphia's Black Unity Council, an organization that merged with Philly's Panthers in 1969. That led to me being forced underground for a year and a half in the ranks of the BLA. Captured in 1972, I have subsequently been a political prisoner, serving multiple "natural life" death-by-incarceration sentences due to my political activities.

My expressions here are of a deeply felt personal nature, but time, reflection and study has allowed me to recognize how our politics of the struggle for human rights, more often than not, is intertwined with rage, humiliation, testosterone (amongst males) and a youthful lack of clarity.

In my case, from the age of 5 until I was 34, I was consumed with a smoldering sense of rage, fed by feelings of humiliation.

I was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1943 – my parents, my siblings and I in a mostly Black working class neighborhood known as “The Black Bottom.” Tiny row houses, treeless and narrow streets and trash clogged empty lots is what I most remember about my early years.

All symbols of power and authority there were white: white corner store owners, bill collectors, cops and later school teachers.

The only white family I knew of was the Pfifers, with their little girl who would beg for bread and their “crazy” son Paul.

At the same time, at 5 years of age, I had never heard anyone discuss anything in racial terms, or how white skin privilege operated to form my world.

Seared in my memory is an event that twisted my personality into knots for decades. Something I witnessed at the age of 5. My father and I were gazing out our tiny living room window, watching two white cops brutally beat and drag a Black man to their parked patrol car, directly across the narrow street from where we stood.

At that age, I had never witnessed such violence – not in our home or my small world of vacant, trash filled lots, alleyways or on the one lane streets that I was allowed to play on.

My emotions revolved around wide-eyed unasked questions that can be summed up in one word: Why? Though everything came back to that one word, my young mind really wanted to know why were those cops beating and using such loud, forceful sounding words against that guy?

Why was my father standing so still, while I peered up to see his reactions to what we were witnessing with my questioning eyes – that never caught his attention? Why were the neighbors, who I could see across the narrow street, all watching from their own doorways and windows and themselves as well seemingly frozen in their movements and not even talking loud enough to be heard through our open summer evening window?

I felt no fear, but my young mind could sense fear in my father and the neighbors. I just wanted someone to tell me why?!

Once the cops got the Black guy in their car, one of them turned and blurted: “Any of you other niggers want some of this?” And I saw our neighbors begin to shut their doors and withdraw from their windows, while my father took my hand and pulled me away from our window as well.

Right then, at the age of 5, I determined that what had occurred was wrong. And I also immediately passed judgment on my father and those neighbors: They were afraid to do anything about that wrong, and that caused me to lose respect for all of them.

Entering elementary school the following year marks another experience that added to the warping of my character.

During one of my first classes, I failed to follow a white female teacher’s instructions on some forgotten matter, and that caused her to sharply smack me across my face, and then force me into the cramped well beneath her desk, and I had to remain there for quite some time.

I had never been slapped or otherwise beaten. My parents did not believe in or practice beating their children, nor had I ever witnessed any fighting between the two of them. In fact, aside from the two cops beating of the Black guy the year before, the only violence I ever saw was during a rare trip to the movies; and our family, relatives or neighbors had no TVs to watch such things.

Thus, the slap stunned and confused me, causing me to start crying. Not from the pain, but from the frustrating realization that the teacher had displayed – like the two cops – that she also had the ability to exercise a power that was hard to resist.

My tears that day were from a powerless rage that even as a 6-year-old I knew was based in a deep feeling that something in the universe had to be out of place in order for me to be experiencing such emotions. A rage that I would harbor for decades to come, fed by a seemingly unending cavalcade of examples that I would face, or become aware that even my untutored mind had no problem in determining were simply wrong and unjust. A rage that for many years was misdirected.

In time, adding to my rage was my witnessing or learning of many other Black people suffering abuse in many ways. And my inability or efforts to resist such things caused me to expand the loss of respect for my father and neighbors into feelings of humiliation about myself and Black people in general.

