



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for June 28<sup>th</sup>

### **11 Jun - Photo and Painting**

*Marius Mason sent a friend and supporter a new photo of himself and a recent painting of his.*

#### **MORE:**

Both can be viewed at [supportmariusmason.org](http://supportmariusmason.org)

About the painting: “This painting was done from a photo in the *New York Times*, taken in 2008. The couple, Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin, were a kind of ‘power couple’ among LGBT activists in the Bay Area for many, many years... they used their home as an organizing center and safe haven for queer folks looking for community and affirmation. I thought the photo showed so much love between two movement elders- and I wanted to celebrate that kind of care and commitment.”

### **13 Jun - June 11<sup>th</sup> Manifestations in UK**

*Below is a roundup of some of the events and actions related to this year’s June 11 International Day of Solidarity with Long-Term Anarchist Prisoners.*

#### **MORE:**

We decided to mark June 11 by calling our little ‘manif sauvage’, with two targets: HMP Pentonville and the forthcoming Google London HQ. The point of this is twofold. Firstly, to start again a trajectory which has ebbed during lockdown – that of constant antagonism at the houses of confinement. In a sense, this seems to us to be an affirmation of the sense of the day of June 11<sup>th</sup>: to clarify that any repressive installations are a part of the global self-sustaining matrix of social control and exploitation. As such, we have seen no contradiction whatsoever in offering a brief disruption to the grotesque regime of control in an English prison, and agitating, speaking in the language and reality of, the international anarchist tension.

But, unsatisfied with simply repeating a well-trod ritual, we also decided afterwards, to move to the Google ‘Campus’, still under construction only a short while away, overlooking the central metropolitan artery of Kings Cross station. There are material reasons for this: Lendlease the construction company is a main contractor for the UK prison industry, responsible for building the new megaprison in South Wales (a recent spontaneous insurrection in that territory should tell us something as to why authority has granted these contracts at great expense). On top of being responsible for a hideous ‘luxury housing development’ on the site of the former Heygate housing estate, they are now constructing Google’s London HQ: this repulsive worm, which will be as long as the ‘Shard’ skyscraper is tall, when completed. This is a monument to the power of social planners and technology multinationals to run the new crisis-ridden economy and categorise, collect and control all the minutia of our lives.

But there are also other reasons. The states of the world have thrown anarchist fighters into the dungeons of their ‘democracies’, in the hope that the possibility these comrades have conferred on the world, of unmediated struggle against the existent, will be forgotten. Therefore, it made sense for us that we would make a connection to the totality of prison society, which their hostage-taking is an attempt to defend, rather than only its most obvious symptoms. We wanted to offer a challenge to ourselves, immersed as we are in a technologically enhanced passivity. The challenge is: how to break out of insipid activism, routine, compartmentalised struggle – and begin to advance something uncompromising, incendiary, in a word; anarchist.

So here we decided to step into the unknown, to attempt to actualise something different within the forms we have around us. If we are still trapped by the outlines of our routines at least we are beginning to push against them.

Those who came out did so from very different situations – but why have they come? Finally (at last!) not to ‘protest’, not to ‘meet a deadline’, but to denounce the miserable conditions of our existence, to identify the enemies responsible and to make a vow to the night, together, to engage with our reduced and pacified context, to act and make our ideas live.

Whatever else, this night was ours. Stepping decisively away from being a ‘bloc’ on someone else’s demo, from single ‘issues’ and compromises, from ‘optics’ and publicity, recruitment and reform, we strode towards our ideas, our comrades, our power. Both in the gentrified avenues of the securitised Smart City and, hopefully, inside the 24hr lockdown of the disgusting prison regime, our hope is that the wild chants, the smoke signals and incendiary words, the pounding of pyrotechnics and hearts, may have opened a rift into which we are determined to advance further.

Nothing is over, everything continues! Against oblivion! Against their prison society! Long live anarchy!

### **June 13<sup>th</sup> - Detroit: June 11<sup>th</sup> Noise Demo**

The June 11<sup>th</sup> noise demo outside of Wayne County Jails in downtown Detroit happened one day after the new interim police chief announced a plan to enforce strict noise and crowd ordinances in the wake of a fight in Greektown, which is one block from the Wayne County Jails. This included a plan to significantly increase police presence downtown on weekends.

Wayne County Jails are also presently experiencing a severe staffing shortage, which has led to officers refusing to work and likening their jobs to “being on death row.” In spite of this, we noticed police buses and vans downtown, parked and ready to load up more arrestees. We were not deterred by these intimidation tactics, as we were committed to showing up for the folks in our community being held captive by corrupt Detroit police.

About 50+ comrades attended the noise demo, representing local mutual aid groups, street medics, anarchist collectives, housing unions, environmental groups, abolitionists, musicians, and folks who had previously experienced incarceration. NLG were also on site for the early part of the noise demo. We distributed zines from [june11.noblogs.org](http://june11.noblogs.org), and mutual aid groups brought cold water and snacks. Folks had musical instruments, pots and pans, drums, kazoos and whistles, microphones and megaphones, thundersticks that said “FREE THE ALL”, and full PA systems. We made noise, danced, sang, and chanted for our incarcerated community members, some of whom we could see through the narrow frosted windows of the Andrew C. Baird Detention Facility. We held up signs with messages such as “Free them all” and “We love you” and chanted “Black lives matter” and “Fuck 12.” Music played through the PA included The Coup, NWA, and Dead Prez. Folks inside were seen dancing, waving, and holding notes up to the windows, showing us that they could see and hear us. It was a beautiful moment of solidarity felt by many.

We were given no trouble in spite of this alleged plan to crack down on weekend noise and crowds. At one point a couple of cops stood behind glass doors and filmed while comrades yelled “Fuck 12!” We held the space for about three hours until a heavy downpour forced those with electronic equipment to vacate. Still, some comrades continued to stay and make noise in the pouring rain, including one comrade who had brought a full drum set.

Many comrades felt moved by this action and expressed interest in showing up for incarcerated friends more frequently. June 11<sup>th</sup> in Detroit was a wonderful night of music, fun, and unity.

### **June 20<sup>th</sup> - Solidarity w/ Anarchist Prisoners!**

In the summer of 2020, three high schoolers – Bogdan Andreev, Denis Mikhaylenko, and Nikita Uvarov, all 14 years old – were arrested in the city of Kansk in the Krasnoyarsk region of Siberia, within the claimed borders of the Russian state. The three boys are accused of forming a terrorist organization, and plotting, among other things, to construct a model of the Russian secret police (FSB) headquarters in the game MineCraft then blow it up. More credibly, they are accused of demonstrating solidarity with Azat Miftakhov, a graduate student in mathematics in Moscow and an anarchist, presently aged 28. Miftakhov was initially accused of constructing a smoke bomb that had been thrown into an office of the ruling political party over a year before. He has more recently been sentenced to six years in a “penal colony”. Andreev, Mikhaylenko, and Uvarov are all awaiting trial.

On June 13, we held up a banner that says “Solidarity with Anarchist Prisoners, Free Them All” outside the Russian consulate in Montréal, located at 3655 avenue du Musée. We did this in part to mark the occasion of the day in solidarity with Marius Mason and all long-term anarchist prisoners on June 11, but also to signal our desire to keep in mind the situation in Russia, where even very young people face the risk of entering the prison system and, perhaps as a result, never leaving again.

Our thoughts go out to all our comrades inside, anarchist or not.

