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Updates for January 24<sup>th</sup>

## **6 Jan - 'It never stops': killings by US police reach record high in 2022**

*Cops killed at least 1,176 people or about 100 people a month last year, making it the deadliest for police violence.*

### **MORE:**

by Sam Levin (*The Guardian*)

Police across the country killed an average of more than three people a day, or nearly 100 people every month last year according to Mapping Police Violence. The non-profit research group maintains a database of reported deaths at the hands of law enforcement, including people fatally shot, beaten, restrained and Tasered.

The preliminary 2022 total – a possible undercount as more cases are catalogued – marks 31 additional fatalities than the year before. In 2021, police killed 1,145 people; 1,152 in 2020; 1,097 in 2019; 1,140 in 2018; and 1,089 in 2017. The earliest data goes back to 2013, when advocates began counting these fatal incidents. A database run by the *Washington Post*, which tracks fatal shootings by police, also shows 2022 as a year with record killings.

The data release comes two years after the murder of George Floyd sparked national uprisings calling for racial justice, police accountability and reductions in the funding and size of police forces. Despite the international attention and some local efforts to curb police brutality, there has been an intensifying backlash to criminal justice reform, and the overall number of killings has remained alarmingly high.

"It just never stops," said Bianca Austin, aunt of Breonna Taylor, whose March 2020 killing in Kentucky sparked mass protests. "There was a movement and uproar across the globe, and we're still having more killings? What are we doing wrong? It's so disheartening."

### **Behind the numbers: 'Routine encounters'**

While the numbers have crept up, the circumstances that precede the killings have remained consistent.

In 2022, 132 killings (11%) were cases in which no offense was alleged; 104 cases (9%) were mental health or welfare checks; 98 (8%) involved traffic violations; and 207 (18%) involved other allegations of nonviolent offenses. There were also 93 cases (8%) involving claims of a domestic disturbance and 128 (11%) where the person was allegedly seen with a weapon. Only 370 (31%) involved a potentially more serious situation, with an alleged violent crime.

"These are routine police encounters that escalate to a killing," said Samuel Sinyangwe, a data scientist and policy analyst who founded Mapping Police Violence and provided 2022 data to the *Guardian*. "The reduction in the conversation around police violence does not mean that this issue is going away. What's clear is that it's continuing to get worse, and that it's deeply systemic."

What's more, in 32% of cases last year, the person was fleeing before they were killed, generally running or driving off – cases in which experts say lethal force is unwarranted and also endangers the public. In June, Ohio police officers fired dozens of rounds at Jayland Walker, who was unarmed and fleeing; a month later, an officer in California exited an unmarked car and immediately fired at Robert Adams as he ran in the opposite direction.

The racial disparities have also persisted: Black people were 24% of those killed last year, while making up only 13% of the population. From 2013 to 2022, Black residents were three times more likely to be killed by US police than white people. The inequality is particularly severe in some cities, including Minneapolis where police have killed Black residents at a rate 28 times higher than white residents, and Chicago, where the rate was 25 times higher, Mapping Police Violence reported.

"Police's ability to be judge, jury and executioner has been taken to another level. No matter how much we insist that it's wrong, society allows it to take place," said Jacob Blake Sr, whose son was shot by Kenosha police and left paralyzed in 2020. Blake Sr and Austin run a group called Families United that assists people whose loved ones have been killed by police.

Sinyangwe also found that there had been a notable uptick in killings by sheriff's departments, which are generally county agencies run by an elected leader. In 2022, sheriffs were involved in 416 killings, higher than the share in 2013, which was 277 cases.

It's unclear what's driving that increase, though Sinyangwe said there had been growing partnerships between sheriffs and other agencies, with deputies executing search warrants or doing chases that can result in death. Sheriffs' offices are also particularly politicized during elections, which could contribute to the problem, he said: "There are campaigns, in which there's a race to the bottom to compete to be more 'tough on crime'. And the result is more violent sheriff's departments."

### **'There are solutions'**

Despite the national increase in killings, there are some local signs of progress.

Sinyangwe noted a Denver program where clinicians and medics have responded to thousands of mental health calls instead of police, and have not had to call police for backup. Some cities have restricted traffic stops for minor violations. And California has decriminalized jaywalking and other minor infractions that advocates say have no relation to public safety but are used to profile certain communities.

"For each of these types of routine encounters, there are solutions and alternative responses that are already being piloted, that are already producing data showing they are dramatically more effective than police," Sinyangwe said.

