



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for June 14<sup>th</sup>

## **20 May - Jessica Reznicek set fire to Dakota Access Pipeline construction. Is she a terrorist?**

*The activist is appealing a district court's ruling applying a "terrorism enhancement" to her sentence.*

### **MORE:**

by Naveena Sadasivam (*Salon*)

On election night in 2016, Jessica Reznicek and Ruby Montoya set fire to a bulldozer and construction equipment at a Dakota Access Pipeline construction site in Iowa. Over the next few months, the activists used oxy-acetylene torches to melt holes in pipeline valves at three other locations in the state. It was at the height of the Indigenous-led protests against the 1,172-mile-long pipeline, which opponents like the Standing Rock Sioux tribe argued would pollute local water sources and contaminate soil. When Reznicek and Montoya's actions failed to halt pipeline construction, they held a press conference and publicly took responsibility for their actions.

The two women were subsequently indicted on nine felony counts of intentionally damaging energy infrastructure, and Reznicek ultimately pled guilty to one count of conspiracy to damage an energy facility. She was sentenced to eight years in prison by a district court in Iowa last year.

Reznicek is now appealing her sentence. Before an Iowa appellate court last week, her attorneys argued that the district court had inappropriately decided that her actions constituted a federal crime of terrorism and applied a "terrorism enhancement" to her sentence. Had the enhancement not been applied, sentencing guidelines would've capped her prison term at a little under four years.

Over the last few years, penalties for protesting pipelines and other fossil fuel infrastructure have increased dramatically. At the federal level, a provision of the 2001 Patriot Act, the national security law passed in the wake of 9/11, makes damaging energy infrastructure a federal crime.

And at the state level, in part responding to the protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline, lawmakers in at least 17 states have passed legislation to increase jail terms and monetary penalties for offenses such as vandalizing and tampering with so-called critical infrastructure. In recent years, nonviolent climate protesters have been charged with trespassing, theft, and terrorism.

At issue in Reznicek's case is whether her conduct was "calculated to influence or affect the conduct of government by intimidation or coercion, or to retaliate against government conduct." Prosecutors in the case argued that Reznicek's conduct fit this description because she held a press conference in front of the Iowa Utilities Board office and used a crowbar to dismantle an Iowa Utilities sign.

"They were trying to say to the government, 'If you do this kind of thing, we're going to go out there and take the law into our own hands and end the pipeline one way or the other,'" the government prosecutor said at the hearing. "That is incredibly dangerous and exactly what this enhancement is designed to stop."

Robert Richman, Reznicek's attorney, argued that her actions did not target the Iowa Utilities Board and that her statements and actions did not indicate she tried to "influence" or "retaliate" against the agency. "There's no question that Ms. Reznicek was unhappy with the decision of the Utility Board to allow the pipeline, but the damage to private property was calculated to stop the pipeline, not to punish the board," he said.

In a 2021 statement to the court, Reznicek, who has long been associated with the Catholic Worker Movement, which promotes a social-justice oriented interpretation of Catholicism, said she is "not a political person" and "certainly not a terrorist."

"I am simply a person who cares deeply about an extremely basic human right that is under threat: Water," she wrote.

### **June 8<sup>th</sup> - Right-Wing Judges Say It's "Harmless" to Label Climate Activist a Terrorist**

by Natasha Lennard (*The Intercept*)

A panel of three Trump-appointed judges this week upheld an excessive eight-year prison sentence handed down to climate activist Jessica Reznicek, ruling that a terrorism enhancement attached to her sentence was "harmless."

The terror enhancement, which dramatically increased Reznicek's sentence from its original recommended range, set a troubling precedent. Decided by a lower court in 2021, it contends that Reznicek's acts against private property were "calculated to influence or affect the conduct of government." The appellate justices' decision to uphold her sentence, callously dismissing the challenge to her terrorism enhancement, doubles down on a chilling message: Those who take direct action against rapacious energy corporations can be treated as enemies of the state. [Related Dakota Access Pipeline Activists Face 110 Years in Prison, Two Years After Confessing Sabotage](#)

Reznicek, an Iowa-based member of the Catholic Worker Movement and a participant in the Indigenous-led climate struggle, engaged in acts of property damage in an attempt to stop the completion of the Dakota Access pipeline in 2016 and 2017. Along with fellow activist Ruby Montoya, Reznicek took credit for various acts of sabotage, which harmed no humans or animals but burnt a bulldozer and damaged valves of the pipeline. The damaged equipment was property not of the U.S. government, but of private pipeline and energy companies.

Following Reznicek's guilty plea to a single charge of conspiracy to damage an energy facility — which brought a recommended sentencing range of 37 to 46 months — Judge Rebecca Goodgame Ebinger, in allegiance with prosecutors, added the terrorism enhancement. This increased her sentencing range to 210 to 240 months, making the eight-year sentence Reznicek ultimately received fit comfortably below the accepted range, though it's more than double the previous recommendation. (Montoya, who also pleaded guilty, has filed a motion to withdraw her plea, claiming that it was coerced.)

Both courts' decisions on Reznicek's sentence reflect unsurprising but deeply troubling priorities in our criminal legal system. It would be unempirical to the point of foolishness to expect the courts, stacked as they are with right-wing justices, to side with individuals taking risks to stop environmental devastation rather than those corporations making millions on the back of it. Yet Reznicek's appeal was on a point of law: Terrorism enhancements are only supposed to be applicable to crimes that target governmental conduct; Reznicek's targets were private corporations.

The collapsing of government and corporate interests signified by Reznicek's terrorism enhancement is worthy of profound challenge, but the 8<sup>th</sup> U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals judges did not even address the substance of the activist's appeal. In a short, unsigned opinion, the court wrote that even if there had been an "error" in applying a terrorism enhancement, it was "harmless," because Ebinger had stated on the record that she would have imposed an eight-year sentence with or without the terrorism enhancement.

It is a cynical move indeed to sidestep the chilling effect of labeling such acts as "terrorism," as if it carries no material consequences for the future of water and Indigenous land protection and other social movements. As Reznicek's support team wrote in a statement Monday, "Federal prosecutors only pursued terrorism enhancements against Reznicek after 84 Congressional representatives wrote a letter in 2017 to Attorney General Jeff Sessions requesting that Reznicek and other protesters who tamper with pipelines be prosecuted as domestic terrorists." These members of Congress, note Reznicek's supporters, have together

received a combined \$36 million in campaign contributions from the oil and gas industry. Determinations over which actions are labeled “terrorism” are always political.