### **June 28<sup>th</sup> - In Contempt: June 11<sup>th</sup> Roundup**

The international day of solidarity with long-term anarchist prisoners on June 11<sup>th</sup> was marked by various activities. New statements for the day were released by German anarchist prisoner Thomas Meyer-Falk, Northern Irish anarchist prisoner John Paul Wootton, and Californian trans anarchist prisoner Jennifer Rose, as well as the Civil Liberties Defense Center, who are currently representing Eric King.

Special episodes were produced by the Final Straw Radio, who interviewed people involved in Ferguson prisoner support, the Atlanta Solidarity Fund, and former prisoners Jason and Jeremy Hammond, as well as by the Anews podcast, Jason and Jeremy’s own project Twin Trouble, Kite Line, who had a two-part interview about Eric King’s case, and This Is America, who interviewed Lauren Swain about Sean Swain’s case. In addition, anarchist prisoner zine *Fire Ant* produced their ninth issue to coincide with June 11<sup>th</sup>.

Other activities around June 11<sup>th</sup> included banner drops in Portland, Lowell/Lawrence and Salzburg, and letter writing events in Portland, Seattle, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis. Elsewhere, there was a poster that was produced in Chile, solidarity actions in both Derry and Belfast in Northern Ireland, posters being wheatpasted up in Montreal, a noise demo in Detroit, a letter-writing and book-packing event in Chicago, a solidarity event in Vienna, a protest outside the Russian consulate in Montreal, an ALF action liberating quails from a farm in England, a film screening, fundraiser and letter-writing event in Cincinnati, a BBQ and movie fundraiser in Philadelphia, a solidarity action in Cincinnati, a wild demo in London, and sabotage actions against Starbucks and Whole Foods in Portland.

### **13 Jun - Kings Bay Plowshares Writings and Updates**

*More writing by and updates on the Kings Bay Plowshares 7 (KBP7) is available at [kingsbayplowshares7.org](http://kingsbayplowshares7.org)*

#### **MORE:**

#### **June 13<sup>th</sup> - Clare Grady Update**

Apologies for the long delay in responding to your letters.

I have been a bit overwhelmed by mail but also by the categorization of mail – a quick answer, a thoughtful read before answering, a thoughtful read of an article, a newsletter, a book. Reading a book before I pass it

on because I have a 5 book limit and 25 letter limit – it is a constant roll. Add that to my slow reading and writing ways. Add that to a bit of ADHD. Add to that – NO SOLITUDE. Add to that NO solid chunks of uninterrupted time. It seems to me I am always in transition. Ok, today is Sunday, my day off. No work, several counts, several meals, several phone calls, a few neighborly encounters but...hours on my upper bunk surrounded by mail, taking one piece at a time.

Sorry to have no update except I think I am in a rhythm here. While I am looking forward to my release date in September (my quarantine date of July 7<sup>th</sup> is coming swiftly) I will be sad to leave many friends behind. But grateful for the recent legislation that will release many more of us soon! Two words that come to me when I think of many of my friends here are BRILLIANT and RESILIENT. I have been honored to spend time with them and grateful for all who have sent mail with prayers, encouragement, newsletters, BOOKS, thoughtfulness and generosity. So good to share all of it.

### **June 17<sup>th</sup> - “Wars for Freedom and Other Lies” by Patrick O’Neill**

#### **Fully Vaccinated**

I just received my second and final COVID-19 vaccination shot after being here for five months. So far...no pain...will keep you posted. The lockdown here at Elkton is far beyond medical necessity, and it seems like keeping us indoors 23-plus hours a day is likely more unhealthy than letting us get fresh air every day. The warden is the king of this dungeon, so here we are waiting to enjoy springtime. Update: The second Moderna shot was like going the distance with Muhammad Ali. I spent all of Friday in bed with a low-grade fever. This morning, I am fine, except for the left arm where I took the shot.

#### **Transitions**

I hope I do not have to be quarantined at the Raleigh Halfway House, which is the case with Martha in her halfway house in New Hampshire. I am trying to get my interviews done before I leave. I now have fewer weeks to serve than many of the men have years. So many with draconian sentences. It’s tragic. As I have said before, there isn’t a man here I would not have to my home for supper. It’s far past time to dismantle this horrible prison industrial complex. I will be quarantined here for three weeks before I leave, but not in the SHU, just another block, but no outdoor Rec at all, and all meals in unit. No fresh air at all for three weeks or more.

#### **Sweet Sixteen**

Today (May 2) is Mary Evelyn’s 16<sup>th</sup> Birthday. I called her during her Sweet 16 party at Nora Torres Chemali’s house. Nora and her husband Mike host wonderful parties for all the children. Nora, now a nurse at Rex Hospital in Raleigh, came to live with us at the Catholic Worker (with her sister Erica, Mom, and brothers Omar and Freddy) when she was 13. The Torres family and our family are “one family” now. The lives of Mary and I and our 8 children have been blessed and enriched by the Torres clan. Nora’s 4 children go to the Exploris School in Raleigh, where 7 of our children went; our legacy at the fine charter school goes on after more than 2 decades! Nora took time off work to come to the Kings Bay Plowshares trial in Brunswick, Georgia. Update: Just got the big news that Mary Evelyn graduated middle school! She drew the loudest cheers from her classmates, and gave a speech (like father, like daughter). Only Moira and I missed the parties. Her gifts included a kitten.

#### **Misery Index**

This morning around 8 the PA system announced “Fox Bravo – Rec,” which was my block’s call to go outside for recreation. One problem was that on a schedule posted on a unit bulletin board it says FB-Rec is supposed to be at 1:30-2:30 on Sunday. Instead, Rec was called less than 10 minutes after breakfast was called. Unfortunately, this is not unusual. Schedules are not adhered to and inmates are never told.

The “surprise” resulted in two big problems. On Sunday, many guys sleep in and/or wear headphones, so only 7 guys went to Rec, and none of us had time to eat breakfast (grits) that were cold (with no means of heating them) after Rec. Had Rec been at the scheduled time (and because it’s a beautiful, warm, sunny day), as many as 50 people would have gone to Rec, which is very important to the physical and emotional well-being of all of us, especially when we are only allowed 3-4 hours of outdoor time per week because of the lockdown! There have been many days when I’m expecting “Rec”, so I eat light and stay on alert to be called to “Rec” the entire day and Fox Bravo never gets the call.

This kind of maltreatment and lack of consideration is just part of being at Elkton, where the dignity of the captive is irrelevant. We have no power because we’re kept locked in a large, noisy room, and the staff doesn’t bother to notify us of changes that would make our lives more manageable. Some of the guys who missed “Rec” said they were going to notify the Bureau of Prisons higher-ups about what happened, but I doubt it will make any difference.

I have spoken before about the “Misery Index” of Elkton. Under “normal” circumstances, just being held captive in Elkton Prison would be miserable; throw in a lockdown, hundreds of men getting COVID, and a staff that doesn’t recognize the basic dignity of the men here, and it all adds up to high anxiety, simmering anger, and a “misery index” registering much higher than it needs to be.

### **Sad News**

Jeremy Culver, a man at Elkton (not in my building) hung himself and died. When I picked up my breakfast tray and clean laundry this morning, I saw a woman from medical running while pushing a gurney toward the building where this happened. I prayed at that time, but later heard that the man died. I think there is a direct correlation between the long-term lockdown and the despair in this place for people who cannot get fresh air or sunshine for prolonged periods of time.

There are also a lot of people with very poor diets because they buy a lot of junk food at commissary, and get no exercise, and eat as “comfort: in the midst of their despair. Please pray for the family of this man who died; one person who knew him said he was a United States Marine Corps veteran.