There are also some local jurisdictions and states that have seen reductions in lethal force. California, the most populous state, has experienced a 29% drop in killings since 2013, while Texas, with the second-largest population, has seen a 30% increase in that timeframe, according to Mapping Police Violence.

The consistent numbers year after year make clear that "broad systemic change" is necessary to prevent these killings, said Dr Elizabeth Jordie Davies, a Johns Hopkins postdoctoral fellow and expert on social movements. While there have been growing calls to defund police, leaders of both political parties have advocated the opposite – pushing for the expansion of law enforcement, she said.

"There's a continual commitment to using violence to control people and manage problems in this country. And as we keep giving police more money and power, we'll continue to see more police violence."

### **8 Jan - The "copaganda" epidemic: How media glorifies police and vilifies protesters**

*How the pro-police focus of mainstream crime reporting misdirects policy discussions and blocks real solutions*

#### **MORE:**

by Robin Andersen (*Salon*)

Last year, Project Censored identified news coverage of protests by Black Lives Matter as an egregious example of "News Abuse," the Project's term for distorted, misleading coverage of genuinely important news topics. Legacy and corporate media portrayed BLM demonstrators across the United States as violent

and chaotic, despite subsequent evidence that, in 97 percent of cases, protests were peaceful and nonviolent. At the time, alternative and independent media carried very different stories, some with headlines accurately describing "police riots." Nevertheless, in 2022, corporate media continued its pro-police bias when reporting on crime, law enforcement and ongoing struggles to reform the justice system.

Consider, for example, news coverage of a highly anticipated FBI crime data report, released on Sept. 27, 2021. Newspapers featured sensationalized headlines about one aspect of the multifaceted report. Though major crimes had declined overall, the homicide rate rose. The *Washington Post's* headline screamed, "Killing Soared Nearly 30 Percent in 2020, with More Slayings Committed with Guns." The *New York Times'* coverage led with the headline "Murders Spiked in 2020 in Cities Across the United States," and NPR, NBC News, the Hill and the *Guardian* also focused on the homicide spike. Journalists failed to use the occasion to question the efficacy of policing, or to open a broader dialogue about public safety in the United States. Writing for *The Nation*, Scott Hechinger, a longtime public defender and now executive director of Zealous, identified how journalism got the story wrong.

Without minimizing the terrible loss of each life taken, Hechinger explained that even though the murder rate rose by 30 percent in 2020 compared to the previous year, homicides were now at historic lows, especially when compared to the 1980s and 1990s. Not surprisingly, establishment journalists jumped on the homicide increase, offering "explanations" primarily from law enforcement, even though ascribing short-term fluctuations in crime data to any particular cause is, according to Hechinger, "impossible."

Current crime reporting is not based on "criminological facts" but continues to repeat familiar narratives that helped drive the mass-incarceration binge. As Hechinger detailed, reporting is marred by "alarmist headlines" and "dehumanizing language" with "overly simplistic stories" that "provoke fear in the public." Indeed, the narrative elements Hechinger described follow the storylines of the docu-cop reality shows that aired on Fox and other networks in the 1980s and '90s, which were often mirrored in local news reporting. Today, the misleading narratives show up across the media, even in prestigious newspapers.

Fear-based coverage of the FBI report excluded the perspectives of public defenders, social workers, health professionals, academics, researchers and communities with direct experience of the criminal justice system. Foreclosing those voices with editorial selections of "newsworthy" sources is a hallmark of News Abuse. In this case, as Hechinger noted, it allowed police "to use their failures to demand more resources, more funding, more support." The pro-police framework for reporting on crime and justice issues serves to misdirect policy discussions on policing and blocks solutions to corruption, police brutality and the criminalization of people and communities of color.

Consider the April 12, 2022, shooting that took place on the Brooklyn subway, where 29 people were injured but no one was killed. Despite the number of police officers now patrolling the subway system and the use of surveillance cameras in every subway station in New York City, police did not stop the shooting spree. Instead of questioning police failures and hefty budgets, the NYPD took center stage in reporting the hunt for Frank James, the suspect. The *New York Times* lionized police efforts, saying hundreds of officers were using methods "as modern as scrutinizing video from surveillance cameras and parsing electronic records, and as old-fashioned as a wanted poster." Responding to the fawning press treatment, Josmar Trujillo of Copwatch pointed out that the cops actually failed to find James, while the *Times* repeated, "They're going to stop this guy, they're going to catch this guy," though the NYPD did neither.

