



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for July 26th

6 Jul - The Feds are using terrorism charges against Water Protectors

A federal court sentenced Jessica Reznicek to eight years in prison for taking nonviolent direct action to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline. Her story is a sign of Big Oil's desperation, according to one of her lawyers, Bill Quigley.

MORE:

by Frances Madeson (*Real News Network*)

It takes a strong, steady hand and seven long minutes to burn a nickel-sized hole into the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) with an oxy-acetylene welding torch. And yet, water protector Jessica Reznicek accomplished this feat on multiple occasions, up and down the pipeline, in Iowa and South Dakota during the spring of 2017. These punctures comprised just some of her deliberate acts of sabotage meant to delay DAPL's completion and forestall the flow of oil under crucial, endangered Midwestern waterways. Drinking water for millions of North Americans has been put at risk by a pipeline that has still never received the proper permits and that, completely unrelated to Reznicek's direct action efforts to disable the pipeline, leaked at least five times in the first six months of 2017.

For water protectors who live with the acute daily awareness that pipeline leaks are a known and common risk, a burning question persists: When will the masses of people move out of their comfort zones to protect clean drinking water and stand up for protectors like Reznicek who are fighting an asymmetrical battle against powerful oil oligarchs? When DAPL operator Energy Transfer spills a couple million gallons of thick black ooze (known as "drilling mud") on a pristine wetland and is fined \$40 million by the Federal Energy Regulation Commission, none of the corporate executives lose their liberty in a federal prison for a single day, though the environmental impacts of their reckless practices will linger for generations. Five years after taking action to prevent such long-lasting destruction, however, Jessica Reznicek is serving out an excessively long prison sentence. It takes a stout, steadfast constitution to contend with the consequences that Reznicek has faced for her nonviolent civil disobedience—consequences meted out by a federal judicial system that, to put it mildly, doesn't always play or adjudicate fairly.

For water protectors who live with the acute daily awareness that pipeline leaks are a known and common risk, a burning question persists: When will the masses of people move out of their comfort zones to protect clean drinking water and stand up for protectors like Reznicek who are fighting an asymmetrical battle against powerful oil oligarchs?

Reznicek pled guilty to a single charge of "conspiracy to damage an energy facility," but was nevertheless slapped with an absurdly onerous sentence: three years incarcerated, three years of federal supervision afterward, and an obligation to pay pipeline operator Energy Transfer \$3.2 million in restitution. Thanks to a provision in the Patriot Act, however, things got worse for Reznicek. Southern District of Iowa Judge Rebecca Goodgame Ebinger applied a "domestic terrorism enhancement" to her sentence, turning three years of prison into eight branding Reznicek a terrorist for life. None of this seemed right or just, neither to herself nor to future protestors who would be saddled with a terrible legal precedent, so Reznicek appealed.

The appeal was denied.

On June 6, a three-judge panel in the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals issued an unsigned decision that reads like a one-two sucker punch. First, the decision failed to address the appeal's main question: namely, did Judge Ebinger properly apply or misapply the "domestic terrorism enhancement"? Second, it upheld the 8-year sentence anyway.

The day after the decision was handed down, the Department of Homeland Security issued its latest warning about domestic terrorism, in which it noted that “The United States remains in a heightened threat environment” and that DHS expects said environment to become more “dynamic” between now and November. It would be reasonable to assume that most of these domestic terrorist threats will continue to come from the far right, yet DHS’s list of potential targets of domestic terrorist attacks notably specifies “critical infrastructure”—which includes fossil fuel pipelines—along with racial and religious minorities. The ink was not yet dry on the decision regarding Reznicek’s case before DHS was normalizing the supposed equivalency between puncturing a pipeline or disabling a bulldozer and mass shootings like the one carried out by white supremacist Payton Gendron at a grocery store in Buffalo, New York, in May.

As an amicus brief filed by the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) in support of Reznicek’s appeal notes, there is murk around the various legal definitions of domestic terrorism and the safeguards guiding their use in the United States. But as the appellate brief made clear, simply damaging oil and gas infrastructure operated by a private corporation, while still a crime, is not an act of terrorism: “Reznicek’s offense did not qualify as a federal crime of terrorism because it was not calculated to influence or affect the conduct of government by intimidation or coercion, and was not retaliation against government conduct.” As anyone can hear in the oral arguments held on May 13, the judges sounded skeptical about whether Reznicek’s actions crossed the threshold, based on these criteria, to qualify them as acts of terrorism. Nevertheless, they opted to remain silent on the issue in their decision, letting Ebinger’s enhanced sentence stand.

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As the ACLU notes on their website, Section 802 of the USA Patriot Act defines domestic terrorism thusly: *“A person engages in domestic terrorism if they do an act ‘dangerous to human life’ that is a violation of the criminal laws of a state or the United States, if the act appears to be intended to: (i) intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination or kidnapping.”*

Jessica Reznicek did damage private property and publicly accepted responsibility for her actions, but she took great care to make sure no human life was put at risk. There are plenty of laws stipulating punishments for damaging property, but damaging property on its own is not terrorism.

It’s worth noting that the United States would likely not have had the opportunity to prosecute Reznicek if she hadn’t come forward. She was never caught in the act, nor was she tied to the sabotage by skillful detective and forensics work carried out by any law enforcement agency or private security force: she’d eluded them all. But on July 24, 2017, she and Ruby Montoya, a fellow climate activist and member of the Catholic Worker Movement, alerted the public to their joint acts by holding a press conference and issuing a claim of responsibility. In it, they detailed what they did, how they did it, and explained what had moved them to step so boldly outside the bounds of the law:

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 rampantly across our country seizing land and polluting our nation’s water supply. You may not agree with our tactics, but you can clearly see the necessity of them in light of the broken federal government and the corporations they protect. We do not anticipate a fair trial...

They were right not to anticipate a fair trial. But Reznicek’s sentence goes beyond mere unfairness; it is a clear, heavy-handed attempt to discourage protestors from taking any action that could be construed, however obliquely, as terrorism. In general terms, Reznicek’s legal and support team view Ebinger’s harsh sentence and the ensuing aftermath as the bidding of an oil and gas industry that, until its dying breath, will resort to whatever measures it needs to to make sure nobody gets in their way. Since the initial sentencing, her legal team has been circulating a petition, which expresses a guiding sentiment: “What happens to

Jessica, happens to all of us.” Now, members of that legal team are weighing their best options for making another attempt to overturn this dangerous precedent and obtain a more proportionate sentence. These options include: asking for a rehearing by the entire 8th Circuit, composed of 11 judges (not just the three who failed to clarify the law in their ruling); directing an appeal to the US Supreme Court; and/or seeking clemency from President Biden.

Bill Quigley, renowned civil rights attorney and one of Reznicek’s lawyers, likens Reznicek’s acts to those of 19th-century abolitionists who broke the law to free slaves. Regardless of what the court does or says, Quigley believes history will honor her for her selfless courage. Though he takes his cues from his client, he is determined to fight this attempt by the state to curtail protest until there’s no more fight to be had. On behalf of *The Real News*, I spoke with Quigley about the high-stakes battle to disestablish this terrible legal precedent and to overturn Reznicek’s unjust prison sentence.