### **One-time Oasis**

When I got to the running track (a walking track to most of the guys), the bright sun was still low in the eastern sky, the temperature was mild, and the air was fresh and invigorating. Elkton was built into a large land basin that’s surrounded by rolling hills, lush greens, copses of pines. The guys tell me that we’re at altitude (on a “mountain”), but I can’t tell for sure. The sad part is this “one-time oasis” is corrupted by the intrusion of the steel and cement prison, completely surrounded by double fencing topped by haunting concertina wire.

In addition to being ominous and ugly, all this security is an unnecessary show of Brute Force. Many of the men are like me...we turned ourselves in. Clearly, the courts did not perceive us as dangerous. It’s also important to note that every man held in Elkton has a release date that they hope to live long enough to see. An escape charge can add five years to your sentence. Very few people would take that risk, even if there were no fences!

### **Punishing the Disabled?**

The window in my cubicle (thick glass and five vertical bars keep me from escaping!) offers me a view of the Elkton “compound,” which is essentially closed down. What I can see is the men from the various cellblocks with various two-story prison buildings walking to the “Chow Hall” to pick up their lunch trays. As I watched the men go by, I saw three of them walking slowly and using walkers and another guy in a wheelchair who was being pushed by another inmate who is designated as his helper. The \$64,000 question

in the midst of a global pandemic is: “why are these disabled men in prison?” Certainly, they represent no threat to anyone. The only reason to keep them at Elkton is for punishment. Why not restorative justice, compassionate release, redemption and mercy instead? Is there a large percentage of our society clamoring for the incarceration of disabled people? Yesterday, I saw three men in wheelchairs and seven guys with walkers at the same time in the compound.

### **Treated like a Number**

From my barred window in Cubicle 4 (of 64), I look out at the prison compound, which is bigger than an NFL football field with large patches of grass intersected by long, wide cement walkways that lead to all the perimeter buildings on the compound (and also the main gate that we come into when we get here). When I look out my window, the compound is almost completely devoid of life. Since the lockdown, hundreds of men are unable to utilize that compound for fresh air or exercise. The gym is empty, the chapel is empty, the workout rooms are empty, the basketball courts and handball courts are empty. While more than a thousand prisoners are trapped in “units”, all the resources go unused.

Earlier – just before dusk – I watched a single black and white skunk walking through the grass outside my window as well as sparrows roosting in the concertina razor wire outside my window. The people who work here don’t see a problem with leaving men locked up in units for days on end. Sadly, the brutal maltreatment of the “offenders” (I’ve heard that word for prisoners used on NPR) is part of the normal course of Elkton’s oppression of we men. It seems to me the worst kind of evil is evil that becomes normal to those who experience and uphold the evil. These correction officers just go home each day at shift’s end, and they are seemingly undisturbed by what they are doing with their lives.

This week I got out to “Rec” four times, which was great. I was able to run seven miles (twenty-three laps on the prison track) on three of those days. On the other day, our time was cut short and I only got in five miles. “How old are you?” is a question I often get from someone who has watched me run for close to an hour straight. There are about four other runners in my cellblock – all are younger than me. We often run together, but I’m always the last one left. I treasure my time to run, so I just don’t stop till a guard announces over a PA system, “Yard closed, clear the track.”

We’re all just a number. That’s how they treat us, just like a number, not a human being. And there’s nothing you can do about it. 7:30 AM – “No inmate movement, no inmate movement until further notice” was the message just now over the PA system. It must be a joke. We’re all locked down with nowhere to go. 8:15 AM – “Assume normal inmate movement” the PA just blared. Can I go outside for a walk?

### **When Things from Outside are Thrown Over the Fence**

I have come to the conclusion that NE Ohio has the most unpredictable weather of anywhere I’ve lived. After temperatures close to 90 degrees and a week of hot weather, the last two days have been really cold; probably in the low 40s – today with a cold rain. I was supposed to get “Rec” today, but it was cancelled because someone threw something over a fence near the track where I run, so they shut down “Rec”. Things thrown over the prison fences include drugs, cell phones, tobacco – all contraband, and of course Elkton treats this as if it was a major security breach, so one thousand-plus men have to be locked down without “Rec” until further notice. It’s not a valid reason to deprive us of fresh air.

### **Memorial Day**

Tonight, during the “White prayer group”, there was a prayer thanking God “for our freedom,” while here we are, locked down in an overcrowded cellblock – not free at all, but in here the U.S. history of war is viewed in a one-size-fits-all that wars fought by the USA were, are, and will forever be all about “our freedom.” Nothing could please the Pentagon more than a circle of unjustly incarcerated men who will today hearken to the same prayers as their also blindly “patriotic” captors. The lie claiming war is about

freedom is “in the water.” Macho men must value the killings by the warriors and also honor all those poor souls and their wives, children, and mothers (and husbands now that young women get to die “for freedom” as well) who were killed for freedom. As if all war is of God, by God, and for God. No one seemed to appreciate the irony that they in fact were imprisoned by the same government that fights wars for “freedom.” If war is “not sanctioned by Jesus”, then it becomes problematic for the God and Country crowd. Because if war is not God’s will, then by whose will is it sanctioned? No one wants to go there, so keep the narrative on “freedom” and “Jesus is American!” How do we begin to counter the brainwashing of the masses? Prayers to the Prince of Peace!

### **Keep Those Cards and Letters Coming**

I’ve been trying hard to catch up on answering mail after I fell behind after being in the SHU (Special Housing Unit) twice and going to the hospital. I really appreciate all of you who send postcards and letters. It’s very nice to hear from folks.

### **June 24<sup>th</sup> - Update on Mark Colville and Other Plowshares**

Mark Colville, the last of the KBP7 activists sentenced, reported to prison on June 8 and is in quarantine for 2 weeks in the Brooklyn Federal Detention Center since. He is kept in a cell for 23 ½ hrs a day and only let out for ½ hr. to call his family. Mark is very grateful to receive your letters but is unable to answer anyone as he was given only 6 stamps instead of 20. He’s in good spirits and was finally given a bible yesterday by the priest-chaplain.

Yesterday Mark was interviewed by a psychologist, dressed in tactical gear. Mark has offered his talents, as long as he’s not getting paid by the prison, for the betterment of his community. He’s willing to tutor or clean toilets. He does not want to work for the prison and have his prison pay garnished to pay restitution for the nuclear weapons of mass destruction that should not have been built in the first place.

If all works out, after being tested for Covid, on Monday, he may be moved to general population. Mark’s release date is September 11. He doesn’t want to apply for early release to home confinement or a halfway house as he views that type of intrusive supervision and wearing an ankle monitor as worse than being in a prison. He welcomes mail and his address and that of the other KBP7 are on the website.

### **Clare Grady**

Clare is doing pretty well. The federal prison at Alderson, West Virginia will be sending Clare to group quarantine in early July in preparation for her Sept. 10<sup>th</sup> release date. After she entered in February Clare was in a quarantine pod for approximately 2 months, as small groups of women kept joining that pod from other jails. Eventually, 45 women were moved together into the general population, in a pod of 120 women in one big noisy dorm, similar to Patrick O’Neill’s prison situation in Elkton, OH. Clare’s letter from May 30 is pasted above.

As Clare enters quarantine, the pod will be quieter, she won’t have to clean showers anymore and she’ll be able to rest a bit. The downside will be no access to the outdoors unless she throws out the garbage at the end of the day to see the night sky and stars.