Determinations over which actions are labeled “terrorism” are always political, and in this case nakedly so given the clear pressure applied on prosecutors by politicians and their industry backers. Ebinger’s claim — that she would have imposed the excessive eight-year sentence with or without the terror enhancement triggered — cannot be considered the final word here. Reporting on Reznicek’s case, ABC News — an outlet hardly aligned with the environmental left — noted that neither white supremacist murderer Dylann Roof nor avowed neo-Nazi James Fields, who plowed his car into anti-fascist protesters in Charlottesville, Virginia, received a terrorism enhancement when sentenced.

Reznicek’s legal team will continue to challenge her sentence in court, especially since the question of the misapplication of a terrorism enhancement remains open, despite the judges’ decision this week. A full court hearing by the 8<sup>th</sup> Circuit, an appeal to the far-right Supreme Court, or a request for clemency from President Joe Biden are all technical options, but hardly are any of these sites of optimism.

As her legal battles continue, Reznicek, whose acts of sabotage place her firmly on the right side of history, if not the law, deserves full-throated public support. As she noted in her 2017 statement claiming responsibility for the actions against the Dakota Access pipeline: “We acted from our hearts and never threatened human life nor personal property. What we did do was fight a private corporation that has run rampant across our country seizing land and polluting our nation’s water supply.”

## **27 May - Uvalde Police Didn’t Move to Save Lives Because That’s Not What Cops Do**

*It should not take an event so devastating to break the spell of policing mythology about what cops do — and what they don’t.*

### **MORE:**

by Natasha Lennard (*The Intercept*)

The more details that emerge about how police responded to the massacre in an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas, on Tuesday, the clearer it is that the already well-funded, heavily armed and amply trained law enforcement officers on the scene failed to save the lives of 19 children and two of their teachers.

Here’s what we know so far, based on haunting videos from the scene outside Robb Elementary School and statements from police officials themselves. Salvador Ramos murdered 21 people. Despite earlier, misleading claims from law enforcement officials, it appears that no police officers engaged with the shooter before he entered the school. Instead of rushing in to protect the children and staff when reports of a gunman approaching the school were made at 11:30 a.m., police instead waited outside and aggressively confronted parents who were begging them to enter. The parents were threatened with arrest — one cop brandished a Taser — as they attempted to access the school to save their kids themselves.

One mother who was urging the police to enter the building, Angeli Rose Gomez, was handcuffed. When she was released, she managed to run into the school, grab her kids, and bring them out to safety, which is the alleged job of the police. According to one Texas Department of Public Safety lieutenant interviewed by local news, some officers did run into the school — but only to grab their own children.

The Border Patrol SWAT team that eventually engaged with and killed the shooter — 40 minutes to an hour after first shots were reported — was not able to break down the door to the classroom where the killer was holed up with more children. A staff member had to unlock it with a key. According to the chilling firsthand account of a fourth grader in the room, cops told children to yell “if you need help”; when one little girl did, the gunman immediately shot her.

The police failed at protecting the schoolchildren, yes, but we should not be under the illusion that this is an example of the cops failing at their jobs. As far we can tell from reports, police at the scene acted as they

usually do, in accordance with standard policing practice: Rather than risk a hail of gunfire to stop the killer, they kept themselves safe.

As Akela Lacy noted on Wednesday in *The Intercept*, the approach is not an outlier: “As the number of school resource officers has ballooned over the last two decades, so has the number of school shootings. There is no evidence that police have the ability to stop these shootings from happening.”

The behavior of the police at Robb Elementary is only shocking if you are committed to a mythic notion of what policing entails. The “thin blue line” does not, as reactionary narratives would have it, separate society from violent chaos. This has never been what police do, since the birth of municipal policing in slave patrols and colonial counterinsurgencies. The “thin blue line” instead separates those empowered by the state to uphold racial capitalism with violence, and to do so with impunity.

It is disgusting, not shocking, that police officers would sooner harass and handcuff parents — parents begging them to save their children from a massacre — than they would run in and put themselves in the line of fire. What is striking, though, is how inconceivable it is to so many people that policing is not, in fact, what they’ve been told it is by the police themselves, by those in power, and by the mainstream culture built around those mutually reinforcing myths.

Since police propaganda relies on the repetition of lies, certain corrective truths bear repeating too.

Being a police officer is not even among the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the U.S. Roofers, loggers, and delivery drivers all face greater risks to their lives at work. For the last two years in a row, the leading cause of death among cops, purportedly in the line of duty, is the coronavirus pandemic.

And cops don’t solve most crimes. Only around 2 percent of major crimes are solved by police. Police also don’t prevent crime, they criminalize: Ninety percent of the almost all Black people stopped under the New York Police Department’s stop-and-frisk policy were not committing any crime at all. There’s scant evidence that police surveillance reduces or prevents crime. What policing does do, however, is criminalize poverty and the communities of color forced to live in it.

In just the last month, the vast and wealthy army that is the NYPD failed to apprehend two shooters on the subway system — a system that crawls with cops and surveillance. When the first of these shooters was eventually taken into custody, thanks to the intervention of a civilian who spotted him, he was just blocks away from the site of a homeless encampment, which the police were busy destroying.

So what are cops up to? Katie Way, writing on the All Cops Are Posters Substack, gathered the social media posts of the Uvalde Police Department to show that, rather than saving lives and risking their own, the Texas cops spend a considerable amount of their time arresting and caging desperate men, women, and children attempting to enter the U.S. through the southern border.

Even the Supreme Court affirmed in 2005 that police departments are not in fact obligated to provide protection to the public. Our safety is quite simply not what our tax dollars, endlessly funneled into glutted police departments, pay for. Meanwhile, it was two teachers who put their bodies in the line of fire and died trying to protect children during Tuesday’s massacre.

As Patrick Blanchfield, author of the forthcoming “Gunpower: The Structure of American Violence,” noted on Twitter, “U.S. police are trained to maximize control over situations while minimizing their personal risk. That translates into beating parents while a rampage shooter executes their children just as easily as it does their rolling up on a kid with a toy guy and executing him seconds later.”

To be clear, this was not a question of funding or training: Police in the Uvalde school district had both.

Those of us who have been calling for the defunding of police departments — indeed for police abolition in favor of real, collective public safety practices — have been treated by Democratic and Republican leaders and commentators alike as fanatical. In the face of decades, if not centuries of evidence exposing what the work of policing actually entails — and does not entail — the true ideologues are those committed to policing as a social solution.

