



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for February 22nd

4 Feb - After 48 Years in Prison, Court Considers Release of Sundiata Acoli

It's been nearly 50 years since a member of the Black Panther Party and Black Liberation Army was convicted in the shooting death of a New Jersey state trooper in East Brunswick.

MORE:

via *WNYC*

Sundiata Acoli received a life sentence plus 24 years for the murder of Werner Foerster. Acoli, now 85 and suffering from dementia, has repeatedly been denied parole over the last 30 years.

Earlier this week, his longtime attorneys and civil rights lawyers went before the state Supreme Court to press for his release.

Reporter S.P. Sullivan has been covering this story for The Star Ledger and NJ Advance Media. He spoke about it with WNYC's Morning Edition host Michael Hill.

February 20th - Oral Arguments in Sundiata Acoli's Appeal Case Can Now be Viewed

If you missed the tremendous oral arguments in Sundiata Acoli's appeal in New Jersey Supreme Court on January 31, you can watch them at njcourts.gov/public/webcast_archive.html

For more information and what you can do to help, please check out the Bring Sundiata Home Freedom Campaign's webpage and also follow on social media: sundiataacolifc.org

8 Feb - New Writing by and Update on Eric King

We always like being able to share writing by Eric, and for now at least, he can receive your reactions as his mail ban is lifted. Take time to read the following and let him know what you think.

MORE:

February 8th - New Poetry

They forgot we were earthworms

They tried to bury us
They forgot we were earthworms
Eating out their rotten brains
And shitting out their undigestible's
that we were fucking shovels
just 'cause someone throws dirt on you
doesn't mean you can't throw
That shit right off
that we were landmines
waiting for one, wrong, cocky misstep
To bring them to their knees
and send their knees into the trees
that we were fucking zombies
we'd keep rising up
'cause we didn't crave brains
we craved freedom
that we didn't mind the underground

Our Getaway

With a shovel and a dream
I begin heading your way
The ground is cold and hard
and inclined to budge
But we fight it, we fight hard
and we fight the calendar
We're expected to break
to throw in every towel
Our muscles are aching
Sore but not breaking
Meet in the middle
We'll help each other to escape
To flee society and heartbreak
Together we'll tunnel out of this pain
and nothing will stop our getaway

This Vile Institution

away from their laws and harsh glares
that we were Prairie dogs
digging tunnels and spending all day
just barking and talking shit
when we see the Hawks come in
we'll scamper for a minute
that we're already dirt
full of the goddess energy
giving life to vibrant communities
we'll gladly share the world
with pretty flowers and tickly bugs
that we do what we want
like our mothers and fathers before us
we don't wave the flag
and say surrender
because the enemy tells us
"the fight is over"

I have the blues like a dead man's lips
This vile institution
Serving your cereal with a cup of warm piss
they'll teach me a lesson
If only my cold shoulder didn't come with a chip
for all my treason
maybe my life was a failure, but it felt like a gift
the dementor is freezing
I'm a thorn bush that needs to be clipped

On the other side of the fence it grows

On the other side of the fence it grows
out of the reach of my hand & nose
free to be as lovely as it intends
free to be with its flower friends
Not to be killed inside this cage
such enchantments would be a waste
Never seen such a blue, defying hate
just by existing
fed by the sun it feeds my being
sometimes being happy feels like treason
your petals offer one more reason
to not break down or fold so easy
life would be such a cake
the day I awake
on the same side as my friends
we'll both rise up in defiance
on that day

February 14th - Mail is Making it Through to Eric King

Eric is over the moon having his mail back and hearing from his friends! It's making him feel so strong and ready to win in March and end this three and a half years of hell. Sitting indefinitely in segregation can really throw a wrench in the trial prep machine. It wasn't until a year and a half in that he even had his glasses. He survived 18 months of communication restrictions. He survived so so much thrown his way. But beyond survival he is ready to dominate in March when he gets to finally have his trial. He wanted to send everyone love and thanks and sat he is thrilled to hear from everyone.

Trial is March 14th

If folks are looking for more ways to help they can donate to his lawyers from the Civil Liberties Defense Center and you can support his legal defense efforts by donating <cldc.org/donate>. Please earmark your donation on the website "Eric King legal defense." These funds cover transportation, housing, transcript, deposition and filing fees. Please donate if you can.

10 Feb - Prisoner Found Guilty of 2017 Uprising Seeks to Get Sentence Vacated

After almost completely beating the state of Delaware's case at trial, the Vaughn 17 are now aiming to vacate some of the few guilty charges won by the state.

MORE:

Dwayne "Bim" Staats, one of only two of the 17 found guilty at trial, is currently seeking to get his sentence vacated because the court failed to swear him in before he took the stand on his own behalf. According to Delaware Rule of Evidence 603 (which tracks Federal Rule 603), "Before testifying, a

witness must give an oath or affirmation to testify truthfully. Without administration of an oath to a witness, the taking of testimony is meaningless. The lack of oath means there is no testimony.”

When Bim was brought back to the second trial to testify for his co-defendants, during cross examination, the prosecutor stated, “So you took the same oath today that you took back in November. To just swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.” Bim responded, “I wasn't even sworn in at my trial, so you can go ahead and save that buddy.” Immediately after hearing Bim's statement, 2 of the defense attorneys stood up to object. The judge then called for a sidebar conference, to explain that Bim was never administered an oath before testifying at his trial.

This is significant because many feel that Bim was found guilty of most of the charges because he testified on his own behalf. Out of the 13 state witnesses the prosecutors put on the stand, only 1 said Bim did anything physical to a guard. It's important to note that all other Vaughn 17 defendants that this witness said something about got acquitted.