The *Times* also featured Mayor Eric Adams praising New York City's law enforcement officers for eventually arresting the suspect, though James had walked around the city for hours, gone to a McDonald's, and finally called the police hotline to give authorities his location. Even so, on the sidewalk, New Yorkers had to point the man out to cops to make the arrest. The mayor pronounced the solution to all such crimes, saying that if "all goes well, he will never see the outside of a prison cell again." Trujillo called this "copaganda," when police agendas lead in media coverage and cops are foregrounded even in the face of failure. Another writer, Mark Anthony Neal, defined copaganda's active role in countering attempts to hold

police accountable for malfeasance as "reinforcing the ideas that the police are generally fair and hardworking, and that 'Black criminals' deserve the brutal treatment they receive."

A systematic look at media coverage of crime led critic Julie Hollar to identify what has been called the "Ferguson Effect," defined as the supposed fear and resulting retreat from policing "caused" by Black Lives Matter. One USA Today headline clearly illustrated this: "Why Violent Crime Surged after Police Across America Retreated." Hollar observed that blaming BLM is popular among police chiefs and their media boosters who seek to "defend against movements challenging police violence" and "deflect blame back onto protesters." Hechinger also pointed to an overwhelming media bias that, "against all evidence to the contrary and the FBI data itself," continues to assert that the increases in homicides could have been "caused by bail reform and protests for racial justice following the police killing of George Floyd."

Today we know, from experience and overwhelming research, that releasing people from jail prior to trial reduces crime for years in the future — and saves tens of millions of dollars in each major city. Yet police point to BLM protests and measures such as bail reform to account for the rise in murders. Speaking on FAIR's "CounterSpin," Alec Karakatsanis, a former civil rights lawyer and executive director of Civil Rights Corps, explained that jailing people "prior to trial just because they can't make a monetary payment actually increases crime by huge margins." It makes people more likely to commit crime by destabilizing their lives, disrupting medical treatment and mental health care, forcing them out of jobs and housing and often separating them from their children. "Cash bail is actually really harmful to public safety," Karakatsanis explained. Police, prosecutors and judges may still detain anyone who is a danger to the community or is charged with a serious offense.

Yet the *New York Times* referred to bail reform using the scary, mystifying phrase "the revolving jailhouse door created by bail reform," a not-so-subtle reference to the infamous "Willie Horton ad" that fabricated the criminal justice policies of Democratic presidential candidate Michael Dukakis and helped George H.W. Bush get elected in 1988. Ironically, the advertisement, which depicted the entrance to a jail where inmates entered through a revolving door and immediately returned to the streets, was criticized by the *Times* in 2018, when the paper called it part of "the racially charged politics of crime" that "reverberate to this day."

## **8 Jan - Former legislator Ruth Buffalo visits Leonard Peltier in prison, joins chorus calling for his release**

*When Ruth Buffalo goes on long trips, she usually brings her daughter. But when she was recently granted permission to visit Leonard Peltier in federal prison, she decided to go alone.*

### **MORE:**

by C.S. Hagen (*The Forum*)

With all the attention Peltier's case has received since 1977, her fear didn't come from what was inside the U.S. Penitentiary, Coleman, near Orlando, Florida. Her thoughts turned to: Who might be watching?

"The nature of Peltier's case and what we are up against is huge. It's a huge injustice in the system, so yeah, I had thoughts about my safety initially," said Buffalo, a former North Dakota state representative.

"I didn't know what to expect. I didn't want to put my daughter in harm's way. Questions I had, like would someone follow me from the airport? Those kinds of things crossed my mind," she said.

Peltier, now 78, from Grand Forks, is a Native American activist convicted of murder in 1977 following a trial that took place in Fargo. Since his conviction, numerous appeals and pleas for clemency have been made from Native Americans, international celebrities and even some judicial officers involved in prosecuting his case.

Peltier was convicted in a Fargo federal courthouse by an all-white jury for the murders of two FBI agents during a shootout June 26, 1975, on South Dakota's Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Two of his co-defendants were found not guilty due to self-defense.

Peltier was sentenced to two consecutive terms of life imprisonment , according to the FBI.

Buffalo's trip to visit Peltier came about a month after a group of seven U.S. senators urged President Joe Biden to commute the man's sentence.

Buffalo received permission to visit Peltier on Dec. 21, and after the new year, she flew down to make the visit.

"I figured I'd jump at the opportunity to go as soon as I could, just didn't want to miss an opportunity and offer support," Buffalo said. "But there have been so many people carrying the torch for him for so long, I don't want to be in front of it."