It would be too generous to those in power to grant that they have simply been misled by copaganda. By insisting that we double down on policing, they make clear that they too uphold what the institution of policing defends: property, power, and racial hierarchy.

The police response to just this latest massacre of children is drawing rightful ire. Yet that alone is unlikely to turn the tides of political will when it comes to shattering the myth of policing. The lionization of the police is as deep seated as any American ideology — resistant to buckling under its own contradictions and obvious falsities. This is a country, after all, founded on genocide, slave labor, and universalist claims to equality for all. Violent contradictions should come as no surprise.

Those who have dismissed calls to defund the police as too radical ought to question their own convictions about policing. It should not take an event so devastating — with police behavior so counter to the task of saving lives — to break the spell of policing mythology.

### **1 Jun - Leonard Peltier Shares His Indian Boarding School Story**

*This first-person account from Leonard Peltier about his experiences at the Wahpeton Indian School from 1952 to 1955 was sent to Native News Online by one of his longtime advisers. Its authenticity was confirmed by his attorney, Kevin Sharp.*

#### **MORE:**

by Leonard Peltier (*Native News Online*)

My name is Leonard Peltier and I am 77 years old. I am a member of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa tribe. I am Anishanaabe and Dakota. I was taken to Wahpeton Indian School, an Indian boarding school, in Wahpeton, North Dakota when I was nine years old and did not leave until I was 12. This is my story.

When I lost my grandfather in 1952, life changed forever. He was a good and kind man and he was my mentor and knew how to live off the land. But then he got pneumonia and did not survive. I will never forget watching him die from the foot of his bed. Even now, that sad memory comes back to me as I lay in my bunk at night in a federal penitentiary.

About a year after my grandpa died, my grandma had to go to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to beg for help for her and me, my sister Betty Ann and cousin Pauline. As it turned out, that made things much worse for us. Now, we had to worry about the BIA agents coming to take us away. I grew up with the stories. I was old enough to know what happened when the government took you away. I knew some children never came home.

So we — my grandma and my sisters and I — watched for new cars from the top of the hill. Indian cars were old and made a lot of noise so we heard them coming. We were always prepared to run and hide in the woods.

But then one day, I forgot to run and hide and the girls were hiding in the house. This shiny car drove up the hill and stopped in front of our house. A man stepped out of a 1952 Chevy Fleetline.

I will never forget that government car.

Grandma could not understand much of what he said, and no other adult was there. But she finally understood that he came to take us away. The government man told us he was taking us away to a boarding school because my grandma could not take care of us. I loved my grandma. I knew he was wrong.

She started to cry and pleaded with him not to take us. She cried out, but he told her she would be jailed if she tried to interfere. That was it. I said nothing. I was 9 years old, but I was afraid if I said anything or tried to run, the government man would take my grandma and put her in jail.

So I watched as Grandma packed the few clothes we had and put them in a small bundle.

"Protect your sisters. Do not let anyone harm them," Grandma told me before the government man took us away.

I promised her I would. But I almost broke out crying. In a single day, my whole world changed. I know I was just a little kid, but I just felt so helpless.

Maybe that day was my introduction to this destiny I did not choose. Little did I know that those school years would condition me well. I was treated very badly by the people in that school, but it made me stronger. I found out in boarding school I had no rights. So I guess I am not surprised that at 77 and still locked up, it is the same for me now.

The government man drove us to a parking lot with a long line of buses at the Belcourt high school. Families were saying goodbye. Children and parents crying in each other's arms.

Some of the traditional Natives were chanting in that way they do when someone has passed. It was an eerie sound for a small boy and a chill ran up my back. I almost lost it.

Betty and cousin Pauline were crying, and I could not do or say anything to get them to stop. I thought: "I have to stay strong and be ready to fight if anyone tries to hurt them." They held onto me so tight I couldn't move at times, though. I can only describe the scene at the bus loading as one of horror. I know I was terrified.

Everyone was crying as they kept yelling at us to get on the bus. The BIA officials and Indian Police were watching and guarding. They made sure no one escaped and no Indians came to help us. They were all powerless to come and take us home.

We traveled all day. Poor Betty and Pauline cried all the way. They asked for water and to use the restroom only once — the bus driver told them to shut up and sit down. I told them I had to watch where we were going. If we got away, we needed to know how to get home. Getting home — all I could think about was getting home, but I soon understood that there were too many turns. I could not remember them all.

We finally got to a rest stop. Only a few at a time were allowed to get out. Everyone had to urinate so badly, poor Betty and Pauline barely made it.

When we finally got to Wahpeton, they separated us and lined us up in military formation, smallest to tallest.

The girls were sent to the girl's dorm, a two-story building, and us boys to the other one. The dining hall was in the middle, the school was across the road. To rez kids, this looked scary as hell. It was hell.

I could hear Betty and Pauline crying and screaming for me not to leave them. I came close to breaking down. But I knew I had to show them I was strong and brave. I did not cry. Mostly for their sake.

Others kids did break down. It was the beginning of a nightmare that at 77 years old, the fear of remembering it all still keeps me awake some nights.

The matrons used our fear against us. They yelled, "Shut your mouths...stop your damned crying...it won't help."

Some of us were angry, but we were scared. We had to whisper our anger. They marched us down to the basement where the shower and laundry rooms and the barber shop was. First, they buzz-cut our hair off. Then they took us to the showers and stripped off all our clothes.

This was disrespectful and humiliating. In shame, we marched into the showers. They had set them on HOT. Very HOT.

Some of the kids screamed as the water scalded them. None of us knew how to adjust the temperature. The older kids showed us. Some kids never wanted to go to the showers again – they had to be forced.

When we left the showers they put DDT (an insecticide used in agriculture) all over us. The poison even got in our eyes and mouths. They said it was to kill lice and other insects that carried disease.

Then the matrons sat on benches with a large jar of Vaseline. They lined us up very close together, naked and spread it on the top and back of our ankles, arms, and elbows. They then took a towel, wrapped it around their finger and rubbed the Vaseline off. If any dead skin came off, we were hit with a fat ruler. That sucker hurt. Then we were sent back to wash again. We rubbed our skin raw so as not to get beaten.

A young Native student came and brought me over to the girl's dorm that first night. Betty and Pauline were still clinging to each other, crying. I almost broke down again. I somehow managed to stay strong and console them. I told them that they would beat me if they didn't stop and that worked.