And it is important to point out that once my family and neighbors began to rent, share and buy TVs in the early 1950s, the demeaning ways Blacks were depicted on the small screen: “Mammies,” buffoons and characters whose roles were designed to debase Blacks and afford whites a sense of inflated self-worth left me feeling more humiliated.

Rage and humiliation fed on each other.

In my mind, Blacks were essentially cowards. I did not place myself in that category, but it subsequently provoked a decades-long quest to prove to myself and the entire world that I was justified in not placing myself amongst such cowards.

Along the way I ran into the gang culture of the middle 1950s. And from 13 to 20 years of age, the gangs of Philly were my instrument and stage that facilitated my search for a form of recognition and a level of respect that could not be denied by anyone.

The young males who were in my gang and our counterparts in rival gangs were undoubtedly harboring similar feelings of rage and humiliation, though the fratricide amongst us left little time to reflect on such things. Our male dominated gangs were as testosterone driven as ancient gladiator arenas.

Unlike youth groups in better-off communities, our Black gangs never had any real adult guidance or supervision. We had our “old heads,” who were always older former gang members, but they too held firmly to the gang culture, and that never elevated beyond placing a premium on the search for recognition and respect – even after the old heads began devoting more time and energy to marriage and children.

In Philly, the young Black women of that era generally displayed less of a desire to try to keep up with the testosterone driven competition, though some did participate as a means to wrestle with their own feelings of rage and their humiliation that was compounded by the overarching cultural practices that were more oppressive and abusive towards women.

Malcolm’s “By any means necessary!” approach to the human rights struggle changed everything.

Adding a new approach to the heroic civil rights struggle that was based in the South, a primarily nonviolent effort that caused me to reexamine my belief about Blacks being cowards. Still, nonviolence held little appeal for many who saw Malcolm's teachings as more suited to serving to rid us of our humiliation and redirect our rage away from our Black-on-Black violence: seeking both our humanity and -political, economic and social changes.

Some said revolutionary change was needed. Followers of that doctrine emerged to form the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California – albeit earlier Black Panther formations were already in motion in the South, amongst the urban based Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) and elsewhere. RAM, in particular, was heavily influenced by Robert F. Williams and his North Carolina NAACP chapter, who had practiced armed self-defense extensively in the 1950s and early 1960s.

The coming together of the “any means necessary” doctrine and an ever increasingly political strata of young Black men, who were full of rage and feelings of humiliation, proved to be a powerful formula for recruiting Black youth who remained unmoved by the nonviolent methods of the early civil rights struggles.

It is very important to recognize that Black women also harbored feelings of rage and humiliation. Given the history of the USA, Black women had to be experiencing even more rage and humiliation than most Black men! And the already mentioned heroic civil rights struggles that had been taking place in the South propelled to the world's attention the now iconic Rosa Parks, Gloria Richardson, Ella Baker, Fannie Lou Hamer and quite a larger number. And in the urban areas, untold numbers of lesser known women would populate and distinguish themselves, not only amongst the Black Panthers, but amongst the ranks and leadership of hundreds of forgotten formations.

Still, the testosterone-fueled men usually smothered or pushed to the background those female contributions, especially in the urban areas, which were essentially youth movements that allowed, encouraged and elevated the mystique of “the bad motherfucker.” At the same time, the women, who did more than their share to establish and sustain all these groups, placed more value on working to solve the mountain of problems and difficulties being given voice to.

The women's closer connections to the children left them with little appetite for the usual “king of the mountain, last man standing” syndrome that the raging, testosterone “drunk” men were practicing. And unlike the Southern civil rights struggles, the urban youth in question lacked a mass of older people who they trusted, who could afford them with a wealth of learned experiences the leading urban youth could weigh while making important decisions.

Even on matters concerning armed self-defense, only practiced on the margins of the usual nonviolent Southern struggle, people like Robert F. Williams and the Deep South's Deacons for Defense and some lesser known local formations had quite a number of professionally trained military veterans, who went forward to use their training to organize and lead the defense of the civil rights struggle against both the police and Ku Klux Klan. The urban formations only sporadically produced such effective armed self-defense.