Quigley also represents water protectors who protested DAPL’s construction in Louisiana, the L’eau est la Vie Bayou Bridge defendants, all charged with felony trespassing under the state’s “critical infrastructure” bill passed in 2018. While Quigley succeeded in getting all charges dropped for the Louisiana defendants, the felonies hung over their heads for two years, which amounted to a punishment by process.

My talk with Quigley tracks events from the moment Judge Ebinger handed down her perturbing sentence last year to June 3, 2022, just three days before the most recent decision was handed down.

Frances Madeson [FM]: Bill, I shouldn’t be surprised. I was in the Bismarck, North Dakota, courtroom when #NoDAPL water protector Red Fawn Foster was sentenced to 57 months and remanded to Bureau of Prison custody. The FBI had sicced an informant on her, who’d seduced her into becoming lovers; it was his gun they’d found in her jacket. There is no law they won’t stoop to when it comes to #NoDAPL water protectors. It is bitterly anathema to think that a water protector’s name could be linked for posterity to this attack on protest.

Take us behind the scenes—to the moment you were all sent down the “domestic terrorism” rabbit hole. **Bill Quigley [BQ]:** Honestly, it didn’t become real to me personally until the judge started talking about it at the sentencing. It had been something that was in the paperwork, we’d put some materials in the brief about why it wasn’t appropriate (one of many points in a long document), and the government had made a casual reference to it. But I never ever believed that Jessica’s actions constituted terrorism, and I never believed that any judge would think that her actions did. As the judge was seriously talking about it, I was really shocked and stunned, and extremely disappointed.

At one point, the judge actually did say that, in the regular course [of] this kind of case, the [sentencing] guidelines were somewhere around 36 to 40 months, which is about what we had hoped for. Not “hoped for,” but expected. We hoped for less than that, honestly. And when [the judge] talked about that, I thought, “That’s where we’re going”; but then she went on from there and I thought, “Really? You see this as an attempt to intimidate the government? Really, to intimidate the United States government?” [My reaction] was just unbelief.

I was one of the two lawyers for Jessica in the courtroom at the time. There were quite a few people that had come to support her, and she was shocked, I was shocked, they were shocked. But then here was the thing: The judge was saying, “You qualify for terrorism, so I’m going to essentially double your sentence, but I’m also gonna let you stay out without a bond until you have to report to prison in another couple of months,” and it’s like... would you do that with a terrorist? You wouldn’t let a terrorist stay out on their own recognizance and report on their own volition to the prison. The disconnect between the word “terrorism” and the actions, and the treatment of her by the court, just didn’t add up.

Jessica had told the court that the plan was that they intended to stop the pipeline—there’s no doubt about it. They tried to stop the continued construction of the pipeline, property was damaged, and they were somewhat successful. But they went to great lengths to make sure that no person got hurt.

In the United States, for the last several years, there have been thousands of people arrested for nonviolent civil disobedience, and of those thousands, certainly dozens, if not hundreds, have actually done some damage to property. The idea that damage to property plus protest could equate to terrorism—it's something that went like lightning through the entire protest community across the country.

People have advocated bring[ing] terrorism charges against Black Lives Matter protesters, against environmental protesters, anti-nuclear protesters, and the like. But to me that was always just hyperbole, and not something to be taken that seriously. But [Reznicek's case] shows, I think, that we had underestimated the power of the United States government to try to crush any sort of civil disobedience, even if it was nonviolent.

Immediately upon leaving the courtroom we gathered in a circle outside the courthouse and talked about this. Jessica felt, and it was very clear at that point, that we were really going to work on this terrorism enhancement. If she had been given two or three years, I'm not sure if she even would've wanted to appeal, but with this idea of eight years, and the signal that it sends to other protesters around the country, she was very much open to appeal.

FM: One of the outstanding aspects of your appeal was the collective strength and power of the four amici curiae briefs (friend of the court briefs) from the Climate Defense Project, the Center for Constitutional Rights, the Water Protector Legal Collective and National Lawyers Guild, and Catholic Social Action. How did that strategy evolve?

BQ: We started putting together a team of people to talk about the appeal. The team was me, the federal public defender, and a special person that was doing appeals for them, and we talked to lawyers and legal groups around the country. I started talking about the importance of its impact not just on Jessica, but all the other protesters, and that's where the idea of the amicus briefs emerged.

It's something that's done very rarely. There are thousands of appeals, and most of the time it's one person appealing one thing, or one corporation, but it's pretty rare to get a large number of people and legal organizations to join in and talk about how important the case is. One of them, the Catholic lawyers' brief—they reached out to us out of the blue and said, "We're a bunch of Catholic lawyers in Kentucky and we think it's important for the court to realize just how prominent this idea of respect for the Earth is in Catholic social teaching," and they wanted to do an amicus brief, and Jessica said yes.

FM: Maybe it wasn't the most polished of the four briefs, but in some ways, I felt it was the most passionate. Perhaps because I read it on the day the revelations around the hidden graves at Indian boarding schools in the US came to light, but some of its verbiage seemed to gesture toward amends to Indigenous people for past harms the Church had caused them. I was also struck by how seriously it took the need to vigorously defend the Catholic Workers from an association with terrorism.

BQ: There are legitimate concerns about terrorism, and terrorism is unfortunately a fact of life in our world these days. But the concept of terrorism is being badly abused in this case. I'm sure the people who originally inhabited the land before the English, French, and Spanish took it over considered what happened to them terrorism. It's a concept that's bandied about lately, and the court really runs the risk of diluting the concept if you just apply it to everyone you don't agree with politically.

And CCR's brief had other points in terms of international context, and we felt that all of the briefs [together] would help the court understand that this is just much more than an individual sentencing issue. Not everybody thinks or agrees that amicus briefs are helpful; some people think that in special criminal cases the best thing to do is keep quiet and focus on the technicalities and don't try to show their ripple effects and that sort of thing. But Jessica very much wanted to respond to the concerns of her supporters, and to publicize these parts of it as well.

If she has to serve eight years in prison, she's going to do that, and she's going to do that as well as anybody can do it. She's already spent a fair amount of time in there—in the summer it'll be a year. But the

hope is that the amicus briefs will educate the court and the public to the larger importance of this beyond the significance of how many years Jessica Reznicek spends in prison.

FM: The courts being political institutions, were [the briefs also meant] to demonstrate a countervailing force to the fossil fuel industry?

BQ: Yes. Whenever you go for an appeal, the chances of winning are low. By the time you get to the court of appeals in the federal system, you have a less than 50-50 chance to win. The government gets the close calls. So [the briefs are partly] to show that this is not just a private pipeline corporation at issue, but the government is trying to do something that is very scary not just to Jessica Reznicek, but to lots of other people as well.

FM: Like so many others, I follow her progress on Free Jessica Reznicek and on social media, but sometimes it can be hard to tell how she's doing.

BQ: Jessica is a very gregarious person and a very positive person and she has made a lot of friends in prison. At the same time, prison is set up to harm the spirit, and the prison has been locked down with COVID—and she has had COVID. Lockdowns are particularly tough because you don't get to go outside, you don't get to do any sort of recreation.