### **Patrick O’Neill**

Since January, Patrick O’Neill has lived in one room with 115 other men at FCI Elkton in Lisbon, OH. The cacophony is unrelenting. Men yell even when playing chess, he says. “The noise includes a brutally loud public address system that screeches commands and other ‘information’ beginning at 5:30 a.m. and continuing throughout the day as if you were in a stadium! There is also no privacy.” On a good week

Patrick is allowed outside four times for one hour each. He can fit five to six miles of running into each session. He is the only white man in the Black prisoners' prayer group, and also participates in the white prayer group. "While my imprisonment here has been difficult at times," he writes, "mostly I am contented. I have made a lot of friends, and I get along with everyone for the most part." He recently got to visit with his wife Mary and son Michael for one hour, no physical contact allowed. Daughters Annie and Bernadette will visit him on Fathers Day. Though each entire visit is watched by a guard each visit is followed by Patrick being "strip-searched with a body cavity 'inspection.'" He is interviewing his cell block mates for a book he is writing about the "harshness and vindictiveness of the federal judicial system." Patrick expects to be released to a halfway house in Raleigh on August 24. He has written frequent reflections on the prison experience which are posted on the website under "Letters from Jail."

### **Martha Hennessy**

Martha Hennessy was released to a halfway house in Manchester, NH on May 26. She had served five months in Danbury in addition to two months before trial. It is not clear how long she will have to be there before being allowed home confinement until the end of her sentence in August. She originally thought it would only be a week or two. Martha is trying hard to get approved for home confinement for which she believes she is eligible but the process is murky. After a few weeks of quarantine she is now allowed out for walks and to go to Mass once a week. She also started volunteer work at a food pantry. However, she really wants to get back to her family farm in Vermont and see her grandchildren. She has done several recent interviews which are available on the website.

### **Carmen Trotta**

Carmen Trotta was released to home confinement in a friend's apartment in NYC on May 27. He has to wear an ankle monitor and is not allowed to go out of the apartment without advance permission although he has now set up a regular schedule where he can go Mass once a week, to a gym twice a week and grocery shopping once a week. He is trying to get permission to help out at the Catholic Worker to serve food and cook some meals. The probation officers want him to get a paying job. He is also allowed to go out to a designated restaurant with relatives once a month. He has gotten a computer and cell phone and can use email and the internet.

### **Fr. Steve Kelly and Liz McAlister**

Fr. Steve has refused to report for his three years of supervised probation after more than three years of incarceration and a bench warrant has been issued. He is laying low for the time being. Liz is in her supervised probation with almost no limitations.

### **June 25<sup>th</sup> - Bar Crawl Radio Podcast interview with Carmen and Martha**

This is a podcast interview conducted by Alan Winson and Rebecca McKean where Carmen Trotta speaks of his time in Otisville and now under strict home confinement in NYC. Martha tells of her time in Danbury and now the conditions in the halfway house in Manchester, NH where she is currently being held. Mark Colville also has a brief segment before he reported to prison in Brooklyn on June 8: [shows.acast.com/bar-crawl-radio/episodes/martha-and-carmen-are-free-well-sort-of](https://shows.acast.com/bar-crawl-radio/episodes/martha-and-carmen-are-free-well-sort-of)

### **13 Jun - One year**

*It's been a year since Lore Elisabeth was taken into custody.*

**MORE:**

She was apprehended violently in her home, tortured for weeks, infected with COVID, denied medical care throughout, and fights to this day for access to her case files. Federal authorities have shown no interest in proving their case against her, nor have they allowed her to defend herself.

Thanks to you, she can still fight. In this past year, you have kept our beloved Lore going with your precious messages of love and solidarity; you kept the pressure on the Bureau of Prisons until she and her women's unit got access to the vaccine; you showed your joy online and onsite where she could see and feel it; and you raised an absolutely essential fund for her legal defense.

Let's show Lore that we still love and haven't forgotten her. Please never stop supporting our friends and allies leading the fights against police violence and mass incarceration. Keep sending letters and photos! And you can always donate to Lore's commissary fund via PayPal or Venmo @WeLoveLore for food, clothes, and essentials. We couldn't do it without you.

### **June 24<sup>th</sup> - A visit with Lore**

We got to see Lore this week! For the first time in 8 months and just the second time in a year, Lore's mother and I were allowed into FDC Philadelphia to see her in person. She is healthy, vaccinated, and extremely appreciative of everyone's ongoing support, so long since this all should have ended.

It was tremendously powerful to see the brightness in her eyes again. She even managed to make some homemade eyeliner and mascara from the colored pencils that your commissary donations support just to celebrate and dress up for a change.

A dozen of us gathered beforehand to throw an impromptu block party, dance, and show our love to Lore where she and the women incarcerated with her could see us. Her cats Chalceus and Pegasus even got to attend this time. "Are you protesting cats?" one passer-by asked. We got lots of good opportunities to educate people about Lore's case and the unfinished business of freeing Donald Trump's political prisoners.

These visits sustain Lore. The FDC is a brutal place, designed to kill spirits and harden hearts, so we will continue to blast it with light and love. Subscribe for updates and we'll let you know about the next summer block party - Lore would love to see you!

### **14 Jun - Reality Winner's Release From Federal Prison Met With Calls for Full Pardon for the NSA Whistleblower**

*Winner will serve the rest of her five-year sentence under the supervision of a halfway house.*

#### **MORE:**

by Julia Conley (*Common Dreams*)

Press freedom advocates were among those celebrating the release of former National Security Agency contractor Reality Winner on Monday after her attorney announced Winner had been transferred from federal prison to a halfway house.

Alison Grinter Allen, Winner's lawyer, said the legal team is continuing to pursue a full pardon from President Joe Biden.

Winner's release was not part of a commutation but was the result of "time earned from exemplary behavior while incarcerated," according to Grinter Allen, who added that San Antonio's Residential Reentry Management field office may allow Winner to serve the rest of her time in home confinement.

"The Residential Reentry center is in charge right now and will manage her transition, but we are definitely still seeking commutation and pardon," the attorney said in a tweeted statement. "The fight continues and I'll still be taking meetings in Washington to press forward the case for commutation and pardon, but the family will be stepping back to concentrate on Reality and her health and healing."

Winner, who worked at Fort Gordon in Georgia as a contractor with Pluribus International, was arrested in 2017 after federal law enforcement agents determined she had given a secret document about Russian hackers targeting the U.S. election system to reporters at *The Intercept*.

She was charged under the Espionage Act and took a plea deal which included a five-year prison sentence, which she is scheduled to finish serving on November 23, 2021.

The Freedom of the Press Foundation said Winner's release from federal prison was "long overdue."

Grassroots public interest newswire The Sparrow Project tweeted that Winner's prosecution served as a reminder of "the separate standards of justice in 'leak' investigations, and just how politicized they have become."

Winner's legal team sent thousands of letters to former President Donald Trump asking for clemency, but he did not intervene in the case.

The digital rights group Fight for the Future called on Biden to pardon Winner "immediately."

"Telling the truth is not a crime," the group said.

### **16 Jun - It's time to release Sundiata Acoli**

*Sundiata Acoli is an 84-year-old grandfather, mentor, teacher and artist who has been in prison for more than 48 years.*

#### **MORE:**

by Rev. Lukata Mjumbe (*Amsterdam News*)

He and Assata Shakur were both convicted and sentenced to life in prison (with the possibility of parole) for their role in the tragic shooting on the New Jersey State Turnpike which resulted in the death of New Jersey state trooper, Werner Foerster and Black Panther Party member named Zayd Shakur. The highly publicized trial and Assata Shakur's subsequent escape from prison in 1979 have framed Sundiata's imprisonment as one of the most emotional and passionately debated cases in the history of the state of New Jersey. Though Sundiata has been eligible for parole for more than 25 years his petitions for parole have been summarily denied eight times.