Later, we were assigned to wash the smaller kids. If dead skin was found after we washed them, we got the beating. They made it clear they considered us filthy from the inside out.

They made it clear we were hated. With every look, with every cruel word, they continued a war our ancestors had fought since their ancestors landed here back in 1492.

The sound of the ruler hitting the boys and their screams is something that still affects me whenever I see someone striking a child on TV or in a picture.

When I was older, I was forced to scrub the little kids. A small boy named White Cloud had tender skin and cried, so I did not scrub him as hard as they told me to do it. They found dead skin and they beat me. I had to scrub him again, with a stiff brush like we used to scrub the floor, only smaller. I was angry and I scrubbed until he started to bleed.

How does a person live with those memories?

As time passed and I lay in my bed, I heard crying and whimpering every night. So much crying and so much fear. The bigger kids would try to quiet the little ones, telling them the matrons would come in and beat them if they didn't stop.

Some older boys told us they were trying to scare us into being submissive, but for some of us, our pain turned to hate and it made us rebellious.

We spoke our language. We sang our songs. And we prayed in our languages, all in secret. We called ourselves the Resisters, after the famous French Resistance.

I think I've hidden my hate and my anger throughout my entire life. It was impossible to manage as a kid. But I learned how to deal with their demons. I had to, as I was determined not to ever become one of them. I never felt bigger by hurting others. I am my grandmother's legacy, not Wahpeton's.

There was a prison cell in the basement. In my last year at Wahpeton, they used it for storage. They had me take a broken chair down there one time, and I saw it. I thought of what kids must have gone through in that prison cell in the past. I heard some children committed suicide and had been buried somewhere on the grounds. We did not want to know where this sacred ground was, so we never tried to find it. I admit I was scared.

What could be worse – the yelling and beatings, or being buried there?

Some heard phantom crying in the night. Lost children, hurt so badly they took their own lives. Some of us would not allow ourselves to believe they were spirits crying.

At one point we heard Eisenhower ordered no more maltreatment of Native children. It took a couple of years for the law to be enforced and it did not come in time for us — if it ever came at all. The staff was used to having free reign to beat the hell out of children that could not fight back.

I used to sit around with Dennis Banks and other men and talk about our days at Wahpeton. We could not find a single pleasant memory. Our memories from those vulnerable, formative years are harsh and violent. But we learned one thing from those awful places your people sent us to: We are survivors.

And we survived with our hearts intact.

You don't treat people badly like that. I rise only when I help you rise. Despite all those beatings, I still believe it. It's a law, like physics, and it's true. You get nowhere being mean and disrespecting the feelings of others, especially the most vulnerable. I have seen both kinds of people and more than my share of evil ones, and I know I'm right. I rise only when I help you rise.

## **2 Jun - Dr. Mutulu Shakur June 2022 Health and Legal Update**

*Mutulu's support crew is so grateful for the outpouring of love and support for Mutulu--and want to update his friends and supporters with information from Mutulu himself, and from the medical records.*

### **MORE:**

We understand that people want to share information on social media, but we respectfully ask that people share only information that Mutulu and his support team have consented to be shared publicly.

We learned last Friday that Mutulu's health had taken a turn for the worse. The chemotherapy drugs and other medications that Mutulu is on are very strong and have side effects that can be difficult to manage, particularly within the confines of prison. His legal team is closely monitoring the medical records every week with the help of outside medical practitioners. The hospital where he has been receiving treatment for the last 2 and a half years is already planning on starting a different form of cancer treatment, another kind of chemotherapy. Depending on his test results and whether he is strong enough, he may get a newer form of treatment that has a higher chance of succeeding – but which can also make him feel sicker. We want to get him home to his family – and Mutulu and his team are also still looking for treatments that will give him as much time as possible to be with his family and friends.

The legal team is actively pursuing all avenues for Mutulu's immediate release, including compassionate release and parole. Please keep Mutulu in your thoughts and prayers and stay tuned for further updates.

## **6 Jun - After the Revolution**

*We are always happy to share new writing by Dan Baker.*

### **MORE:**

I recently read "Nation on No Map" and recommended this book to everyone I can reach, which is somewhat limited in prison. I am now reading "After the Revolution," a novel by Robert Evans. "Nation on

No Map” is probably the best non-fiction book I’ve read since going to prison, and “After the Revolution” is now the best novel I’ve read. The author has front line experience as a war correspondent and this shows in the skillful storytelling. Being a combat veteran, I am deeply moved by this book. More importantly than the realistic descriptions of humanity’s violence is the prophetic prediction of the life cycle of the United States government.

Before white colonists came to North America there were nations of Indigenous people here. Columbus raped them and so did British colonists. After slave owners rebelled against the British colonialists the United States government was born on the backs of African and Irish slaves, then immigrants from all over the world. This country has been the battlefield of Revolutionary War, Civil War, a War with Mexico, a war with Spain, and an ongoing war against slave uprisings and the present-day war against the working class wage slaves. My point is that America is a battlefield. In reality the entire world is a battlefield. The misconception that North America will not be the scene of modern warfare is a gross illusion based on privilege at the expense of the global victims of American imperialism. Many countries are known for some cultural trait, like tea, or spiritual traditions, technology and so on. America is known for guns. Not only is America going to experience civil war, sooner than later, it is inevitable. All things are temporary, this is a fundamental law of physics. This includes governments and nation states. Every country, empire and government has a life cycle. They are born in coups or revolutions and the rise and fall over time. “After the Revolution”, while indulging in science fiction for the entertainment of the reader, accurately describes the process by which the United States will eventually fracture and divide into states resembling European and Middle Eastern countries, each about the size of a current American state. America is already at war within itself, with the police working for the interests of the wealthy ruling class to criminalize race, poverty and pretty much anyone else they can. Charismatic leaders like Donald Trump want the whole pie for themselves and their wealthy heirs, but they will settle for a seceded white nationalist Christian ethno-state. Likely candidates for the first to secede include Florida, Trump’s base of racist operations, Texas, who already consider themselves a republic, and Alaska, a state of fiercely independent survivalists.