She has made it very clear to me and others that she respects the way that her prison is operated, and its place in the Bureau of Prisons, and she's doing everything she can. She's enrolled in college courses, she has a job there (she's helping to train animals to assist people with disabilities), and she is taking every opportunity to maximize the purposefulness of her time there.

She's overwhelmed by the numbers of letters and cards that she's getting, and she just literally cannot respond to everyone who is in touch with her. But she does appreciate it.

I think there is growing support for her across the country, but also internationally. There have been articles published in Germany and many other countries about what's going on here, and she has been getting tons of support from people who are really concerned about the future of our planet. And not everybody is saying she shouldn't have gone to prison; but what they are saying is that it is ridiculous to send somebody to prison for eight years for doing that stuff, and to label her a terrorist for doing it.

The other part about it that's pretty unusual is the amount of support she's getting from these Catholic sisters that are up there. She tries to be in contact with one of them as a spiritual advisor every week, and they exchange letters regularly. She is working really hard to try and keep her spirits up and make this time as productive as possible. But on occasion it's overwhelming, hurtful, and depressing, especially over this last winter when it was really cold, dark, and they couldn't go outside, and they were locked down, and they weren't allowed to mix much inside the prison. That was really hard. Some long-time political prisoners have said that last winter was the hardest time they had ever spent in prison because of the isolation and the COVID.

FM: How is she coping with being labeled a domestic terrorist?

BQ: Jessica was never charged with terrorism, she never pled guilty to terrorism, and now, after everything is all over, she's being labeled a terrorist. It's just in the terrain of Animal Farm; it doesn't really make sense, but if people keep repeating it often enough...

I have noticed that people say she should pay a price for destroying property, and she's going to pay a price. There are laws to punish people for destroying pipelines and property—she pled guilty to those. But she was never even charged with terrorism, and the idea that they come up with it at the 11th hour—it's just very unfair, and it's a real overkill by the government, and what I would call hyper-criminalization.

She was ready to take the consequences, she took the consequences, and then on top of it they add a whole other layer of consequences, which is just not fair and not logical. And it has a chilling effect [on] what other people understand about the limits of protest.

There is a conscious effort across the United States to hyper-criminalize people who interfere with pipelines because pipelines are so controversial right now. People are protesting them so broadly—from nuns, to Native Americans, to climate activists, to business people, elected officials—everybody. Because these are sort of the dying days of the pipeline industry, and they know it, and they’re trying to get as many pipelines in the ground in as many states as they can. They’re going to be stopped and they know that, so they’ve made a conscious effort to hyper-criminalize protesting them.

It’s a scary time for people who protest, and not everybody is going to sit down and figure out in advance what they are going to do and how they’re going to do it. But it’s clear that the government is really trying to clamp down hard on protesters who do anything other than stand with a sign on the sidewalk. Oil and gas and the government will do whatever they are allowed to do. They’re not gonna stop, they’re going to try and be more aggressive in other ways. If they can do this to [Jessica], and the court sanctions it, what does that mean for all the other people?

In order to stop them, we have to push back, and pushing back means taking public stances. It means working the legislature, fighting in the courts; it means lots of things.

The CCR brief was really important in showing the international context and where this comes from, and lays out why it’s important to not let the courts cheapen the idea of what terrorism is—and, especially, to not let the courts use it as a bludgeon against people who are doing nonviolent civil disobedience.

They would not have done this 20 years ago. If they get away with this [now], we really have to wonder: Where are they going to go next?

9 Jul - New Writing by Dan Baker

We are truly excited to be able to share more recent writing by the prolific Dan Baker.

MORE:

July 9th - Hope For Tallahassee

I’m told there is hope for Tallahassee, so I promise my friends – I won’t give up.

The union stands solidly beside me.

This is my village and we protect us.

Deep in my heart are spiritual longings, balanced by rage at daily injustice.

How should I love and honor both these things when we can only rely on us?

Should we take up arms like the PLO, Rojava and the IRA?

They share the same world and dangers you know,

giving up privileges to make a change.

Animal and Earth Liberation Front, not harming people, plants and critters,

going beyond mere publicity stunts, burning killers’ properties to cinders.

The Zapatistas, the army that don’t fight, Marcos says that “our word is our weapon”.

They remind us that might does not make right.

The world is still learning this sweet lesson.

But, whatever path you choose to apply, they’re all weeded in this revolution:

Construction, soldiers, medics and supplies, nurturing love is the core solution.

The theme of that poem is to make peace with our inner demons and to coexist as Buddhas with them. This is how I’ve found my place in our community, my identity in the world and Tallahassee. I like to think of myself as a “medical ninja”, belligerently loyal to my friends and village, like Narrator, and good with the ladies. In reality I’m more like Dan Quixote than Dan Juan. I was kicked out the Army and I’m not quite an EMT yet. I don’t have a trade mastered to offer my union and my community, unless you count holding a “hungry veteran” sign, doing yoga, thinking deep thoughts about why I don’t like patriarchal authority figures (basically my daddy issues), and maybe jiu jitsu strangleholds and joint locks. But really, I’m

mediocre, or at most intermediate at these things. Personally, I don't think being an "expert" at shooting is something to be proud of, like Atticus Finch would say. So I have very little to offer my community, but they have been there for me for a decade and I'm determined to give back. I want to help build up our home, by protecting nature, nurturing future generations, supporting women's rage towards idiots like myself and planting seeds that continue to bare fruit long after I'm gone.

July 12th - To All White Anarchists

I write this on the anniversary of the MOVE bombing by police (1985) and the execution of James Conolly, leader of the IRA's Easter Uprising (1916).

I challenge all white anarchists, and liberals of all races, to read *The Nation on No Map* by William C. Anderson. I've been reading constantly, and building a dialogue with black prisoners, for the past sixteen months, and this book is the single best work that I have read. William has set the standard for all anarchists and allies of oppressed people worldwide. This book is easy to read, condensed, brief, accurate and brave. He tells truths I have been trying to share with the white and intersectional activist community, and the comfortably blithe liberals. I discovered this exceptional book through AK Press via the Noname Book Club out of Los Angeles.

William explains that liberals and pacifist civil rights leftists simply preserve and seek to mollify the same State that oppresses black people. This system is not broken, it was built on the foundation of slave labor, and functions by catching people and enslaving them, today in prison plantations, called "work camps", "institutions" and "penitentiaries". I'd like to add that the enslavement of white people by white people has been made possible by the enslavement of black people and so-called "foreigners" and "minorities". Additionally, the captivity of men has been brought about by the housewivisation of women. All male prisoners and their captors are subject to what women have experienced since nation-states first began to domesticate strong women by turning them into dependent housewives. This process came about by applying animal husbandry to people. These are the roots of all slavery, and by changing the way we live, think and eat we can overcome civilization's control and achieve true liberation.