After the Southern civil rights struggle succeeded in winning major reforms in voting rights, public accommodations etc., that arena of our struggle became preoccupied with consolidating those gains, while Malcolm's human rights struggle evolved into the Black Power/Black Liberation struggle – revolutionary doctrines and political, economic and social programs that were almost always led by youthful Black urban men.

When I joined that urban struggle in 1967, rage, humiliation, testosterone, youth and politics had all come together, and I found a movement dominated by kindred spirits. Our philosophies, ideologies, doctrines, programs, strategies, tactics and practice were always overshadowed by those elements.

We idolized Che Guevara, the Tupamaro urban guerrilla group of Uruguay; we doggedly held on to Mao Tse Tung's quote, "Political power grows from a barrel of a gun." We trained and practiced armed self-defense against the police, FBI and any others we believed were enemies. "The Mini Manual of Urban Guerrilla Warfare" and Panther Field Marshal Don Cox instructed on "Forming Self Defense Forces." Later his urban guerrilla writings in his "For the Liberation of America" reached us from exile.

By 1971, not only the Panthers, but scores of other "bad motherfuckers" across the U.S. had taken on the police and FBI in defense of their offices, homes and persons. They robbed banks to fund the struggle, hijacked planes to seek exile in foreign countries, staged retaliatory attacks against the police drug suppression measures, escaped after capture, and developed an extensive and effective underground system that may never be properly exposed because of actions that could still endanger the freedom of many.

Malcolm X had been assassinated by then, but our actions paid homage to him for teaching us how to channel our rage and humiliation against those who were oppressing us.

The youthful male testosterone was stoked in other ways. Elaine Brown, who would become the only female to lead the Black Panther Party, made a record album where she crooned, "Believe it, my friend, for this silence to end, we'll just have to get guns and be men."

Before the Los Angeles Panther head Bunchy Carter was assassinated, he wrote a powerful poem for his mother that we reworked into an oath for new recruits: "If I should fall, weapon in hand, you'll be free, and I a man. For a slave of natural death who dies cannot balance two dead flies. If I should fail to follow our goal, may burning cancer torment my soul."

Those of us who went underground wound up on a "run and gun" mission, and that, coupled with our rage and humiliation, further distanced us from the political programs that kept us connected to the Black community. And since that community was not ready to join or adequately support our urban guerrilla activities, and our youthful minds could not find any way forward except more of what we were doing. Our fate was death, injury, prison or exile, and those who suffered those fates have still not been determined.

Freedom ain't free!

We raged on. Every blow struck lessened our burden of suffering humiliation in silence. And those of us who survived found time to read "The Wretched of the Earth," where the author and veteran of the Algerian war of national liberation in the 1950s and early 1960s, who was a psychiatrist who had a chance to study both sides of the conflict, discovered that often in liberation struggles the overarching political goals are sidetracked by the powerful needs of many amongst the oppressed to lash out against their oppressors in order to simply regain their feelings of being human.

In my case, I distinctly remember the exact moment that occurred with me – when I again started feeling fully human since suffering the trauma of a confused, defenseless 5-year-old, watching my father and our neighbors all being forced to stand by while the two white cops beat and arrested the Black guy, then hurl humiliating threats our way on departure.

After my 1972 capture, by 1976 I had been transferred to the state prison at Huntingdon due to unsuccessful escape attempts from two other prisons. Huntingdon at that time was known as the "breakin'

camp” because of its brutality. It was there in 1977 that four comrades and I took over a cell block, held the guards hostage, and then were able to escape into the surrounding mountains and forest of Central Pennsylvania.

To make a long story short, one comrade got trapped inside, another was killed on a mountainside, two others were captured that night, while I was chased through the mountains and woods for a month before being recaptured.

Once returned to the prison, I was viciously beaten and, since I had been beaten by guards previously and that was what they would do to try to break prisoners’ spirits “normally,” I expected as much.