I’m not just spewing conspiracy theories. In Florida, where I grew up, a toxic culture of white Christian nationalism exists in coordination with the descendants of the confederacy of the old south. When they say “the south shall rise again”, they mean it, and they are willing to fight and die for that. In Tallahassee, my home for the last decade, I was approached by Jordan Jereb, leader of a neo-nazi gang which has wisely rebranded itself as “the Republic of Florida”. They pulled up to the corner where I was begging for my daily bread while homeless and unemployed, at a Wal-Mart on Tennessee Street, holding a “hungry veteran” sign. Their offer was food, housing, weapons and training in exchange for my militant loyalty to their racist organization and ideology in coordination with members who had already infiltrated local and federal police and the military. They said, “You look like a racially aware person, with your shaved head.” I told them to fuck off of course, but that day I began to receive aggressive attention from the FBI, Tallahassee Police and the Leon County Sheriff’s department, specifically a deputy called Larry Folsom, who is widely active in the Jujitsu, MMA and Judo communities in Tallahassee. The end result of their campaign of targeted harassment is that I am now sitting in federal prison. Jordan Jereb bragged about training school shooter Nicholas Cruz by the way. He also recruits kids at high schools and middle schools with flyers in plastic bag with candy. I’ve seen them, they are similar to the flyers he used to distribute at Walmarts around town until my friends and I organized a town council meeting to put a stop to this. The flyers ask kids if they feel threatened by people from other cultures picking on them, and foreigners, and invite them to join RoF for safety and camaraderie. The reason I bring all this up is because there are very real organization who are already deeply supported by so called law enforcement in Florida and Nationwide, who are actively, openly and covertly working to create white ethno-states, to return to “the good ol’ days” of plantation slavery. These are not people who will listen to reason. The hippies cannot “hug it out” with these people. They are very real, they are already here, they are armed and they are now globally networking with white supremacists, fascists, racists and far right-wing conservatives in Austria, Germany, Italy, the U.K., Turkey and Russia, to name a few. Some of them have infiltrated the YPG international, like Ryan Patrick Kasperik. The danger is real.

We have been warned by authors like Robert Evans. In dystopian, authoritarian police states like the United States it is dangerous to even write truths like this, but a medium that is available for many is fiction, where dangerous truths can be shared with less violent response from the cops. We live in a time when the prophets of the new age include Robert Evans, Margaret Atwood, with her *Handmaid's Tale's* and Abdullah Ocalan.

The words of these great minds serve as parables and clear warnings to present and future generations. We know about the Holocaust, but we are watching another approach us over the top edges of our smart phones, sinking lower into our seats to just keep scrolling and swiping. This is not enough for us to be on the correct side of history, or even to survive long enough to allow truth and freedom to continue to evolve in the face of regressive forces of domination, hierarchy and dogmatic mysticism. Please take the time to read these writers messages to the world.

Just because war seems distant in the Ukraine, Rojava, Syria, Iraq or anywhere besides the U so called United States does not mean that it is happening in a different world. If you listen closely, you can hear the screams of immigrants dying in America, the sounds of gunfire and artillery in Ukraine, the smell of burning bodies on the wind from the Middle East. It's a small world and America's sins are coming home sooner than later. My personal ideal is nonviolence with an emphasis on rescue and healing, but survival may necessitate a variety of tactics. Listen to the well-travelled and well read, and then become well-traveled and well-read and realize the warning signs before it's too late to fight back. A country built on slavery will always be that, and the wrong life cannot be lived the right way. This is the land of the fee and the home of the slave. It will stay that way until we make something new and better to take its place. We can and we will. We should not cause the needless loss of life or instability but when these things come naturally in the course of nature, beginnings, middles and ends, then we can create something new, continuing to evolve and refine the application of fairness, equality, truth, beauty, love and freedom in human global society.

Thank you all again for all of your support. Please reach out to other political prisoners, like Lore, Jessica Reznicek, Eric King, and the elders, like the Black Panthers and Leonard Peltier. More and more people are being rounded up, but we don't seem to be making the connection between the American prison industrial plantation and the German death camps, mainly due to the liberalization of prison culture. Please reflect deeply on this, and reach out to activists you admire, and raise awareness in your community. We need your help to get through this.

## **8 Jun - Solidarity with Marius Mason and All Longterm Anarchist Prisoners**

*Since 2010 a small group of friends and comrades have organized the International Day of Solidarity with Marius Mason and All Longterm Anarchist Prisoners.*

### **MORE:**

The day began as an attempt to expand support for Marius and Eric McDavid, two anarchists who faced many years in prison as a result of the repression of movements to defend the earth broadly referred to as the Green Scare. Eric McDavid was released in 2015, but Marius continues to serve a federal prison sentence. Over the years, the day of solidarity has been expanded to include all longterm anarchist prisoners.

In honor of June 11, CLDC requests that our movement pay respect to Marius Mason, a currently incarcerated political prisoner who needs your support. Marius Mason, who CLDC provided legal support for during his Green Scare prosecution, is an anarchist, labor, environmental, and animal rights activist currently serving nearly 22 years in federal prison for acts of property damage carried out in defense of the planet.

You can learn more about Marius and how to support him at [Support Marius Mason](#).

Read the full 2022 callout for June 11 at June11.org. You can also download resources at the site and see a list of international events.

Check out the most recent episode of The Final Straw to hear June 11 statements from folks inside and to learn about ongoing prisoner support efforts for those serving sentences as a result of their participation in the George Floyd Rebellions in 2020.

## **9 Jun - FCI Englewood Started Eric's ADX Transfer Paperwork BEFORE his recent trial ever started**

*When Eric arrived at USP Lee after a recent acquittal at trial in March 2022, he was not allowed to walk the yard; he was informed he was on a special hold.*

### **MORE:**

At the transfer center at USP Atlanta, before reaching USP Lee, the Bureau Of Prisons deleted Eric's management variable making him maximum security custody. He was told that he CAN NOT be transferred and cannot be placed in general population.

Eric currently has medium security points, and it has been confirmed there's no management variable, yet somehow the BOP has him classified as MAXIMUM security custody.

Eric is at USP Lee because in May of 2020, it was confirmed the BOP previously wrote out some disciplinary shots and referred them to the prosecutor for potential charges; the BOP is unable to conduct it's own disciplinary hearing until the prosecutor declines criminal prosecution. At that point, the BOP can conduct it's own disciplinary hearing for these two write-ups, which could result in potential sanctions like lost good time, lost phone use, lost access to commissary, etc.

The BOP claims they are unable to transfer him from USP Lee due to these indefinitely pending disciplinary hearings, where he is being illegally detained above his current custody level, with records of threats to his life at USP Lee from white supremacist gangs that have been documented since 2018.