William rejects the partial citizenship that the white supremacist United States government offers to black people, because for all Americans their patriotism is rooted in a myth of exceptionalism, a smug sense of superiority, and republicanism in the form of "representative" government officials who really only represent the business interests of their sponsors. He documents the fact that the "founding fathers" were slave owners and that modern police came about as a continuation of slave catchers who were recruited to patrol in order to quell slave uprisings, like Nat Turner's, and to prevent slaves from learning how to read and write. There were times that Irish indentured servants joined black slaves in violent revolts, before the ruling class, especially the British, considered the Irish to be white. In exchange for betraying black slaves, some Irish were granted favors, including "Whiteness". This also occurred in indigenous uprisings – the traitors were granted token "white status". But, some Irish, indigenous and black slaves went "off the reservation" to join a more humane tribe of free communities. Many indigenous Mexicans are descended from tribes who refused to submit to diabolical colonialism.

I respect William's rejection of celebrity, fame and leadership. His focus is on everyone's needs being met. He is truly refusing careerism – there is no price tag on this book, and no copyright restrictions. I also admire the bold principles he openly advocates in these times of State violence. We do need to abolish borders, nations and states. We also need to learn from black gangs – They are effectively organized self-defense structures who fill a gap otherwise colonized by slave catchers. White supremacist militias are actively recruiting homeless people, especially homeless veterans. If we don't, they will.

These fascist gangs are training, hunting, and killing people, in their communities and on the Mexican "border" for sport. I grew up in a racist community in Jupiter Farms, Florida and have declined invitations for such pogroms. Those people enthusiastically agitate for a race war, and when they say "the south will rise again" they mean it with the same zealous tone I heard from Jihadis screaming "Allah Akbar!" while

they tried to kill me. “Vanilla Isis” is Christian White Nationalists and their flavor of “Y’all-Qaeda” is just as virulent as Salafi Jihadism. While you sleep on ‘em, they’re training to kill you. Learn to fight and shoot.

The Future is female and if we want to survive, we must support women’s rage towards abusive and patriarchal structures and people. This means ending cycles of behavior, thoughts and speech reinforced by prison culture, profit driven politics and housewivisation. The criminalization of sex work, abortion and so-called infidelity all subjugate women. The concept of a man claiming a child as “his” is a root of violence, kidnapping and patriarchy. This violence is reinforced by toxic male egos demanding to know if they are the sperm donor for each child in question. Women are free to fuck whoever they want, and to bear or not bear whoever’s child they want. We must support structures for and by women which protect women from abusive men. At the same time men must not expect women to live with them in exchange for, or under threat of denial of, resources and emotional labor. As William points out, women are criminalized for defending themselves from violence and even passive aggressive abuse that ruins communities. Women are also turned against each other, trained to view each other and themselves from objective male perspectives.

William also points out that the U.S. And its prison industrial plantation is not broken – It’s doing exactly what it was made to do. It is built on and perpetuates slavery, genocide, domination, colonialism and never-ending wars. He documents the need to embrace a variety of strategies and tactics to defeat this Leviathan: legal, illegal, passive, aggressive, nonviolent and violent, harassment, debate, petitioning, donating, sponsoring lawyers, legal fees, supporting prisoners, sit-ins, lie-downs, boycotts, strikes, songs, prayers, riots and shooting from windows. The State does not have a monopoly on violence. We must not identify with our oppressor. We are from America, but we are not Amerikkkan.

He also quotes Lucy Parsons to remind us that voting in Amerikkka is largely a ritual that serves to pacify uprisings. All this electoral college does is allow us to look at one side of the same coin every so often. Both parties are part of the wealthy ruling class at the top of a pyramid. Under them the slave catchers keep us separated and exhausted from trying to survive. We don’t need to flip it over and receive a new tyranny – we need to rip the blocks down and form a horizontal, circular community, not a hierarchical triangle with haves and have-nots. According to the supreme court’s Dread Scott decision, this United States of Amerikkka was not made to allow black people true equality. Any “white” person who refuses to help the black community is implicit in this systematic oppression. The legal structure of England has been documented to be the same. Even “emancipation” failed to notify all slaves or even enforce their token “liberation”, as the grim holiday Juneteenth reminds us.

Along with rejecting police, the military and courts we must apply revolutionary intercommunalism. The Black Panthers laid down some groundwork in this respect, and by applying militant feminism we can continue to grow. This is a never-ending process.

I offer the self-criticism that I have idealized flawed figures from leftist history and herstory. William makes very good criticisms on this subject. While I am an anarchist because I reject leftist, and all, authoritarianism, I am still sentimental towards the Shehids, the martyrs. I particularly enjoy William’s references of Zen Buddhism’s methods for dealing with dogmatic mysticism and tyranny.

I support this book, the author, the people it’s for and its message. We are ungovernable. We stand in solidarity with the oppressed. We will never give up. We may feel there is no escape, nowhere to run to escape capitalist modernity’s colonization – so we choose to fight over flight. If we can’t run, neither can they. They are trapped here with us, not the other way around. There is no going back. Harriet Tubman and John Brown pushed rebellion to an insurrectionary stage, then moved towards a social revolution. This war never ended. We have to be willing and able to fight.

13 Jul - 2 Things You Can Do to Urge for Compassionate Release for Mutulu Shakur
Mutulu's health has been in rapid decline since his parole hearing in April.

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His legal team appealed the denial of parole and the petition for reconsideration is now pending with the parole commission. The situation is dire-- Congress can exercise oversight of the USPC and put pressure on Commissioners Cushwa and Massarone to do the right thing and follow guidelines to grant Mutulu's parole. Please contact your Congressperson ASAP to request that they contact the Parole Commissioners as well as BOP Director Carvajal and Deputy AG Lisa Monaco. Keep Mutulu in your thoughts and prayers as always, and now is the time for everyone to take action as well.

Call and/or Email to your Congressperson:

"Hello, my name is _____ and I am a constituent.

I am contacting you regarding Dr. Mutulu Shakur, a federal prisoner in the Bureau of Prisons, whose inmate number is #83205-012.

Dr. Shakur has been diagnosed with terminal bone marrow cancer and he has been told by BOP-contracted doctors that he has less than 6 months to live. He is 71 years old and has spent over 36 years in prison.

Dr. Shakur has not had a disciplinary incident in over 15 years and his conduct in prison has been so remarkable that current and former BOP wardens and employees support his release.

I am urging you to support compassionate release for Dr. Shakur, so he can spend his final days with family and loved ones."

Please contact the United States Parole Commission, BOP Director Carvajal and Deputy AG Monaco to support compassionate release for Dr. Shakur.

July 20th - National Faith Coalition Urges Officials To Release Movement Elder Mutulu Shakur

by Anoa Changa (*NewsOne*)

A national faith coalition wants federal officials to release incarcerated Black liberation movement elder Dr. Mutulu Shakur. The move comes as Shakur has been given less than six months to live as he battles a terminal cancer diagnosis and other ailments, including two bouts of COVID-19.

Hundreds of faith leaders signed an open letter to officials with the Department of Justice, Bureau of Prison and United States Parole Commission urging the dying elder's release. Calling for government officials to recognize the values of redemption and salvation, the faith coalition said that keeping Shakur locked up serves no valid public purpose.