Before she flew to Florida, Buffalo was already involved politically with the National Caucus of Native American State Legislators and the North Dakota Democratic-NPL State Convention in trying to free Peltier.

When she landed in Orlando, she had bad news waiting for her.

"The crazy thing was, when I landed, someone sent me a clemency list for 2022, and he wasn't on it. I was in tears," she said. "I'm new to this, and there are people who have passed away fighting for his freedom for decades. My frustration is nothing compared to them."

After 45 years in maximum security prisons, Peltier seemed to be in good spirits over the three days they met, Buffalo said. Although she declined to go into detail about many of the topics they discussed, she told *The Forum* that Peltier has kept a sense of humor and his wit.

He arrived without manacles, wearing a yellow or tan jumpsuit and prison-issued slippers. She bought him hot meals while they talked, like a \$6 hamburger and \$4 soda. No notebooks, pens or cellphones were allowed, and to sign forms she had to use a bendable rubber pencil.

With a distance of about 6 feet separating them, the conversations were difficult at times. All around her, she witnessed families reuniting, many of whom were excited and happy. Frequently, more than 20 inmates were talking at once.

Conditions inside the prison are poor, Buffalo said. Peltier has a cell mate, and the prison frequently is in lockdown. When he can, Peltier enjoys painting, she said.

"He just looked like a relative. And he is not giving up. I was inspired by meeting him. So many similarities with relatives with the same stories, about boarding schools and injustices," Buffalo said.

"He really gets fired up about the injustice. The common theme of the visit was the truth. He wants the truth out there. People have been shut down throughout this whole process, because they told the truth," she said.

"There was a gentleness about him, a kindness, but also a fierceness, wanting to stand up for everybody," Buffalo said.

Peltier told Buffalo that if released, he would return to Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation in Belcourt.

"That's where he grew up. He went to boarding schools; he was 9 years old when he went to the Wahpeton Indian School. He was forced there," Buffalo said.

Over the past several decades, clemency for Peltier has received support from many faith and human rights leaders, including Pope Francis, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, Saint Mother Teresa, Nelson Mandela, the Dalai Lama and Coretta Scott King.

James H. Reynolds, the U.S. attorney who oversaw Peltier's prosecution on appeal, stated Peltier's continued incarceration was unjust. The late Judge Gerald Heaney, who presided over Peltier's 1986 appeal in the Eighth Circuit, also called for the commutation of Peltier's sentence, according to the Chicago Tribune.

U.S. Sen. Brian Schatz, D-HI, who is chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, renewed efforts to commute Peltier's sentence, saying he has spent more than half his life behind bars and now suffers from numerous health conditions.

Although Peltier has remained insistent that he is not guilty, he has been denied many attempts at clemency. He has also been repeatedly denied parole, and in 2009, federal prosecutors, including then-U.S. Attorney Drew Wrigley, who is now North Dakota attorney general, said Peltier was "an unrepentant, cold-blooded murderer."

Those who believe he is not guilty work for his release, saying his incarceration symbolizes the systemic problems with how Native Americans are treated within the criminal justice system.

"At times, thinking about what we're up against trying to get Leonard's freedom, it seems like a big task. It can get overwhelming. And seeing him sitting there in front of you," Buffalo paused a moment to collect herself.

"We still see the issues today, lingering, but back then there was so much. Some of the stories he shared from back then, Native women and girls blatantly targeted and raped by people in power, and there was nothing anyone could do, nothing ever got done," she said.

Becoming emotional, Buffalo seemed lost in her thoughts.

"Today, there are better ways of covering things up. 'Racism doesn't exist in North Dakota,'" Buffalo laughed at what she said was a joke. "It's just really sad when you think about how poorly Natives are treated. At times less than human.

"I will continue to push for his freedom," she said.

### **January 18<sup>th</sup> - FBI's opposition to releasing Leonard Peltier driven by vendetta, says ex-agent**

by Nina Lakhani (*The Guardian*)

The FBI's repeated opposition to the release of Leonard Peltier is driven by vindictiveness and misplaced loyalties, according to a former senior agent close to the case who is the first agency insider to call for clemency for the Indigenous rights activist who has been held in US maximum security prisons for almost five decades.

Coleen Rowley, a retired FBI special agent whose career included 14 years as legal counsel in the Minneapolis division where she worked with prosecutors and agents directly involved in the Peltier case, has written to Joe Biden making a case for Peltier's release.