Within a couple days I was taken outside the prison to a court hearing, and the police presence was so large, I suspected the different agencies and departments that had obviously come together after our initial escape and during the month long hunt were all trying to get in on “the picture,” as it were. And the press did show up in large numbers – reporters with their microphones, notebooks and cameras.

The court was a long way from Philly or Pittsburgh, where most of my family and supporters lived. Still I could see five of them surrounded by a lot of the cops and prison guards.

That hearing didn’t last long, and I was not allowed to say anything to my people, but was besieged by the press and gawking cops, while my handlers were frantically trying to force a way through the crowd to the waiting cars.

The reporters were firing questions my way, while I rummaged through my brain for something that would make an impact. My capture had forced me out of my run-and-gun posture, back into the political arena where words are weapons.

When the cops got to the cars, before they could get me secured inside, I turned and blurted as loud as I could: “Tell everybody the slave got caught and is going back to the plantation.” That caused the cops to slam me against the car they were forcing me into. Apparently, they were embarrassed by my continuing defiance, even after the epic, month-long chase through the mountains and words they no doubt hunted in. They thought a “nigger” from the city would head for the first fast food place to try to rob someone, get a burger, fries and coke, then head for the city, not come within a day or two of the “hunters” throwing in the towel.

Once back in the prison isolation cell, I began to ponder what had happened before, during and after my escape: my refusal to accept the natural life (death-by-incarceration) sentence, my earlier unsuccessful escape attempts, my growing awareness of how massive the search for me had been, and just how shook-up the angry cops and prison guards remained.

That’s when it happened! The humiliation I had been suffering all those years seemed to lift from my shoulders and land directly on that faceless mass of oppressors and authorities who were represented by the cops who packed my hearing, and who all had been out of their minds by how much it took to capture a single implacable rebel!

I stood up, out of earshot of anyone, and as loud as I could shouted: “That’s right. I’m a bad motherfucker!” Then I gently laughed to myself and lay down on my bunk with a “knowing” smile on my face.

The rage and humiliation simply disappeared. I had forced the world to recognize me as a human being; and I knew it.

Since then I have again felt rage at injustices and due to personal wrongs I've suffered. But the burning, overpowering rage never again returned.

I have also been forced into degrading and humiliating situations during decades of imprisonment since that time, but nothing has been able to take away the dignity I discovered as a human being, now knowing that I am as much as anyone, and more than most.

I remain committed to the struggle for human rights for all of humanity. Since I'm wiser and understand more now, I can better weigh the socioeconomic and sociopolitical as well as the historic factors that preceded their formations. Absent the rage and not suffering the humiliation that once tormented me, I can better help formulate and carry out what is decided about the kinds of far reaching changes that are needed.

When I recognize rage in younger people, I understand how that can dominate their thinking. The same with the humiliation they cannot easily escape or avoid, while the testosterone and its ability to cause a hard to control exuberance amongst young males, in particular, are factors I advise others to always factor in while moving forward.

My story is closer to what untold numbers of highly motivated 1960s and 1970s "revolutionaries" usually don't write about or discuss nowadays. And I believe I have answered comrade Steve Bloom's earlier questions, if one sets aside the usual self-congratulatory narratives related to how the Black Panther Party, BLA and other related groups and formations served the communities, though they did do some of that as well.

Younger activists, and oppressed people in general, can benefit more from the veterans of the struggles from earlier generations working even closer than when our veterans spend so much time on fine tuning their ideological, philosophical positions and worldviews. The looming threats that could very well lead to the next 10 or 20 years!

Straight Ahead!

## **2 Jun - Kevin Olliff released from halfway house!**

*Kevin has spent the last year in a halfway house, following almost three years in prison, and he was released on June 2!*

### **MORE:**

He still has two years of probation left, but is excited for this new stage of freedom.