"Our request is in no way meant to denigrate the victims' families or ignore the loss of life," read the letter. "It is our belief that Mr. Shakur has been more than adequately punished for those acts. The continued incarceration of this terminally ill senior citizen serves no useful purpose as Mr. Shakur represents absolutely no threat to public safety."

The coalition also noted that per the Bureau of Prison's PATTERN risk assessment tool, Shakur was in the lowest possible risk category.

Faith leaders rally in Washington, D.C., to demand Shakur's release

Lack of federal action could convert Shakur's sentence to a death sentence, given the advanced nature of his disease. Faith leaders, legal advocates and supporters will rally Wednesday morning at the Department of Justice in Washington D.C., calling for the 71-year-olds release.

Planned speakers include the founder of the Ladies of Hope Ministries, Dr. Topeka Sam, Plymouth United Church of Christ Senior Pastor Rev. Graylan Scott and professor Karanja Kieta Carroll of First Pilgrim Baptist Church in Delaware. Faith leaders will join friends and family of Shakur and leaders from the legal community, including human rights attorney Nkechi Taifa and Ben Crump.

"Dr. Mutulu Shakur should be granted immediate compassionate release so that he can be home with his family and loved ones and NOT DIE in prison," Sam told *NewsOne*.

The faith coalition's letter highlights Shakur's contributions to public health, creating an acupuncture detoxification program in the South Bronx. As *NewsOne* reported earlier this month, Shakur worked alongside the Young Lords and other groups to transform the Lincoln Detox program into a space of healing and positivity, not the usual stigma and disdain attached to treating those with substance use issues.

Refusing to release Shakur is about politics, not justice

Speaking with *NewsOne*, Maria Fernandez of the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement recounted the many times the Free Mutulu Now campaign has tried to secure the aging healer's release.

"It's important to know that he has served his time," she said. "It's the same judge who first sent him to prison that continues to deny his release. "We know that this is political."

Fernandez said there is no legitimate reason to keep a dying elder locked away from his family. Scholar-activist Dr. Akinyele Umoja previously told *NewsOne* that the reasons given for denying Shakur parole, despite his eligibility, have been his continued advocacy for human rights in the U.S. and abroad. Umoja and Fernandez both pointed to his record of model behavior while incarcerated.

According to Umoja, the only infraction Shakur has in his file relates to a discussion he was a part of with a California University class and actor Danny Glover in which the elder organizer discussed the need for a Truth and Reconciliation process similar to South Africa.

Fernandez said this is also about politics and not justice because of the continued detention of elders in federal prisons despite their eligibility for release.

"For elders like Baba Mutulu, for other political prisoners, who are caught in this old law/sentencing guidelines, we have to do something," she said. "We have to intervene because we're losing our elders behind the walls. Again, this is political."

"Old law" offenders are vulnerable and often without recourse in the federal system

Brad Thomson, an attorney with the People's Law Office in Chicago, has represented Shakur since 2020. He told *NewsOne* that Shakur's status as someone incarcerated under "old law" had complicated the requests for release.

"At the time of his sentence, there was mandatory parole," Thomson explained. "So that means that at 30 years, he should have been granted parole, and the U.S. Parole Commission denied him in spite of that."

Many have long been eligible for parole, but the agency that oversees their release refuses to let them go in most cases. Despite various reforms of the criminal legal system, including the First Step Act, people sentenced in the federal system before November 1987 are in a limbo status.

July 21st - Activists are working to keep Tupac Shakur's stepfather from dying of cancer in prison

by Char Adams (*NBC News*)

Organizers have launched a movement to release Tupac Shakur's stepfather from a decades long prison sentence as he faces a rare form of blood cancer that his doctors say is incurable.

Mutulu Shakur, an activist and holistic health care advocate, has been behind bars for more than 35 years and now, at 71, has several health issues, most notably stage-3 multiple myeloma, a blood cancer that can affect the bones and kidneys.

Shakur has endured drastic weight loss due to his illnesses and treatments; has had Covid at least twice; and has relied on IV feeding tubes on and off since May, his attorney, Brad Thomson, said. Thomson said

doctors with the Federal Bureau of Prisons gave Shakur less than six months to live in May, noting that his cancer treatment had stopped working.

“His health situation is extremely dire right now. He’s very much on an end-of-life trajectory. We’re looking at a matter of months at the most but, realistically, it could be a matter of days or weeks,” Thomson told *NBC News*. “At this point, the issue is getting him released so he can say goodbye to his loved ones, his family, his children, and grandchildren. To be surrounded by loved ones, so he can die in dignity, peace and comfort outside of prison.”

Shakur was diagnosed with myeloma in 2019, Thomson said, and his legal team requested his “compassionate release” in May 2020. U.S. District Judge Charles Haight Jr. in November 2020 denied Shakur’s request, holding that his crimes were too serious, and his health had not deteriorated enough to warrant release.

“Should it develop that Shakur’s condition deteriorates further, to the point of approaching death, he may apply again to the Court, for a release that in those circumstances could be justified as ‘compassionate,’” Haight said in the ruling obtained by *NBC News*.

A spokesperson for Haight, who also presided over the 1988 case that landed Shakur in jail for bank robbery and other crimes, told *NBC News* that a new request for Shakur’s release is pending and the judge is waiting for guidance from the U.S. attorney’s office before making a decision. Shakur is being held at a federal medical center in Lexington, a prison in Kentucky for incarcerated people who require care.

Shakur is serving a 60-year sentence stemming from a 1988 conviction for conspiracy to violate the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, or RICO Act, bank robbery, armed bank robbery and bank robbery murder. He was convicted of leading a group of revolutionaries in a string of armed robberies in New York and Connecticut, including one that left three people dead. He was also convicted of helping JoAnne Chesimard, aka Assata Shakur, escape from a New Jersey prison in 1979, according to The Associated Press and Thomson.

However, Shakur and his supporters say that the acts were political, not criminal, in nature. Jomo Muhammad, an organizer with the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement working to free Shakur, as well as Shakur’s friends and family, said his incarceration is linked to his Black liberation efforts and his work with revolutionary Black nationalist groups in the 1960s, including the Revolutionary Action Movement and the Republic of New Afrika.

Muhammad said Shakur is being used as an example because of his activism. At the time of his 1986 arrest he was doing his own independent investigation of COINTELPRO, an FBI campaign to discredit radical groups including Black liberation movements that were deemed illegal, Muhammad said.

“Fifty years later, the United States government continues to hold a grudge,” Muhammad said. “You can make the argument that he is, in fact, a political prisoner.”

14 Jul - Jury Finds Former CIA Programmer Guilty Of Leaking CIA Hacking Materials To WikiLeaks

A federal jury in New York convicted former CIA employee Joshua Schulte of violating the Espionage Act when he allegedly released materials on the CIA’s hacking capabilities to WikiLeaks.

MORE:

by Kevin Gosztola (*Shadowproof*)

This was the second trial against Schulte. In March 2020, his first trial ended in a mistrial on several Espionage Act charges, but he was found guilty of contempt of court and lying to the FBI.

Unlike the first trial, Schulte represented himself and argued his case. He again maintained he was not the source of the leaks published by *WikiLeaks*.