By the grace of God, Sundiata has endured almost five decades of imprisonment in some of the most torturous prisons in America. He has expressed deep remorse and regret and has taken full responsibility for his actions that fateful night almost 50 years ago. There is so much that this veteran freedom fighter can teach a country that does not seem to be able to move beyond the cycles of protest, retaliation and revenge. I am a pastor at a historic Black Church in Princeton, N.J. and I am blessed to serve as Sundiata's "faith based" counsel and representative in the Bring Sundiata Acoli Home Alliance.

I first "met" Sundiata Acoli over 25 years ago after sending him a letter to where he was imprisoned in a maximum security prison in Leavenworth, Kan. Sundiata Acoli is a graduate of Prairie View University in Texas and was a mathematician and computer analyst who worked for NASA prior to committing his life

full time to the civil rights movement and as a leader in the Black Panther Party. When I learned about Sundiata, I was a recent college dropout turned full time activist working as a Human Rights Fellow for Amnesty International-USA. I was intrigued by his story and I wanted to learn more. I was assigned the responsibility of working on a wide range of domestic human rights projects including the abolition of the death penalty and advocacy on behalf of those identified as “political prisoners” in the United States. I came to learn that Sundiata Acoli was so much more than his political history or an iconic symbol drawing passionate responses from both supporters and opponents.

As an octogenarian COVID-19 survivor in the early stages of dementia, currently suffering from heart disease and emphysema, Sundiata does not represent a safety threat to anyone, anywhere. As recently as May 2021, the N.J. Board of Parole seemingly ignored the fact that Sundiata has had a perfect disciplinary record for almost 30 years and teaches a class in federal prison for young prisoners preparing for re-entry into communities on parole.

Currently, Sundiata sits in a federal prison cell on the verge of what many of his supporters see as a politically motivated death sentence. At last count, close to 10,000 women and men have signed an online petition calling upon New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy to grant compassionate release and allow Sundiata to go home to his family. I pray every day that those in power will submit to the call of a higher power which calls humanity for forgiveness, mercy and grace.

Over the decades of his incarceration, I have come to know him as a father of two daughters and grandfather that longs to hug his grandchildren outside of a prison. I know Sundiata as a source of wise and calming counsel to scores of young activists who needed to understand the connection of one generation of freedom fighters to the next. I know Sundiata as a mentor who encouraged me to be a committed father to my newborn children, return to college and complete graduate school as I discovered my true calling as an activist-minister. Two decades ago, I would have jumped at any opportunity to debate the details of Sundiata’s case and argue the tragedy of political calculations which extend prison sentences for prisoners such as Sundiata and many other aging political prisoners. No more. Today, I am focused on the moral tragedy of a government that waits for aging prisoners to die through the use of de facto death sentences. In this hour, I am committed to calling upon communities to prevent these political death sentences from being executed. The deaths of those identified as “political prisoners” stigmatize freedom movements, institutionalize vengeance and revoke our best hopes for healing and reconciliation.

I remember in one of our first telephone conversations, I asked Sundiata, “When do you think that you will be released?” He answered, “That’s up to you. The people make that decision.” It is a decision that is overdue. If not now—Sundiata Acoli will die in prison. It is time for New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy to do what is right and exercise his executive power to release Sundiata Acoli by commuting his sentence to time served.

### **16 Jun - Ten-year hactivist fugitive Commander X arrested in Mexico**

*A decade after Chris "Commander X" Doyon skipped out on a federal hacking charge and fled the country, the long arm of US law enforcement this week stretched out its hand and plucked him from Mexico City, where he had claimed political asylum.*

#### **MORE:**

by Nate Anderson (*Ars Technica*)

Doyon now faces all of the original charges for coordinating a 2010 High Orbit Ion Cannon (HOIC) DDoS attack on servers belonging to Santa Cruz, California, plus a serious new charge for jumping bail.

This has been a surprising turn of events for the homeless hacktivist, who spent his years first in Canada and then in Mexico issuing press releases, hanging out on Twitter, writing a self-published memoir, appearing in documentaries, and meeting up with journalists like me—all without apparent response from the US government.

All that changed on June 11, when Doyon was arrested by Mexican police. This was confirmed by a press release from the US Attorney for the Northern District of California, where Santa Cruz is located, though no details were provided.

But Doyon's Mexican friends (and a filmmaker who has profiled him) offered their own account in an email to journalists:

*Chris lives in a gated community in Mexico City, and on the afternoon of Friday 11<sup>th</sup> June, several armed, uniformed, Mexican men identifying themselves as DEA agents attempted to gain entry to the community but were turned away. They returned dressed as civilians, with representatives from the US embassy, scaled the walls of the compound and took Chris away in the early evening.*

If this sounds rather dramatic, well—welcome to Doyon's world. The original DDoS incident in Santa Cruz was relatively minor. It was triggered by a new law affecting the homeless community of which Doyon was a part, and it affected Santa Cruz servers for just 30 minutes. The government claimed only a few thousand dollars in damages for investigation and remediation, but the amount was just enough to clear the \$5,000 threshold of the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act, making the DDoS a federal crime.

The incident happened during the rise of Anonymous, the loose hacking collective in which Doyon played a minor role. Anonymous captured the world's attention with its antic spirit of mischief, malice, and occasional self-righteousness, and Doyon himself got caught up in the federal response to the group's actions.

Doyon was no "hacker" in any technical sense; he hung out in IRC chatrooms and could use tools like HOIC that had been built by others. What he did have in spades, though, was a grandiose sense of personal and corporate mythology. After Doyon's arrest and subsequent flight to Canada, he told a Canadian newspaper that Anonymous "might well be the most powerful organization on Earth."

When Doyon announced that he was quitting Anonymous in 2013, he wrote that his "'Commander X' persona has become a bit like Batman, a sort of cyber-super hero. But like Batman, the impossible persona of 'Commander X' rests upon the shoulders of a simple man. And like all men, I have frailties, weaknesses—and limits."

Doyon would "die alone in a foreign land, my ashes spread across a foreign forest." But that was all right because "'Commander X' made a difference—he saved lives and inspired thousands to join this critical fight for the very soul of humanity." The Commander X persona would "step off the stage of history, and fade into the mists of myth and legend."

OK.

Strangely, the US government seemed to accept some version of this story—that is, that Doyon was someone really worth tracking down, at great expense, rather than an extremely minor miscreant who spent seven years in Toronto begging for money on the street, eating at McDonald's, and hanging out on Twitter, before trekking down to Mexico and claiming asylum there. In its announcement of Doyon's arrest, the government provided a list of the agencies involved in tracking him:

- The FBI, generally

- The FBI's Mexico City legal attaché
- The FBI's Cellular Analysis Survey Team Unit
- Mexico City Task Force (which consists of agents from the Mexican Agencia de Investigación Criminal)
- Mexican State Police and Prosecutors in the State of Morelos (Fiscalia General del Estado de Morelos, Unidad Especializada Contra el Secuestro y Extorsión)
- Mexican Immigration (Instituto Nacional de Migración)
- Interpol
- The US Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection, Mexico City Office
- The United States Department of State, Office of American Citizen Services, Mexico City Office

Doyon was easy to reach for years by email, and he met regularly with journalists and filmmakers. Heck, I met him in a public Canadian park—and it wasn't hard to arrange. Why Interpol and a Cellular Analysis Survey Team were required to find him remains opaque—as does why the whole thing took so long. The costs here—to track down a fugitive accused of doing several thousand dollars of damage—must have been enormous.

In any event, Doyon is back in California and has already had two brief hearings, over Zoom, before a federal judge. His pro bono attorney from a decade back, Jay Leiderman, has agreed to represent Doyon once more.