From Kevin:

*I cannot sufficiently express my joy today. My time operating via direct action for animals has come to an end, but reflecting on this ordeal, I have no regret, only gratitude.*

*After thirty-six years imprisoning and gassing generations of minks, the East Fork Mink Ranch no longer exists. Those minks who avoided recapture and made it have already had great grandchildren, and I am long forgotten. But I will never forget them, or that night, for the rest of my life.*

*Thanks to all those who have stood with me and Tyler in this fight. Follow your passion.*

## **4 Jun - Just — Come Home**

*New writing from Jalil Muntaqim!*

**MORE:**

When I was captured my daughter was two months in the womb. Her mother and I were both members of the Black Panther Party, the political party whose legacy, beyond the media-driven narrative of militancy, is responsible for today's free breakfast program for children, Sickle Cell Anemia Research, Free Community Health Clinics, Bus Program for Families to Prison, to name a few of the programs the BPP initiated.

Knowing I would not soon be released from prison, I told my daughter's mother, "go and make a living for yourself, but whatever you do—that baby you are carrying is my child and I intend to part of her life." She stuck around for 10 years before she decided to get married and start another family. By that time, my daughter knew me as Daddy, we had a solid bond, although she only knew me from prison visits. She knew I bought her first bicycle, made sure she had gifts or money each birthday and would be there for her no matter my circumstances surviving in prison.

By the time she turned 11 years old, she began to act out, not getting along with her step-father; from time to time she lived with either of my sisters or brother. You can imagine my anguish trying to convince my siblings to take in my daughter when they had their own children to raise. Added to that drama, each of my siblings had their own issues with me, their big brother being in prison during their formative years growing up and my not being there for them. This is especially true when any of them got into a scrape with the neighborhood bully, they being unable to threaten, "I'm going to get my big brother" or situations where my sisters needed my advice dealing with unwanted suitors. Yes, prior to my capture, I had to stop a couple of young dudes because of their disrespect toward either of my sisters.

When my daughter was 16 years old, she was completely out of control. She lived in California, where I was originally captured in 1971, so I arranged for her to spend the summer in New York City, staying with Safiya Bukhari, a former BPP member and close friend. During the summer, she got a summer job and every weekend friends would bring her to Greenhaven to visit. I remember we had a family day picnic, and Yuri Kochiyama, Nandi Majid and Naomi Burns brought her for the event. While we were standing in line to have lunch, a young prisoner who I knew started talking to her. After a few words between them, I walked away, standing at a distance and watching them converse. After a few minutes they ended the conversation, and she walked to me, asking "Why did you leave me with that guy?" I responded, "Hey, you're 16 years old, I know you know how to handle yourself, and I have confidence you will make the right decisions." She gave me a quizzical smile, appreciative of the fact I recognized her maturing into a young woman.

When we returned to the table with my friends, telling them about the encounter, they started teasing me about how I'd soon be an "ole grandfather"—I did not like that kind of talk at all! Little did I know what they all knew and my daughter did not inform me—she was already pregnant. When I did find out, I was livid! Weeks later she aborted the pregnancy, then the following year got pregnant again, bearing a little girl. My daughter went on to finish high school living with her baby daddy's family, and then went to find work.

By the time my granddaughter was 11 years old, in 2000, I had an interview with Essence Magazine for a feature arranged for me by poet, author and activist Asha Bandele, titled "Daddy Says". The article talked about incarcerated fathers maintaining relationships with their children, with a nice photo of myself, daughter and granddaughter taken at Eastern (Napanoch).

It's now 2017; my daughter is married with her own home and herself a grandmother. At 45 years, she still calls herself "Daddy's girl." My grandson will soon be playing for the "Bulldogs" and my great-granddaughter is writing me telling of her problems in elementary school.

Being an incarcerated father is difficult, but we have to put in the work; in the end, it is rewarded by the legacy you leave behind. Admittedly, it is also painful, especially after 9 parole hearings with you telling your family members—"I'll make it at the next parole hearing." It has come to the point where my daughter tells me to stop telling her that. She no longer believes the parole system is fair and impartial. She says "JUST — COME HOME!"