The jury deliberated for nearly three days before announcing a verdict. Judge Jesse M. Furman in the Southern District of New York did not schedule a sentencing date because there are other charges pending against Schulte.

Known as the “Vault 7” materials, *WikiLeaks* began releasing documents on March 7, 2017. They came from what *WikiLeaks* described as an “isolated, high-security network situated inside the CIA’s Center for Cyber Intelligence.”

Documents revealed how the CIA could target iPhones, Androids, and Samsung TVs and convert the devices’ microphones into bugs used to spy on targeted persons. Malware was also developed to infect Microsoft Windows users, and the CIA was “hoarding” security vulnerabilities in software and hardware that they could use for their covert operations instead of notifying companies that users were at risk of being hacked.

It was one of the largest leaks of information in the history of CIA and a huge embarrassment for then-CIA Director Mike Pompeo, who responded by labeling *WikiLeaks* a “non-state hostile intelligence agency” and developing “secret war plans” against the media organization that included kidnapping or even killing *WikiLeaks* founder Julian Assange.

The US government has charged Assange with violating the Espionage Act, and the UK government authorized his extradition in June.

Assistant US Attorney Michael D. Lockard asserted that on April 20, 2016, Schulte “stole the entirety of the CIA’s highly sensitive cyber intelligence capabilities.” This occurred just days after the CIA “locked the defendant out of the secure restricted vault-like location on the network.”

“Shortly after stealing this extraordinarily sensitive intelligence information, the defendant transmitted those backups to *WikiLeaks*, knowing full well that *WikiLeaks* would put it up on the internet,” Lockard argued. “In the weeks following this break-in, the defendant took every step he would need to take in order to transmit those files to *WikiLeaks*. He downloaded a program that *WikiLeaks* itself recommends to leakers to use to send stolen data.”

The program Schulte downloaded was Tor, and it is a widely used privacy tool that was supported through funds from the US State Department. He also downloaded Tails, which can be used to make a computer forget websites, files, passwords, and devices and Wi-Fi networks.

Lockard said, “[*WikiLeaks*] tell[s] you to use Tails as an OS that allows you to hide all of your activity.”

But like Tor, Tails can be used by anyone who cares about their privacy in an age of digital surveillance.

Lockard cast Schulte as a disgruntled employee and insisted he was known at the CIA for filing “false complaints,” bragging about his access to the classified computer network, and defying his supervisors.

“The defendant would like to think of himself as a bad ass, but in fact, he is a ticking time bomb, a nuclear bomb, one that was ready to explode at any perceived provocation or disrespect,” Lockard declared. “And in April and May of 2016, the defendant, the so-called nuclear option, set out to lay waste to the CIA’s cyber program, to prove his superiority, and to punish the people who he believed had wronged him. In carrying out that revenge, he caused enormous damage to this country’s national security.”

But US prosecutors never presented any forensic evidence to specifically tie Schulte to the publication of the CIA hacking materials on *WikiLeaks*.

Schulte acted very confident during his closing argument. He insisted that Lockard was “worried about the lack of evidence” because he had told the jury the “lack of evidence is not evidence of innocence.”

“He’s worried there was no forensic artifact of a log-in to the Confluence server [the server that allowed employees to share information],” Schulte stated. “He’s worried there was no forensic artifact of a copy command. And he’s worried there was no forensic artifact of the transmission to *WikiLeaks*. And finally, he’s worried there was no forensic artifact of any communication at all between me and *WikiLeaks*. He should be worried ‘because that is reasonable doubt.’”

As Schulte put it, the CIA “had no idea that its crown jewels” were stolen until the material appeared on *WikiLeaks*. “The CIA was under pressure—I will say tremendous pressure—to find out what was leaked, how it was leaked, and who leaked it. They wanted to hold someone responsible for the leak, and so they began immediately an investigation, an investigation that focused on me.”

Schulte left the CIA on “bad terms” in November 2016. According to Schulte, “The lead FBI agent admitted that they had not even interviewed a single CIA witness. They had not even finished seizing the DevLAN network [which stored all the source code for hacking tools], let alone actually reviewed it. They had not conducted any investigation at all, and yet I was already the target of their investigation.”

“Then, within a week, the FBI concocted an impossible theory that the *WikiLeaks* crime occurred on March 7, 2016, because it was precisely a year before the leaks. That was a day when many other people were at a manager offsite, and I was left alone in the office with no one to see what I was doing. And so the FBI argued I must have stolen the CIA’s files,” Schulte added.

Frank Stedman, who worked with Schulte, described why he was known as the “nuclear option.” It had nothing to do with someone prone to leaking classified information. He said Schulte did not care about the process for raising complaints. He would not play nice.”

If there was, like, a project or something that we didn’t want to do or we thought was a bad idea, the joke was that we could bring him into the meeting and he would tell the customer to their face that they were stupid, that their idea was stupid, that we weren’t going to do it,” Stedman testified.

It came out in testimony during both trials that at one point Schulte expressed views against leaking and suggested that NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden was a traitor who deserved to be executed.

Prosecutors attempted to stop Schulte from insisting that there was information from the “Vault 7” materials, which was already publicly available. So the government had not taken steps to protect it, and he could not be guilty of violating the Espionage Act. Judge Furman allowed the argument.

There was scant coverage of both trials from the US news media. Matthew Russell Lee, who publishes to an independent site called Inner City Press, covered the trials—and all hearings in between.

Schulte was designated for special administrative measures, or SAMs, by Attorney General Jeff Sessions, and Lee successfully won the unsealing of records related to Schulte’s civil complaint against the US government for cruel and inhuman treatment in Metropolitan Correctional Center New York. (The prison shut down as a result of deteriorating conditions in August 2021.)

Attorney General Merrick Garland has continued to impose the restrictive conditions against Schulte, which prohibit any communications with journalists, require an FBI agent to monitor limited communications with immediate family, and ban him from talking with any inmates.

While at MCC New York, Schulte complained, “SAMs inmates are locked in concrete boxes the size of parking spaces with purposefully obstructed views of outside. The cages are filthy and infested with rodents, rodent droppings, cockroaches, and mold.”

“There is no heating or air conditioning in the cages. There is no functioning plumbing. The lights burn brightly 24 hours per day, and the inmates are denied outside recreation, normal commissary, normal visitation, access to books and legal material, medical care, and dental care.”

Schulte is now confined at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn. He has several child pornography charges pending against him that stem from the FBI raid on his Manhattan apartment on March 15, 2017.

18 Jul - The George Floyd Uprisings Are Still Happening... For Those Doing Time.

In May 2020, we saw millions hit the streets over the police murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis. It's been argued to be the largest protests in history. The government moved in immediately to repress those taking the streets against the police and racial violence.

MORE:

from *Green + Red Podcast*

We saw intense protest, resistance, violent repression by police and other forces and media attention in Minneapolis, Louisville, Portland and Kenosha WI. But also in places less known like Grand Rapids Michigan and Champaign IL. More than 350 people were arrested on federal charges while city and state level arrests topped 14,000 between May-Nov 2020.