It seems awfully convenient, because the BOP had no problem conducting a disciplinary hearing for Eric regarding the write-up of the assault in the closet (that Eric was just acquitted of in March 2022 at federal trial), despite the prosecutor communicating with BOP they DID intend to prosecute [supporterick.org/2022/04/02/this-is-not-a-blue-dress-gold-dress-type-of-situation](https://supporterick.org/2022/04/02/this-is-not-a-blue-dress-gold-dress-type-of-situation) At trial, it was revealed the BOP went as far as creating a fake version of the BOP disciplinary hearing paperwork to present to Eric that said the prosecutor WASN'T pursuing prosecution.

### **The Write-Ups**

When reading about these alleged disciplinary infractions, keep in mind that Eric has never seen any of these. Nor has he been delivered either of them. They are all at this point hypothetical, straight from the mouths of Bureau of Prison staff.

The alleged write-ups the prosecutor is holding onto that stalls Eric's transfer involves Officer Gustafson, who took Eric into the showers in June of 2020 while handcuffed in his underwear, and attacked him. He flipped Eric over, dumped him head first onto concrete, which resulted in an emergency trip to the hospital and stitches.

They attempted to write Eric up for this, claiming that he assaulted the officer. However, upon review of video and BOP officer statements, this write-up was dismissed. It was clear Eric played no role in this interaction besides victim.

This was not the first incident. In fact, Officer Gustafson carried out systematic harassment of Eric via disciplinary write-ups, assault attempts and threats. At times at the behest of the prosecutor (at trial), at times seemingly of Gustafson's own accord.

If BOP policies extended to protect Eric... Gustafson would have never gotten the keys to Eric's cell in June of 2020.

In April of 2020, Officer Gustafson threw a book at Eric. When Eric attempted to report this, he was told that the specific position of an officer whose job is to investigate allegations against BOP staff wasn't filled, so he was unable to report the violation. In actuality, \*per policy\* if a prisoner alleges an officer attempted to assault him the two will not have contact until an investigation is concluded, or the prisoner has a disciplinary hearing in order to keep all parties safe.

This did not happen.

In May of 2020, Officer Gustafson claims Eric assaulted him by flicking water at him from the shower. (The SAME day in a different unit Eric's friend also received the SAME write-up of "assault by liquid" despite the two being held without contact). While this is an incredibly silly claim, this disciplinary infraction was on the books. It should have created a situation where the two would no longer have contact. [supportericking.org/2020/06/29/deliberate-indifference](https://supportericking.org/2020/06/29/deliberate-indifference)

This did not happen.

Little did Eric know, the next contact with Gustafson would be between his head and the cement floor of the shower. This for SURE was going to trigger the policy protecting him from this officer, right? [supportericking.org/2020/06/24/eric-assaulted-by-guard-at-fci-englewood](https://supportericking.org/2020/06/24/eric-assaulted-by-guard-at-fci-englewood)

The BOP STILL ALLOWED OFFICER GUSTAFSON ACCESS TO ERIC.

And now... Eric is at a max security facility awaiting an ADX supermax transfer.

Afterwards, Officer Gustafson was given a new job out-of- state. The trial prosecutor DID have further contact with him; he brought Gustafson to testify against Eric at trial March 2022, where Eric was unable to bring up the assault in the shower during his testimony. And now, the prosecutor is sitting on these write-ups holding out for criminal prosecution on a write-up that directly involves Officer Gustafson.

Did the BOP investigate this assault and targeted harassment of Eric AT ALL? After his disciplinary hearing in 2020, after those staff statements and video showing he did nothing wrong in the shower, did this trigger an investigation?

### **The ADX Referral**

(read about the ADX prison in Florence here [people.howstuffworks.com/adx-florence.htm](https://people.howstuffworks.com/adx-florence.htm))

FCI Englewood shipped USP Lee in 2022 a hard-copy folder of an ADX supermax designation referral already in process for Eric. It seems BOP attorneys may have begun the process of a supermax custody transfer PRIOR to Eric ever stepping foot in the courtroom for trial (and eventual acquittal) March 2022.

USP Lee has completed Eric's psych exam, intake interview, and sent Eric's ADX supermax referral off for a final decision on transfer.

The supermax control unit was built to handle prisoners with incredibly long sentences or life in prison. So it seems a little odd, so soon after Eric's acquittal, they chose an ADX... We're one year and seven months away from Eric's out date, but he's placed in absolute segregation at the ADX supermax...

Eric wanted to share these; he wants y'all to know that this pending ADX transfer is VERY real. Eric is at medium security points. At medium points with no management variable, a prisoner MUST be held at appropriate custody. Yet he is currently being held in MAXIMUM custody at USP Lee in segregation, and pending transfer to ADX supermax Florence.

### **The Conditions**

- Eric is not receiving any mail, no phone and no visits.
- Eric has no sanctions on phones, yet has not been allowed a phone call to his family.
- The library at USP Lee is closed.
- Prisoners in segregation at USP Lee are not allowed visits. Despite the fact Eric has no visiting sanctions, and did not currently ask to be placed in the SHU, he is going to be held without any access to visits.

*“Things here are EXACTLY as predicted lol, this is mentally + physically exhausting. Same horrible food, finger toothbrush w/ expired “toothpaste,” no family visits, no law library, no phone calls, + seemingly no family mail. Paper spoons, no radios. Loud ALL the time, hot as fuck, dirty as fuck, had the same holey socks for 3 weeks. I’ve been getting legal calls, but only 4 letters – 3 from my first 3 days, + none from my wife 😞 Everything we thought, right on the money. The day I got here S.I.S. put me in the SHU saying it’s cause I had pending shots . . . 2 days later psych said I was being referred to ADX, I told him 2 shut up . . . 3 days later he brought me the “ADX psych eval consent form” . . . then 2 days after that I had the Eval. Test. So they aren’t playing games w/ that. 4 days ago my Case Manager confirmed that my packet was completed here and totally at Region – who along w/ National – ordered this 2 happen according 2 psych.*

*Naturally, that was pretty shocking. They’re saying the referral can take 2-3 months 😞 ugh. Will I hear from my wife during this time? People NEED 2 be asking the appropriate folks, if I’m being moved then what’s the hold up? Let’s go! Why the extra stuff? Why destroy family contact + law library access?*

*19 days + not one fam. letter? :(“*

What did Eric do that is deserving of 7 months underground before he’s eligible for a halfway house? He has been held in segregation for 3 years and 9 months. The BOP told senators that he had to be held in segregation because he was ACCUSED of assaulting a lieutenant. So now that he’s acquitted (not guilty) at trial March 2022, what is the reasoning for sending him back to Florence, to complete solitude underground in a supermax control unit? Why is it necessary to put his halfway house time back in the hands of a warden that sent staff to testify against him at his trial in March 2022?