Leiderman told me in 2012 that he thought the whole case should be dismissed. Most of the "damages," he said, were just employee salaries that were already being paid; besides, he thought the whole thing was essentially just a political protest. "They didn't harm Santa Cruz's computers, they didn't go in and rape their servers," Leiderman said then. In his view, the DDoS attack was "absolute speech under the First Amendment."

"Dateless on prom night" is how Leiderman described the moment in court when he realized that Doyon wasn't going to show. Now, with his date back in federal custody, Leiderman may get another shot at making his argument. Doyon's ability to avoid years in prison may depend upon it.

### **16 Jun - The US Government's Jailing Of A Drone Whistleblower**

*When the United States government had drone whistleblower Daniel Hale arrested and the judge revoked his bail, they deprived him of the ability to tie up loose ends and prepare for incarceration before his sentencing in July.*

#### **MORE:**

by Kevin Gosztola (*Shadowproof*)

It meant Hale could not say goodbye to friends or family with one final meal before going off to federal prison. It meant he could not appropriately coordinate with his roommates to store his belongings. It meant he could not arrange a proper home for his cat, Leila.

But what happened to Hale is part of a stark trend in the government's war on national security whistleblowers that has intensified over the past decade, especially against lower-level employees or contractors.

Hale pled guilty on March 31 to one charge of violating the Espionage Act, when he provided documents to *Intercept* co-founder Jeremy Scahill and anonymously wrote a chapter in Scahill's book, *The Assassination Complex: Inside the Government's Secret Drone Warfare Program*. He was taken into custody and sent to the William G. Truesdale Detention Center in Alexandria, Virginia, on April 28.

A therapist from pretrial and probation services, who was assigned to Hale, violated patient confidentiality and shared details about what he allegedly said during a session.

“Daniel was called into the probation office for what he thought was a routine check-in,” recalled Jesselyn Radack, the head of the Whistleblower and Source Protection Program (WHISPeR) at ExposeFacts who has publicly represented Hale. “Instead, he was arrested on a pretrial services warrant because they were worried about his mental health.”

“It’s no secret that Daniel was struggling with anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of his involvement in the drone program,” Radack added. “Daniel felt that the therapist sold him out as being at risk of self-harm.”

The therapist reportedly backed away from the interpretation of Hale’s confession during therapy, which helped the government secure an arrest warrant. They are no longer seeing Hale. However, Hale remains in detention.

### **The Therapist’s Betrayal**

Thomas Drake is an NSA whistleblower who was prosecuted under the Espionage Act during President Barack Obama’s administration and ultimately pled guilty to a separate misdemeanor. He called what the therapist did a “betrayal.”

“I know what the government tried with me, especially if you’re saying anything of any kind,” Drake shared. (According to Drake, the government tried to “seed rumors” about depression and his potential for self-harm to aid their case.)

Drake declared, “You can imagine, if you’re the government, wanting to know what is being shared in confidence with a therapist.”

Imagine that you’re honest enough to admit you’re suffering, honest enough to admit you have PTSD, and honest enough to admit you thought certain things that were not positive thoughts, Drake added. “And then you get turned in.”

Drake maintained Hale was not anywhere near self-harm. “I can tell you that right now. I am still in communication with him because I’m on a list of people he can call.”

Drone whistleblower Lisa Ling reacted similarly. “Being betrayed by a mental health practitioner and the carceral system not only puts Daniel’s future health at risk, but it happened at a time when there are 17 veteran suicides a day.”

“Daniel is nowhere near harming himself or anyone else, and that makes what happened completely unconscionable,” Ling added.

Hale’s roommate, Bob, said detention made it “really difficult to create a plan to support someone who is going to be incarcerated for a long time. And that’s what the government has done is made it more difficult for this individual to maintain his connections to the outside.”

### **‘A Cheap Shot’ By The U.S. Government**

On April 29, Hale was brought before a magistrate judge. Radack said, “The public defenders, Daniel, and I all figured he’d be confined for a few days until he could get in front of Judge Liam O’Grady,” who is presiding over his case in the U.S. District Court of the Eastern District of Virginia.

O’Grady overlooked concerns related to what could happen to Hale in detention as a result of his mental health, despite past incidents of self-harm and suicide attempts at the jail. He was put in isolation to satisfy COVID protocol, but Radack indicated Hale was vaccinated. He is now in general population.

CIA whistleblower John Kiriakou, who was prosecuted under the Espionage Act while Obama was president, pled guilty to violating the Intelligence Identities Protection Act. It was part of an agreement to only serve 30 months at a federal prison in Loretto, Pennsylvania.

“I had a date to which I had to report to Loretto, and I knew that I had until that date to get all my business taken care of,” Kiriakou said. “He never had that luxury and it’s not fair.”

Kiriakou continued, “The opportunity to get my finances in order, say goodbye to my family, my friends, my children especially meant everything to me. Daniel being snatched off the streets was a cheap shot because he’s not able to come to closure on a lot of these issues. He can’t say goodbye to his friends and family. He can’t arrange for the care of his cat.”

Both Drake and Kiriakou have the experience of pleading guilty to offenses in order to end the indefinite stress of a leak prosecution. Along with Radack, they advised Hale on the pros and cons of pleading guilty.

Hale was charged with five offenses. The public defender representing Hale argued during the hearing, where he pled guilty, that the charges are duplicative. But the prosecutors refuse to dismiss the remaining charges until after his sentencing on July 27.

“The prosecutors have been playing hardball with him,” Kiriakou contended. “He’s got terrific attorneys. And Daniel and the attorneys made this calculated decision that the one count that he decided to plead guilty essentially covers everything he did.”

### **‘A Manipulation Of Due Process’**

To Drake, the Justice Department prosecutors are engaged in a “manipulation of due process,” which reminds him of what happened at his sentencing in 2011. Prosecutors maintained the punishment of probation was “insufficient to fit the crime.”

His case was before Judge Richard Bennett in the U.S. District Court of the District of Maryland, not the Eastern District. Bennett strongly objected to how the prosecutors abused Drake and even compared their acts to British tyranny in the days before the Revolutionary War.

What the prosecutors are doing to Hale pushes the boundaries of what is permissible to the next level. They are doing a “bait and switch,” Drake contended. “If we don’t like what the judge’s sentencing is, then we’ll proceed to trial.”

Prosecutors theoretically could use Hale’s guilty plea to one Espionage Act offense to help them convince a judge or jury that he committed the other four offenses. After all, the guilty plea lays out the timeline of disclosures to a reporter.

Before detention, Hale was living with roommates near Washington, D.C. He moved in with them in February 2020, right before the U.S. was shut down by the COVID-19 pandemic, and his trial was postponed from March 2020 indefinitely.

The pandemic only compounded Hale’s anxiety and stress, Radack shared.

Hale was hit by a car in October while riding a motorcycle and broke his leg. It was no longer possible to work jobs at restaurants. He stayed home, recovered, and then turned to cooking and helping with chores for his roommates.

That same month, 20-year-old Karon Hylton was killed in D.C. when a car struck his moped while police were chasing him. The young Black man’s death sparked protests and officers involved were temporarily placed on leave.

According to Bob, he was on a street corner with Hale watching the pursuit unfold. Hale was still in a hospital gown with a broken leg. “We both saw him die in the street.”

Both Hale and Bob went to some protests. Hale connected with an attorney for the Hylton family, and they provided a list of witnesses to the assistant U.S. attorney. Prosecutors asked them to testify before a grand jury, which they did.