In our latest episode, we talk with Sarah with Uprisings Support. We talk about the ongoing legal struggles of people arrested and facing serious charges from the 2020 uprisings and how Uprising Support continues to support those in jail and awaiting trial. Listen in here: greenandredpodcast.org/2022/07/18/the-george-floyd-uprisings-are-still-happening-for-those-doing-time

20 Jul - Grand Jury resistance: Not if, but how

James is an anti-repression and movement defense activist and former grand jury resister from Texas. Katie is an anarchist legal worker in the U.S. South and a former grand jury resister. Eli, the attorney who represented Katie, worked for a non-profit representing people in prison and provided pro bono legal representation. Critical moments in that conversation have been highlighted in the article below.

MORE:

Two Stories of Resistance:

For James, his subpoena to attend a Grand Jury did not come necessarily as a surprise, but it was not what he was expecting. Three weeks after his protest activity, he said he had begun to let his guard down. When two men showed up at his door, he assumed they were the construction workers from the house next door, asking if he wanted a new roof. It turns out James should have followed the gut feeling he had when he heard the knock, “I felt it in my stomach, that, oh this is the FBI. When James opened the door, he did not find his X-files expectations of attractive agents in black suits and ties; James says “they didn’t look like the FBI, I didn’t see any badges or anything. Instead, they wore jeans, khakis, polos, and striped shirts. The FBI agents tried to ask him about his location at certain times, and James’ know your rights training quickly kicked in, so he remained silent. As soon as the FBI left, he was seeking legal counsel.

For Katie, she isn’t quite sure what specific activity or relationship led to her being subpoenaed. That confusion is often the nature of, and a part of the game of, the FBI using these subpoenas in relationship to activist circles. It is hard to talk about the opaque system without speculation, but speculation is often what is so insidious about grand juries, so trying to get the facts as accurate as possible is key.

When the FBI showed up at Katie's house, she wasn't home. Her roommate told her about their visit and she decided that her next step was getting a lawyer. Unfortunately, obtaining a lawyer meant that the lawyer was the one who was served the subpoena. While this wasn't able to delay the inevitable, as Katie says, "that steered them away from visiting me over and over again, which is something they continued to do with other people" and this effectively "directed [the FBI] to only contact [the lawyer] from that point forward."

By the time Katie had her subpoena, she only had 21 days to decide what to do. As Katie says, the few days' notice is often a tactic "used to disorganize you" and give you little time to prepare, often further creating a sense of panic. As soon as you receive a subpoena, if you decide to not show up you could be held liable for a criminal offense. And while avoiding a subpoena entirely is possible, it is unlikely and could result in isolation from much needed community support. The best option for most people is to know your rights, lawyer up, and get community support. Subpoenas don't have to result in giving up your values and cooperating, and that is where resistance comes in.

For Katie, she says, "that wasn't a choice [about resisting]— it wasn't something that I can imagine having made a different choice about, but the reason for that is because when I was served a subpoena, I think I was 30 or 31, and I had been doing legal support." Katie knew a lot of people who had resisted in the past, she knew what resistance was, and she knew the consequences; her decision was an educated one. Because of this, Katie decided to make her resistance public, seeing this as an opportunity to educate her community on the injustices of grand juries and the possibility of resisting.

This conviction to fight was vital, as Katie says, "I do think that the question of what motivates or what strengthens your resistance is fundamental." For Katie, this resistance was personal, political, and community-oriented. But the conviction to bring this resistance into such a public light comes with great responsibility. Since "it wasn't a question of whether I was going to resist, the question became how" what was integral for Katie was figuring out "how to be responsible and accountable to everyone else but doing it in a way that made it so public that it could bring other people in." Not only was Katie trying to educate others, but she was trying hard to maintain the mutual trust between herself and her comrades that the government was trying to disrupt.

Katie went about this in the best way she could think of, through "transparency with my community." When she entered the courtroom, she answered each question with a written statement invoking her constitutional rights to not answer and writing down the questions asked so she could share them back, disrupting the veil of secrecy grand juries rely so heavily upon. When Katie left the courtroom, the prosecutor recommended she be held in contempt of court, but she never heard from them again. The radio silence was not the end of it, though, the issue continued to be investigated, so "the open-ended nature of the legal process for the large community in North Carolina, I think, kind of remains."

While Katie had the support of her community, for James, much of the heavy lifting was on the backend of the process. For James, resistance "just seemed like the thing to do." Reasoning that the "the more [the FBI] wanted it, the less you should tell them."

In many ways, the judicial system is designed to be confusing, and especially in a grand jury room, where the prosecutor is in charge and hearsay is admissible, James feared that talking would result in more charges against him or his friends. In addition, James was aware that there was a confirmed informant within his group who had caused these issues, which only left him feeling "we could talk ourselves into more trouble," and that "things could get worse if we cooperated."

The group James operated with was not initially all on board. Resistance is a fear-inducing unknown, which should not be downplayed. But often, the best person to look for support in is a fellow resister. In James' group, there was an older member who was justifiably scared of the consequences of resistance and being held in contempt of court. Another younger member was more prone to following others' lead and didn't see the complete picture of the danger of cooperation. James sat them down and "convinced them

cooperating was risky and not cooperating could be successful if we all stuck together.” For James, “that was crucial in keeping a coherent, cohesive strategy of noncooperation.”

Community Support:

Resisting isn't a one-person process, though; it requires the community's support and knowledgeable legal counsel. Obtaining that is easier said than done. The question I posed to the interviewees is, was it up to the community to be ready and prepared to support the resistance, or was it up to the resister to educate the community on how to support them? With all the complicated factors, the answer wasn't a clear one.

Often, James says, communities don't like talking about complicated, often mundane legal processes such as grand juries, and there tends to be, as with much of American culture “a do-it-yourself self-reliance, go it alone attitude.” The solution then to this issue of support is not a clear one, but likely a combination of both pieces. The problem is, “there is a lack of one because there is not enough of the other, people don't know what support looks like or what's available, so they don't ask for support. And nobody's asked for support, so people don't know how to initiate and offer and ask for support,” James explained. Creating a culture where both operate with one another helps to bridge that gap.

Katie sees the solution as an integration of resistance and support built into everyday life. “When we think about moments of repression and how we care for people, there are so many things going on that make it more complicated. And it informs the way I work with people thinking about how many things are going on, people are just dealing with a lot, how do we work to support in a way that's suitable and keeps people tied to the people that makes them stronger without creating ideas for our community that are not realistic.”

Support tends to come in episodic waves, as Katie says, “support is going to fray no matter what, no matter how good and well-intentioned.” She went on to reflect that “one of the things that was hard for me and hard for people in my life to understand is that people had a great fundraiser and people did supportive stuff, and then they went away, but I was still doing this thing.”

Integrating support, resistance, and building up the community when things hit the fan is more complicated than building it into daily life. Especially when thinking about how many political movements aren't static, as Katie says, “when we see movements like the George Floyd protest, where people don't have preexisting relationships, they may or may not have any relationship coming out of that. It is a very different way of relating, so there is not the same conversation about long-term solidarity. So how do we resource somebody to get through something right now? And how the people in their life fit in or don't.” Integrating this support is not always easily done. As Katie says, “[it is] really hard to distill into a workshop,” but continuing the conversation around it is an essential consideration in the future.