### **8 Jun - Welcome Oscar López Rivera to NYC**

**WHAT:** OLR en NYC

**WHEN:** Starting June 8, see below for details

**WHERE:** At least three of the five boroughs

**COST:** Some free, with a fundraiser in the mix as well

#### **MORE:**

Recently freed political prisoner Oscar López Rivera is coming to NYC and will be at several events. Show him the support and love he deserves.

#### **June 8<sup>th</sup> - Welcome Oscar to NYC**

Welcoming event at 7:00pm. "The Mandela of the Americas," a 74 year old Puerto Rican political prisoner, after serving more than 35 years in US prisons, visits New York.

Hostos Community College, Main Theater, 450 Grand Concourse, Bronx, New York 10451

For tickets (\$35 for general public, \$10 for Senior citizens and college students), call 718.518.4455

#### **June 9<sup>th</sup> - Dance with Oscar Fundraiser**

From 6:30-11:30pm, come dance with Oscar and help raise funds to insure he has a smooth transition from prison to freedom.

Taino Towers Crystal Ballroom, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, 240 East 123<sup>rd</sup> Street, New York, New York 10035

Tickets are \$35

#### **June 10<sup>th</sup> - South Bronx Community Welcomes Oscar**

Welcoming event at 6:30pm. A \$10 donation includes dinner.

1300 Southern Boulevard, Bronx, New York 10459

#### **June 11<sup>th</sup> - National Puerto Rican Day Parade**

At 9:30am, please join the Oscar contingent in the parade, that will honor him as the procer de libertad.

### **10 Jun - No Platform for Fascism: Noise-Demo Against Hate in NYC!**

**WHAT:** Noise Demo

**WHEN:** 10:00am-2:00pm, Saturday, June 10

**WHERE:** Foley Square, 111 Worth Street, New York, New York 10013

**COST:** FREE

**MORE:**

Bigots, Racists, Fascists out of NYC!

Join us to make noise and drown out hate at Foley Square! Bring noisemakers of all kinds!

America's proto-fascists have issued a national call for a "March against Sharia" on June 10<sup>th</sup>. In NYC, this thinly veiled racist rally will be taking place at Foley Square from 10AM – 2PM, featuring such infamous bigots as Gavin McInnes of the Proud Boys and Frank Morgenthaler of the Oathkeepers.

We at the Metropolitan Anarchist Coordinating Council (MACC) are taking this opportunity to announce a new campaign, No Platform for Fascism, which will seek not only to confront far-right organizations in the streets but will also pressure businesses like Squarespace that give them a mouthpiece and profit off of their hateful ideologies. We call on all of those in the broader anti-fascist movement to join us as we inaugurate this campaign with a counter-noise demonstration at Foley Square starting at 10 AM. We encourage all organizations allied with immigrants and the oppressed to use this campaign and to call their own parallel events. Together we can shut it down and show that racist movements have no place in our city!

To be clear, this rally for Christian supremacy has nothing to do with the First Amendment and everything to do with promoting terrorism against minorities. In the last week two people lost their lives in Portland (Ricky Best and Taliesin Namkai-Meche), knifed to death after attempting to defend a Muslim woman from a known white supremacist spewing hate speech on the light-rail. This isn't an isolated event. America's own law enforcement organs state that the vast majority of fatal attacks on U.S. soil are carried out by white supremacists. We at MACC believe that the atmosphere of fear that the Trump administration and the far-right are cultivating in marginalized communities is an extreme form of a systemic violence that has long existed in the United States – precisely calibrated to deny these communities anything like "free speech" or a voice in the public sphere.

How can you expect the Muslim community to engage in dialogue, if being visible means the constant threat of attack, murder, deportation, or imprisonment? And how can the Islamophobic movement wrap themselves in the mantle of free speech and women's rights when they recently beat a young woman at their rally at CUNY, where they were trying to prevent a moderate Muslim leader from speaking?

The anarchist and anti-fascist movement understands that we must fight both neoliberal terror and fascist terror wherever it arises if we are to create a new radically democratic and radically pluralistic society. A society in which all voices have a say in their political lives.

Anti-fascists to the streets June 10<sup>th</sup>! No Platform for Fascism!