At this juncture the superior court would deem any post-conviction motion that Bim files to be time barred, or deny it altogether because he didn't object when it happened. A few different attorneys have expressed that, if Bim files his motion under Delaware Criminal Rule 33b, “the exceptional circumstances clause,” there's a good chance the supreme court will hear it.

Unfortunately prisoners, who exist in a perennial state of imminent danger, don't have the privilege like others in society of using physical resistance as a means of self-defense. They found Bim to be in violation of their rules and he dealt with the consequences. Now that he points out how they violated their own rules, Bim needs the power of the people to aid in his pursuit of liberation, by help making sure that the court is held to their own standards. In this situation that means vacating his sentence.

13 Feb - Liberation Reading Group: An 8-Week Course beginning

Join Free the People Rochester and Jericho Boston for an 8-week course, starting on February 24th, based on Jalil Muntaqim's revolutionary text "We Are Our Own Liberators."

MORE:

The course is written and led by Jalil Muntaqim with an interactive component and room for critical discussion.

This course is FREE and open to the public. Registration is required, however, in order to receive course materials. All registrants will receive a FREE digital PDF of the book. Register at bit.ly/WAOOLiberators

17 Feb - Political Prisoner Dan Baker now has an online book wish list

Dan Baker is a social justice activist & former army vet. He went AWOL instead of fighting in Iraq, and then took his training to help defend Rojava w/ International Freedom Battalion & was featured on VICE.

MORE:

Order books at tiny.cc/DB_Books

Dan was also active during the George Floyd Rebellion and took part in CHAZ. He was arrested on January 15th, 2021 after the FBI compiled social media posts related to Trump supporters' actions on inauguration day to build a criminal case against him. Dan was facing up to 10 years for two counts of transmitting a communication in interstate commerce containing a threat to kidnap or injure. He was sentenced to 44 months in prison and 3 years of supervised release. His legal team is appealing the verdict.

21 Feb - Water Protector Update

There is a new documentary premiering at the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival and you are able to watch it in advance starting February 25th.

MORE:

Today, I invite you to experience something wonderful: Next week, Big Sky Documentary Film Festival is hosting the online world premiere of "OYATE" — a brand new feature documentary film produced by Films with a Purpose and Irrelevant Media, in association with the Lakota People's Law Project. Big Sky has graciously also made the movie available for viewing online at the same time, and you can purchase your ticket to watch today: bigskyfilmfest.org/festival/films-2022-view/oyate_2022

We wanted to make sure you have the opportunity to watch this special premiere with us! Please note that the film will be available through Big Sky for a limited time. I urge you to purchase your ticket right now, then mark your calendar to remind yourself the streaming window opens on Feb. 25 at 9 a.m. PST. After that, you'll have about three days to start watching and another 24 hours to finish.

Now that you've got all those important details, let me tell you a little more about our involvement and what you'll see. In the wake of the protests at Standing Rock in 2016 and '17, our Lakota Law team worked closely with producers Brandon Jackson, Emil Benjamin, Sandra Evers-Manly, and Jennifer Martel of the Cheyenne River and Standing Rock Sioux tribes, to tell this powerful story of resistance. You'll spend time with Phyllis Young, me and my daughter Tokata, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland of the Laguna Pueblo People, and many more powerful Native voices.

As you know, our #NoDAPL struggle at Standing Rock became an inflection point for human rights and environmental justice, a rallying cry for Indigenous people everywhere to take a stand against centuries of land theft, imposed poverty, and cultural erasure. "OYATE" successfully communicates our thoughts, as Indigenous activists, organizers, and politicians, on that complicated history.

Lakota Law aided the filmmakers by providing exclusive interviews, archival footage, and perspective. The directors did a fantastic job of using a blend of storytelling tools to weave all elements harmoniously and to fully immerse you in our worldviews. The end result is a thing of beauty, ambitious in scope and, at the same time, personal and intimate. I think you'll very much enjoy watching, and I hope you'll find it illuminating. You may gain new understanding of our struggles for sovereignty and justice — and you'll even meet some rez dogs! So, please watch the trailer, and then join us for this exciting premiere. I can't wait to hear your feedback.

February 21st - Resist Line 3: Call for In Person Court Support for Upcoming Trial

For years now, water protectors from across Turtle Island have come to Anishinaabe Territories or so-called Northern Minnesota and put their bodies on the line to resist Enbridge's new Line 3 Pipeline. On March 3rd, 2021, around 50 people were wrongfully kettled and cited for coming together. This happened inside of a rest stop, near Grand Rapids MN on the Prairie River, a tributary of the Mississippi River. It was the 30th anniversary of the largest inland oil spill in the so-called United States. This spill was caused by the old Line 3 pipeline, owned and operated by Lakehead Pipeline Company, now known as Enbridge Inc.

After almost a year from this March 3rd anniversary and arrest, Michele Naar, one of the water protectors who was kettled by Itasca County Sheriffs and State Troopers has trial coming up on Friday, February 25, 2022. Michele was wrongfully arrested and charged for bringing awareness to the horrific Line 3 spill and standing up for the land and water. In this upcoming trial, Michele will be going head to head with Judge Heidi Chandler as a Pro Se defendant, seeking to force the Judge to be held accountable to the willful breach of 1st Amendment rights that she experienced on March 3.

Michele is inviting you to come witness and hold space at the Itasca County Courthouse on February 25. Please bring signs, supporters & friends, and warm layers. If you feel comfortable, wear formal court clothes. Court is an extremely violent place and people will show up how they feel comfortable showing up. There will be speakers and food. If you want to come, but need help coordinating logistics please email L3In-PersonCourtSupport@protonmail.com.