Lawyering Up:

One of the most important things I learned from these interviews is that grand jury resistance is similar to any legal process: the first step is lawyer up, lawyer up, lawyer up! But this is not as simple as it may seem. James says, the perfect lawyer would be “one that is experienced, in general, and in this area, is politically sympathetic, and has the time, energy, and resources to do the work for you for free, and that just doesn't always exist.” For him, the issue becomes a balancing trade-off of lawyers, but his advice is to “ask a lot of questions, be honest from the beginning about what you're looking for, and see who you feel the best about and figure out what you need to do to afford them.” Connecting with an organization like the Civil Liberties Defense Center or the National Lawyers Guild is a great way to find a referral.

For Katie, that similar all-hands-on-deck approach to community support is good for thinking about an attorney. Katie got lucky; her attorney was a long-time friend who knew “what my resolve was and how much I was willing to learn and how much I was willing to sacrifice.” They had a much more horizontal relationship than most people think of in attorney-client dynamics. But Katie doesn't believe you have to have a good friend with a law degree just to get a good lawyer. For Katie, finding a good lawyer is about finding an attorney that is not afraid to learn something. For her, her lawyer was excellent not necessarily

because of their relationship, but because “they were willing to talk to anybody, they consulted with so many good people and used our resources well” and for Katie, if felt like, “we learned to do it together.”

Of course, no lawyer is perfect, and even those with all these qualities still need a community of peers who are well attuned to the topic to confer with. But, as Katie says, “there are a lot of attorneys who are willing to learn things outside of their scope if there are people who know better [about the subject] who promise they will be there and walk them through it so they can do it to the best of their ability.” It is critical to find a lawyer who is willing to learn with you as well as other attorneys, comrades, or organizations that are willing to help you and your attorney learn what resistance looks like in action.

I was also able to sit down and speak with Katies attorney at the time, Eli. Eli gave invaluable advice for both those seeking legal representation and lawyers considering taking on cases. Eli told me that one of the most helpful things someone who is looking for a lawyer can do is try to get community support or fundraising going. The grand jury resistance process was significantly longer than Eli had anticipated, and doing this work pro bono, detracted from their full-time job. While Eli was more than willing to help Katie in this process, considering the fiscal impact this work has is critical when asking lawyers to provide free legal representation. If you have a list of other lawyers who work within grand jury resistance or you can get sample motions or media statements, that is valuable information for your lawyer to have.

As James highlights, it is essential to sort out your networks, contacting organizations like CLDC, the NLG, or calling the NLG federal repression hotline at 212.679.2811.

23 Jul - Tree-sits and Barricades Hold Strong as Week of Action to Defend the Atlanta Forest Kicks Off

As the week of action to defend the Atlanta forest begins, already a wave of actions have set an uncompromising tone.

MORE:

Over the past week, police attempted to block off access to Intrenchment Creek Park with large concrete barriers and also put up, “Park Closed” signs, angering both forest defenders and park goers. As the *Atlanta Community Press Collective* wrote:

With no warning and little legal justification, a mass of DeKalb County police officers accompanied by construction equipment and paving machines descended upon Intrenchment Creek Park (ICP) on the morning of Friday, July 15th.

Barricades were placed at the entrances of two parking lots with access to the park, effectively preventing vehicle access to the park. While pedestrian access points remain physically unblocked, “private property – no trespassing” signs have been posted at multiple spots. As of Monday afternoon, it remains unclear to what extent this so-called trespassing will be enforced by DeKalb County PD.

In response, local community groups held a press conference denouncing the move, but according to Scenes from the Atlanta Forest, the barriers did not last long. A communique posted to the site reported:

It takes 100 cute little ants working together to type a communique. Imagine how many ants it takes to move a 4,000 lb concrete barricade! That’s what we accomplished last night, the evening of the 19th. Ryan Milsap wanted to close Intrenchment Creek Park to the public and thought that some 2 ton concrete barricades would do the trick. But he just had no idea how many ants love to come and go from the park and love to work together to make a nicer place for the whole community. Fuck Milsap, Fuck Blackhall, and FUCK THE COPS!

Inside the Atlanta forest itself, tree-sits remain ongoing, despite continuing attempts by police to remove the growing resistance encampments. According to a report published on July 21st, local police made another failed attempt at removing tree-sitters, who wrote:

The continued militarized response to tree sitters in the south Atlanta forest shows very blatantly how willing the state is to use violence and intimidation to repress our movements. To the state we say this

“We will not be intimidated.” Your “aggressive posturing” will not scare us away. While you depict us as almost mythical creatures capable of terrifying things, skulking through the woods, we enjoy a world filled with relationships built on trust and intimacies deeper than you can imagine. group meals, music around the fire, real talk, a life richer than most anything to be found in civilization, built with the scraps of your world. There are many of us, with many different analyses, but we hold one thing in common, we have seen what is possible, and we stand in total opposition to this world and its cops. For a world without police or prisons or asylums, a world without gender, a world without civilization.

Then on July 22nd, the day before the week of action was set to kick off, a new communique claimed that forest defenders had barricaded an area of Intrenchment Creek Park where police had originally placed concrete barriers up last Friday. According to the report:

“BECOME UN-REMOTE-CONTROLLABLE, FUCK BLACKHALL” reads the banner in front of the new tire-and-brush barricade in front of the Remote-Control Airfield at Intrenchment Creek Park, where police entered the forest twice this week after barricading the ICP parking lot shut last Friday. The cops gleefully stepped into their role as the hired henchmen of corporate elites, and “closed the park”—which is still legally a public park—at the behest of Blackhall Studios CEO Ryan Millsap, sworn enemy of all things good in this world. The cops put up private property signs which were swiftly taken down, and the cement barricades autonomously swung open.

The time has long passed to choose a side. You are either with the forest or against it. We know where the cops stand, we know where Blackhall Studios stands, and we will no longer let them into these woods without a battle.

OUR WOODS NOT HOLLYWOOD’S! NO HOLLYWOOD DYSTOPIA! FUCK RYAN MILLSAP! FUCK BLACKHALL STUDIOS! BECOME UN-REMOTE-CONTROLLABLE!!!

To check out a calendar of events for the unfolding week of action, visit defendtheatlantaforest.org/calendar. Be sure to also follow Defend the Atlanta Forest and check Scenes from the Atlanta Forest for action reports.

30 Jul - Interference Archive Walking Tour of Gowanus

WHAT: Walking Tour

WHEN: 10:00am, Saturday, July 30th

WHERE: Interference Archive - 314 7th Street, Brooklyn

COST: FREE

MORE:

Join Daniel Pecoraro, NYC tour guide, history educator, and longtime Interference Archive volunteer, for a walking tour of Gowanus. How did a natural creek become a canal; how did it become one of the most polluted sites in New York City; and how is it, in spite of the pollution, becoming one of the hottest neighborhoods in which to reside? And what all comes next? This tour will attempt to answer these questions, with a focus on the past, present, and future of Gowanus as told through its pedestrian bridges (and the Culver Viaduct), going south to north.