### **We have QUESTIONS**

North Central Regional Office

Andrè Matevousian is currently the North Central Regional Office Director, however he was also the warden of ADX Florence in 2018. Eric was NOT designated to ADX Florence at that time, yet his transfer paperwork dated August 20<sup>th</sup> of 2018 was signed by then-warden Andrè Matevousian. This was a “temporary transfer” request to USP Leavenworth. Warden Matevousian tells Director Sarah Revell that Eric was AGGRESSIVE and DISRUPTIVE and therefore had to be placed in hard 4 point restraints, but...

Did Matevousian have knowledge this was not the truth? If he would have reviewed the footage and reviewed staff statements to the FBI about the day Eric had been assaulted in a broom closet August 2018, he would have known that in fact there is no footage of Eric demonstrating anything but compliance. When the head of SIS Robert Cordova spoke to the FBI in May of 2020, he admitted in fact footage had been deleted because it showed that Eric was compliant and therefore there was no reason to maintain the footage. Other officers also testified under oath to Eric’s compliance at an evidentiary hearing October 2021 and at federal trial March 2022.

After this transfer requested by Andrè Matevousian

Eric was never allowed to safely walk a normal yard again.

Andrè's will be one of the final signatures on the paperwork that will seal Eric's fate and send him to the ADX.

Director Andrè Matevousian played a role in 2018 in these trumped-up charges Eric was acquitted of due to acts of self-defense from an assault in a broom closet at Florence in August 2018, and again in 2022 being a part of placing Eric into ADX supermax custody.

## **9 Jun - We Both Were Incarcerated at Rikers Island. Now We're Discussing Its History.**

*Former antifascist political prisoner David Campbell writes about his time at Rikers Island and interviews Jarrod Shanahan about Jarrod's new book.*

### **MORE:**

by David Campbell (*Truthout*)

Two years after the 2020 Black Lives Matter uprisings began, mainstream politicians are pushing a reactive, fear-based law-and-order politics. In this precarious moment, Jarrod Shanahan's new book *Captives* is more necessary than ever. The book traces the history of post-war New York City through the lens of the city's jails, focusing largely on the notorious Rikers Island jail. Shanahan shows, in vivid detail drawn from extensive research, how the facility became the squalid penal colony it is today. In 448 pages, Shanahan covers city politicking, jail rebellions, the dismantling of the welfare state, and finally, the rise of police and guard unions as reactionary political entities in their own right.

Shanahan knows Rikers well; he served 30 days there in 2016. I met him while preparing to begin my own one-year jail sentence there in 2019. We stayed in close contact throughout my sentence, and have remained close since. Here, I interview him about *Captives*, and what this history means in light of the city's plan to replace Rikers with new jails designed under "progressive" ideals, the looming threat of a federal takeover, and our personal experiences as captives there.

**David Campbell:** Tell me about your writing and research process for this book.

**Jarrod Shanahan:** This project began when I went on Amazon and typed in "Rikers Island history book" and nothing came up. I just wanted to know the history and understand the social context of this awful place that I got sent to, because you try to process it when you leave.

I also really want to emphasize that archival research is essential, even though it was a fraught undertaking in this case. Documentation was often from the perspective of the jail administrators or their allies in city government. It's also easy to mistake the information that you have with all of the information [that exists]. But archival work is essential for putting together the basic skeleton of how an institution came to be and how it's changed over time, and it's getting easier and easier as a lot of this material gets digitized.

Another important component is speaking with people who were there, whenever possible. I understand there's an oral history of Rikers coming out. I can't wait to read it!

The more I learn about Rikers, the more I realize I know so little. Do you ever have that feeling, as a scholar?

Oh, definitely. I actually had that feeling while finishing this book, specifically talking to you about it. When you were locked up there.

Right. You were working on Captives while I was serving my sentence, and we communicated about all kinds of things regarding Rikers.

Yeah. One discussion we had was very humbling for me because I had collected documentation of a number of prisoner disturbances and I thought I had a fairly coherent thesis for how they were connected. And then when we published your article in Hard Crackers about the strike that you helped organize around COVID conditions in Rikers, I told you, “Man, this is so amazing, what you did.” And right away you said, “This stuff happens all the time at Rikers.” So that was a reminder to me that the vast majority of the history that I was writing about, I don’t actually know. So much of it is never documented at all.

One of the most fascinating things in Captives for me was the history of the jail rebellions you were able to uncover, and how they often actually succeeded, even receiving total amnesty. Less surprisingly, the same is true for the guards, who have gotten away with some horrifying things, and rarely is anyone punished. Every once in a while, someone gets some sort of administrative slap on the wrist.

Every once in a while, yeah.

But by and large, for both guards and prisoners, refusing to play by the rules — and often sheer insurrection — has tended to work.

There’s an old saying: “direct action gets the goods.”

Another thing I found really striking was just how petty, nefarious, and reactionary a force COBA [the Correction Officers’ Benevolent Association, the main DOC guards’ union] had been.

No less a prison scholar than Heather Ann Thompson has written that guard unions are actually potential allies in the struggle against mass incarceration. By contrast, I tried to carve out a very clear picture of the reactionary political role of guards and cops in our society, in particular how they have been instrumental in pushing for and reinforcing the entire social order in which mass incarceration forms such an important part. There’s an even more pernicious tendency to view guards and cops in their workforces as simply an amalgamation of individual people. And it’s very much true that these institutions are comprised of individuals who might, in their interpersonal behavior and sometimes even at work, diverge from the overall political function of the organization. But these are very much coherent political power blocks. They serve very clear social functions, and pursue clearly defined interests that are opposed to the dignity and safety of most of the people they police and guard.

Most Rikers staff, like most prisoners, are working-class people of color. They often come from the same communities. Do you think that telling themselves they’re serving some higher social good functions as a kind of coping mechanism for some guards?

I think the best way to view workforces of cops and guards is as remarkably ordinary people who are doing jobs that should not exist, and which transform them over time. It’s an interesting case study in how social being determines consciousness. The vast majority of young people who become jail and prison guards do so because it is the most palatable option among a relatively narrow set of choices. And guards at Rikers, for instance, refer to the 20 years that they must serve before collecting a partial pension as their “20-year sentence.”

You often hear them chatting to each other about how much time they have left...