“I was very reluctant at first, and it was Daniel, who actually convinced me to give testimony,” Bob recalled. This is an example of the compassion Hale has for other people, he added.

Pleading guilty is “extraordinarily challenging on a personal level,” Drake asserted. “Is it in my best interest? I’m actually going to admit to something.”

For Hale, it conflicts with the belief that what was done was right because it involved exposing war crimes that occurred as a result of the U.S. military’s drone program.

“He ultimately made a very, very difficult choice under less than ideal circumstances to plead out to one count and then admit that he was the anonymous source,” Drake concluded.

### **17 Jun - Emergency Action for Russell “Maroon” Shoatz**

*Russell Maroon Shoatz, a 77-year-old political prisoner, is suffering from stage 4 cancer.*

#### **MORE:**

The DOC canceled his scheduled chemotherapy treatments last month. Maroon is very ill and upset that he still cannot begin these life-saving treatments. Your voice can make the difference! Call, fax and email this Thursday!

PA Governor Tom Wolf

Phone: 717.787.2500 ext. 3; FAX: 717.772.8284; govcorresp@pa.gov; facebook: @governorwolf, @TomWolfPA; Instagram: @governortomwolf

PA DOC Secretary John Wetzel

Phone: 717-728-2573

jowetzel@state.pa.us

Ra-crapadocsecretary@pa.gov

Prison SCI Dallas: Phone: 570.675.1101

PA DOC, Christopher Oppman (Deputy Secretary for Administration who oversees healthcare): Phone: 717.728.4122

Philly DA Larry Krasner

Phone: 215.686.8000; justice@phila.gov; Twitter: @DA\_LarryKrasner; Instagram: @larrykrasner

**SUGGESTED SCRIPT:**

*My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I demand:*

*1. The immediate scheduling of necessary chemotherapy treatments for Russell Maroon Shoatz #AF-3855, who has stage 4 cancer and is recovering from COVID-19.*

*2. I am aware that he had previous been scheduled for treatment and this it was postponed indefinitely. Mr. Shoatz must be put on the schedule for treatment today.*

*Russell Shoatz's health is rapidly deteriorating. They track the calls from different phones and how many times the same number calls so please keep calling and activate your networks.*

Make the calls, emails and tweets to ensure Maroon gets immediate response and medical treatment.

**18 Jun - Jaan Laaman's First Steps of Freedom**

*On May 15, 2021, after 37 years in captivity, Jaan Laaman walked out of McCreary Federal Prison.*

**MORE:**

by Sonja Wilde-de Vries

He carried a few clothes and personal items and a drawing of Breonna Taylor, 26-year-old Louisvillian, murdered by LMPD on March 13, 2020.

The first stop Jaan wanted to make, was not for food or anything like that, but to send a message to family and friends who had been supporting him all these long years. We stood on the side of the road, video rolling and Jaan shared some thanks and other thoughts, ending with his fist raised and the words—"Black Lives Mattered then (37-years-ago) and Black Lives Matter NOW"

Jaan also reflected on his beloved comrades Tom Manning and Richard Williams who had died in captivity. "Richard and Tom never got to take these first steps of Freedom." Jaan shared that he had always planned to leave prison and go stay with his son Ricky, it was something they had spoken of during visits, from the time Ricky was a child, but Ricky died in October of 2011, while Jaan was inside.

As Jaan stood there in the grass, still wearing his drab prison garb, relatively free (still on parole.) I remembered over 37-years-ago when my comrades and I heard about one of the biggest manhunts in U.S. history that ended in the capture of a group of white working-class men and women suspected of being part of an armed underground movement, the United Freedom Front.

At that time, we lived in a collective of anti-racist activists and were members of the John Brown anti-Klan committee as well as the New Movement in Solidarity with Puerto Rican Independence and Socialism. These organizations regularly received copies of communiques from the underground, in the mail, about actions within U.S. borders targeting racist police brutality and murders, representatives of South African

Apartheid, and Death squad governments such as El Salvador and companies supporting repressive and murderous policies. Activists helped disseminate those communiques to the wider public so that people would understand why these attacks (in which no human beings were targeted or injured) were happening.

These were the actions of the United Freedom Front, which was the organization that the Ohio 7 were being charged with having been part of.

The Ohio 7 trials were some of the most militarized court room situations. In a New York City courtroom, Members of the Ohio 7 stood and denounced the injustices of the U.S. government and its support of Apartheid in South Africa, the colonization of Puerto Rico and support for death squad governments in power in Central America.

In March of 1985 I stood in the courtroom and watched as Marshals stun gunned and beat them for refusing to be silent, all the while other Marshals had their guns trained on us, the supporters. Needless to say, neither that beating, nor others, ever silenced this group of passionate and committed revolutionaries.

Jaan Karl Laaman is an Estonian, born in a refugee camp in Germany in 1948 and emigrated to the United States with his family. The family of mostly women and children were fleeing converging armies—they knew that regardless of the flags of the armies, they would be targets. In 1951, Jaan's family moved to Roxbury, the heart of the Black community in Boston, Massachusetts.

In letters and visits, Jaan shared that living in Roxbury with Black friends and school mates, he developed a sense of solidarity with Black people in the community, and even at a young age he felt a connection in terms of economics, as a working class, immigrant family. Some years later when his family moved into a predominately white neighborhood in Buffalo, New York, he witnessed white supremacy and racism for the first time. These were some of his earliest influences in his understanding of life in America.

In 1966, Jaan was first locked up on a non-political robbery charge and his twenty months in prison helped radicalize him. In 1968, Jaan was released and went to Cornell and the University of New Hampshire, was an SDS activist and anti-war activist, worked in support of the Black Liberation Movement and the Black Panther Party.

In 1971 he was charged with a parole violation for speaking at an anti-war rally and was sent to Attica Prison. Jaan was there in the months leading up to the Attica Uprising. While there, he met and became friends and comrades with Sam Melville, (One of the early armed underground leaders of the 1960's.)

The Attica uprising, one of the most impactful prisoner uprisings of all time, happened in September of 1971. Sam had been a key participant and there was testimony that he had been shot down execution style when the prison was attacked and retaken by State Police and Prison Guards. Knowing Sam, and the way he died, had a deep impact on Jaan.

"Attica was a bright light, a searing beacon showing that even the most oppressed in the tightest of conditions can rise up. It was also a blood-drenched reminder that the American government will fight against Peoples' quests for justice and freedom and is willing to commit unspeakable atrocities to hold onto its power. It's as simple as this: if We the People aren't pushing them, they immediately begin pushing us back—all the way back to servitude and slavery, and that's regardless of race or nationality if you are a prisoner." [1]

In 1972 Jaan was arrested and charged with bombing a Richard Nixon reelection headquarters building and a police station in New Hampshire and was sentenced to 20-years. He was released in 1978 after winning an appeal and having his sentence reduced.

Jaan immediately jumped back into anti-racist organizing and in 1979 he and Kazi Toure helped to organize the Amandla Festival of Unity. This concert, featuring Bob Marley, focused on fighting racism and police brutality in Boston, where it was held, and raised money to support the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. This, along with the anti-racist and community security work Jaan was doing led to increased police and Klan harassment, so Jaan, once again, went underground and became part of the armed clandestine movement.

On February 7, 1982, Jaan Laaman and his comrade Kazi Toure were charged with being in a shoot-out with police. Kazi was captured, convicted and imprisoned for over ten years.

On November 4, 1984, five members of the group alleged to be part of the United Freedom Front, including Jaan Laaman, were arrested. Nearly six months later two other members were arrested, and they became known as the Ohio 7.