Yeah. There’s even a popular saying, “Hired in my 20s, retire in my 40s — can’t touch that.” This is the pervasive ideology around the job among rookies: I’ve gotten this lucrative job that’s going to build a secure future, and all I need to do is suffer through it. Law-and-order ideology tends to come later.

So, when they say they're just doing their jobs, that's not wrong, just irrelevant. Some of them end up really believing that they're taking care of prisoners, who would be in Rikers anyway, or that they're dangerous and need to be separated from society. And none of that's true.

When you went on strike at Rikers, which directly contributed to the mass release of almost 1,500 people, you were part of a social experiment that demonstrated concretely that at least 1,500 people did not belong there. As we saw in a similar 1983 mass release, which I write about at length in *Captives*, the local right-wing newspapers were obsessed with finding the wrongdoings committed by the released prisoners to prove that they should not have been let out in the first place. And to my knowledge, there isn't very much to that effect at all.

Statistically, 13 percent were rearrested in the following months, and very few for serious crimes. But we're still locking people up.

I took great heart from the No New Jails campaign in New York City a few years back [which sought not only to close Rikers, but also to stop the construction of the new borough-based jails and redirect that funding to investing in communities in order to promote permanent decarceration]. The campaign didn't succeed in stopping the jails, but it was a small activist campaign, composed of people working in their spare time, lacking the mountains of foundation money that propped up the pro-new-jail side, and it was taken seriously by many New Yorkers as an alternative. It's easy to get demoralized when you lose, but my primary takeaway from this campaign was that there's a potentially large audience for abolitionist ideas.

When you were at Rikers in 2016, the Nunez monitor (a court-appointed federal oversight body arising from a 2011 lawsuit regarding the use of force by Rikers guards against prisoners) was fairly new, and security cameras were just beginning to appear. When I was there in 2019-2020, cameras were ubiquitous, and toward the end of my sentence they even started to roll out bodycams.

Cameras were not new under Nunez. Previously, they were required for certain high-risk actions. But as the Department of Justice has shown, guards were adept at strategically concealing violence from view, or failing that, making the footage disappear altogether. So actually, the guards have had a long time to prepare for the prevalence of cameras, which are really only the latest iteration of a long history of reformers documenting abuses in the city jails. Before that, you had plentiful written reports from monitors, city officials, civilian workers and sometimes even guards. And what did they amount to? For instance, I was able to reconstruct two incredibly violent staff riots, one in 1986 and one in 1990, in startling detail. The prison scholar Abby Cunniff hit me up and said, "Come on, Jarrod. How did you know that it was drizzling outside?" It was because these events generated mountains of detailed paperwork, investigations, internal reports, responses to the reports, in which all kinds of ranking members of the department and respected civilian overseers, in addition to the prisoners themselves, presented a similar picture of widespread brutality, the kind of violence that if a normal person meted that out in their day-to-day life, they would be going to prison for a long time. And virtually nothing happened.

Yeah, a lot of guards would say "We're making a movie," in regards to the cameras, when they performed a perfunctory pat frisk or something.

One guard told me in 2016, "I have two Academy Awards at home." Meaning he could act compellingly for the cameras and justify his actions later. I think that the guards like this, who told us that they weren't worried about the cameras, should be taken at their word.

We both spent time at the Eric M. Taylor Center, or EMTC, which was designed as the flagship facility of penal welfarism at the height of a progressive golden age in New York, and under the stewardship of Commissioner Anna Kross, a devoted local champion of "humanitarian incarceration" and prison reform. We both know firsthand that EMTC is, in layperson's terms, a shithole.

That's an academic term, actually [laughs].

Well, one thing that surprised me in Captives was how little time it took to get that way. Within three years, none of the progressive policies envisioned by Commissioner Kross were being implemented, and the place was already abysmal.

You see a lot of the same arguments being made today in New York, about repurposing jails as “sites of civic unity,” as [Judge Jonathan] Lippman calls them, and all the rest of it. If this was ever going to happen, it would’ve happened in the 1950s and ’60s under Kross, for a number of reasons. There was a remarkable bipartisan consensus on crime and punishment, the city had a lot more money for investment in public welfare expenditures, and there was a much more progressive political climate not just in the city but in the nation.

What about the possibility of a federal takeover of Rikers in the form of a receivership? There’s been a lot of buzz lately about the possibility of this last-resort legal tactic, in which a court-appointed authority assumes control of an institution unable to manage its own affairs, to effect positive change at Rikers.

The city has been given a firm timeline, through a series of federal lawsuits, to provide the bare constitutional minimum standards for care at its jails almost continuously since the early 1970s. There’s no reason to expect that the local monitors or the federal government will have any more luck enforcing their will than their predecessors. The guards have too much power and there’s no counterpower willing to oppose them, including the federal judiciary. The bureaucrats and technocrats will not save us. And what that calls to mind, for me, is the necessity to build collective power capable of pushing back.

The subtitle of your book is “How Rikers Island took New York City hostage.” On the one hand, it means very literally holding large numbers of New Yorkers captive. It also means that the present arrangement, by being held up as untouchable, prevents us from finding any meaningful way of moving toward decarceration.

Yeah, it should be clear after at least 50 years of law-and-order politics that it’s actually not making things any better. But simultaneously, this social order has done a very good job of presenting itself as the only possibility. So, the solution to violence is more of the same social constellation that creates violence in the first place. And so, we are very much held captive.

## **10 Jun - We did it! Sundiata is home!**

*The headline says it all!*

### **MORE:**

Thank you for signing Bring Sundiata Home. We Won! May 25<sup>th</sup>, Sundiata Acoli walked out of prison into the arms of his family and loved ones! We knew this day was coming but wanted to ensure it was official and that we saw it with our own eyes. As you can imagine, after 49 years, Sundiata is finally able to spend time with his family and we want to make sure we respect these precious moments. To that end, we are asking our supporters to hold off on contacting him until he can get settled and his family can love up on him by themselves. We’ll announce an official homecoming celebration in the coming weeks.

In prison, there’s no 401k, no savings plan, and no pension. It’s up to all of us to provide that. We ask for your generous support to allow Sundiata to enjoy his years of freedom with the financial stability he deserves. Please donate at [secure.actblue.com/donate/bringsundiataacolihome](https://secure.actblue.com/donate/bringsundiataacolihome)

All donations received will go to Sundiata’s family to care for him.

Real change happens when everyday people like you and I take a stand for what we believe in. We will continue our work to ensure our elders can live the remainder of their lives in dignity outside of prison.