While originally charged with seditious conspiracy, Laaman was found guilty of five bombings, one attempted bombing, and criminal conspiracy, and was sentenced to 53 years in prison.

As a young activist who began visiting political prisoners in the 80s, I soon came to understand that their activism did not end with their capture, it simply took different forms. With Jaan, it was writing and engaging in political movements through the written word including founding and editing 4StruggleMag.org and through interviews, sharing perspectives and always centering anti-racism and a revolutionary anti-capitalist vision.

More than once, there were reprisals, such as when he recorded a statement over the phone for the brilliant lawyer Lynne Stewart's memorial.

Jaan also organized political study groups and political consciousness raising groups among the prison population.

In the prison visiting room we often talked about the Black Lives Matter movement, Palestine, LGBTQ—all of it—because Jaan is about all oppressed people getting free.

Jaan also worked diligently with his brothers in prison, teaching meditation classes and yoga for many years. In addition, Jaan developed a yoga class specifically for people with disabilities, limited mobility and people in wheelchairs. Jaan's yoga class was, for many of the men, a small taste of freedom within the confines of captivity.

In 2020, after Breonna Taylor was murdered by Louisville Police in a no-knock raid, I shared with Jaan about the Say Her Name Bike Ride, founded by Erica Nicole Williams. The ride was about fighting for Justice for Breonna and other victims of Police brutality as well as taking care of the folks involved in the movement.

By the next time I talked to Jaan, he had not only begun riding in honor of Breonna but had inspired others to do the same, inside. Though they had only one or two stationary bikes, they took turns. It became a regular movement inside the walls. When he walked out of prison on May 15<sup>th</sup> one of his most prized belongings was a portrait of Breonna Taylor, drawn by a brother named Dion Holmes aka Brother Farooq.

That is who Jaan K Laaman is—he organizes and inspires others by example and by his fierce commitment to justice on all levels.

### **18 Jun - New Website for Oso Blanco!**

*Folks with ABCF collective Philly ABC have exciting news—a new website for political prisoner Oso Blanco: [freeosoblanco.org](http://freeosoblanco.org)*

#### **MORE:**

Oso Blanco is an indigenous activist originally serving 80 years in prison for a series of bank expropriations throughout the southwest in 1998-1999. In 2016, 25 years were taken off his sentence when he won his Johnson v. U.S. appeal making him eligible for release in 2048. He is part of the wolf clan Cherokee/Choctaw, raised in New Mexico. His indigenous name is Oso Blanco, or Yona Unega in Cherokee. He was known to the FBI as ‘Robin the Hood’ because he informed the bank tellers he was expropriating funds to assist the Zapatistas fighting for independence in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas.

Oso Blanco continues his assistance to Zapatistas and native kids from within prison through the Children’s Art Project (CAP). Check out the artwork he created to raise funds for native kids, for sale online as greeting cards and posters, on his new website at [freeosoblanco.org](http://freeosoblanco.org). Please support the ‘Zapatista supply warrior’ in his mission and share the link within your networks!

And be sure to get the amazing greeting cards that Oso Blanco made as a fundraiser for the Children’s Art Project at [burningbooks.com/products/oso-blanco-greeting-cards](http://burningbooks.com/products/oso-blanco-greeting-cards)

### **21 Jun - Grant Clemency for Dr. Mutulu Shakur**

*Please sign this and share with your networks: [campaigns.organizefor.org/petitions/grant-clemency-for-dr-mutulu-shakur-a-father-grandfather-healer-human-rights-activist](http://campaigns.organizefor.org/petitions/grant-clemency-for-dr-mutulu-shakur-a-father-grandfather-healer-human-rights-activist)*

#### **MORE:**

We urge you to commute the sentence of Dr. Mutulu Shakur, a father, grandfather, healer, and human rights activist who has been in the custody of the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) for over 35 years. Dr. Shakur is now 70 years old, has suffered 2 strokes, glaucoma, and has been battling Stage 3 bone marrow cancer for the last 2 ½ years. Although he received a bone marrow transplant, his cancer is not curable — he will require continuing treatment and cancer management, until the end of his life.

Why is this important?

Dr. Shakur was sentenced to 60 years in prison because of actions based on his political beliefs. He was targeted and victimized by the now infamous Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO), as early as 1968. Dr. Shakur comes out of a complex and turbulent moment in American history, when civil unrest fractured our country into pieces. He is recognized as a leading member of the movement for human rights for African Americans.

Dr. Shakur has taken full responsibility for past actions that resulted in loss of life. Today, his beliefs center around the desire for fundamental human rights, a desire for equitable laws and policies, and a world without racial, gender and class divisions. He has been a force for peace and for good during the many years of his incarceration, working against violence in the prisons and in his varied communities. He has developed hospice programs for incarcerated elders, and created educational curriculums for young

prisoners entering prison. He has also counseled and mentored countless younger prisoners, including many who are leading positive lives after prison and attribute much of their success to Dr. Shakur's influence.

His release would pose absolutely no threat to public safety. This is supported by BOP's own PATTERN risk assessment tool, which has determined Dr. Shakur is in the lowest possible risk category. Studies by the Department of Justice (DOJ) have also shown that based on Dr. Shakur's age, he poses almost no risk of recidivism. Current and former staff have supported his release on parole, but the US Parole Commission has denied him parole 8 times.

All of Dr. Shakur's co-defendants and co-conspirators convicted as part of this federal conspiracy have been released. This leaves Dr. Shakur as the only person remaining in federal prison for these offenses, all of the white co-conspirators having been released from prison more than twenty years before. His release would correct this disparity and give him a chance to rejoin his family and community.

Mr. President, we urge you to act with compassion, and grant release to Dr. Mutulu Shakur. In this historical moment, millions of people in this country are advocating for Black Lives and there is bipartisan support for the end to mass incarceration. The release of Dr. Shakur, a Black elder who has spent his life advocating for his community, aligns with these goals of racial justice and criminal justice reform.

## **2 Jul - Metropolitan Anarchist Coordinating Council (MACC) General Assembly**

**WHAT:** General Assembly

**WHEN:** 6:30pm, Friday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>

**WHERE:** Online (details below)

**COST:** FREE

### **MORE:**

We will be hosting another "Virtual" General Assembly—lookout in your various Working Group platforms, e-mail listservs, Loomio, et cetera for details on how to join in and visit [macc.nyc](http://macc.nyc)

General Assemblies are the most ideal place for new folks to plug-in to MACC, learn about our projects and ongoing efforts, and connect to organizers. We encourage everyone to come with ideas about what they would like to see for future campaigns or actions and what direction they'd like MACC to take to build a more powerful anarchist movement. Especially in our current context, when renewed attention has mixed repression with struggles for racial justice, abolition, and a humane economy. There will be a 6:30-7PM orientation for new folks that would like to get connected and learn more about MACC's structure and history.

Accessibility statement: This is a virtual event at this time, which usually takes place on Zoom, although Jitsi is also an option if requested. We don't currently have ASL or language interpretation in use; we can do close-captioning. For closed captioning it is helpful, if possible, to coordinate that in advance so we can plan for someone to come to an event prepared to do that. We can coordinate in advance using the accessibility question on this RSVP, the email [info@macc.nyc](mailto:info@macc.nyc), or at the beginning of the meeting we will do a check-in and we encourage anyone who is comfortable doing so to use that time to whatever extent is desirable to them to share or request anything that will help them to experience a greater level of comfort and/or ability to engage fully in the event.

Please review these documents before coming: [macc.nyc/organizing](http://macc.nyc/organizing) [macc.nyc/safer-spaces](http://macc.nyc/safer-spaces)