"Retribution seems to have emerged as the primary if not sole reason for continuing what looks from the outside to have become an emotion-driven 'FBI Family' vendetta," said Rowley in the letter sent to the US president in December and shared exclusively with the *Guardian*.

Rowley added: "The focus of my two cents leading to my joining the call for clemency is based on Peltier's inordinately long prison sentence and an ever more compelling need for simple mercy due to his advanced age and deteriorating health.

"Enough is enough. Leonard Peltier should now be allowed to go home."

Peltier, an enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa tribe and of Lakota and Dakota descent, was convicted of murdering two FBI agents during a shootout on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota in June 1975. Peltier was a leader of the American Indian Movement (AIM), an Indigenous civil rights movement founded in Minneapolis that was infiltrated and repressed by the FBI.

Rowley refers to the historical context in which the shooting took place as "... the long-standing horribly wrongful oppressive treatment of Indians in the U.S. [which] played a key role in putting both the agents and Peltier in the wrong place at the wrong time".

The 1977 murder trial – and subsequent parole hearings – were rife with irregularities and due process violations including evidence that the FBI had coerced witnesses, withheld and falsified evidence.

Peltier, now 78, has been held in maximum security prisons for 46 of the past 47 years. He has always denied shooting the agents. Last year, UN experts called for Peltier's immediate release after concluding that his prolonged imprisonment amounted to arbitrary detention.

In an exclusive interview with the *Guardian* about her intervention, Rowley, who retired in 2004, said that for years new agents were "indoctrinated" with the FBI's version of events.

"The facts are murky, and I'm not going to say either narrative is correct. I wasn't there. But I do know that if you really care about justice, then the real issue now is mercy, truth and reconciliation. To keep this going for almost 50 years really shows the level of vindictiveness the organization has for Leonard Peltier.

"The bottom line is there are all kinds of problems in the intelligence service which by and large never get corrected for the same reasons: group conformity, pride and an unwillingness to admit mistakes so systemic problems are covered up and never fixed," said Rowley, a 9/11 whistleblower who testified to the Senate about FBI failures in the terrorist attacks.

Nick Estes, an assistant professor of American Indian studies at the University of Minnesota, said Rowley's support of Peltier's clemency was "historic".

"She is trying to dispel a myth that is deeply embedded into the culture of the FBI ... handed down through indoctrinating young recruits such as Rowley about Peltier's unquestionable guilt and the FBI's supposed blamelessness during the reign of terror on the Pine Ridge Indian reservation," said Estes, a volunteer with the International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee.

Rowley wrote to Biden in response to a letter by the intelligence agency's current director vehemently opposing Peltier's release on behalf of the "entire FBI family" – which was recently published online by the Society of Former Special Agents of the FBI.

Christopher Wray described Peltier as a "remorseless killer who brutally murdered two of our own – special agents Jack R Coler and Ronald A Williams". Commutation of Peltier's sentence would be "shattering to the victims' loved ones and an affront to the rule of law", according to Wray's letter to the justice department's pardon attorney dated March 2022.

FBI has successfully opposed every clemency application with emotive op-eds, letters and marches on Washington.

But the time served on most murder sentences ranges between 11 and 18 years, while Mark Putnam, the first FBI agent convicted of homicide – for strangling his female informant – was released after serving just 10 years of a 16-year sentence. Peltier was sentenced to two consecutive life sentences, and a parole officer who recommended his release after acknowledging that there was not enough evidence to sustain the conviction, was demoted.

"The disparate nature of Peltier being held for nearly a half century behind bars is striking," said Rowley, who in the 1990s helped pen an op-ed by the head of the Minneapolis division opposing Peltier's release. "The facts are everything, not loyalty to the FBI family, not them versus us, not good guys versus bad guys."

Peltier supporters hope that Rowley's intervention will count.

"Rowley speaks with authority and is saying that nothing justifies him being in prison, just vindictiveness, so ignoring her means turning a blind eye to what's happening," said Kevin Sharp, Peltier's attorney who submitted the most recent clemency application 18 months ago. "Rowley knows the case. She knows the FBI and supervised some of those directly involved. She knows Indian Country, so understands the context, which is really important."

Peltier is currently being held in a maximum-security prison in Coleman, Florida, where his health has significantly deteriorated since contracting Covid-19, according to Sharp, who visited in December. Multiple recommendations by the facility to lower Peltier's classification, so that he can be transferred to a less restrictive prison closer to his family, have been rejected.

"This is a little old man with a walker. It's not just the FBI that's vindictive," added Sharp, a former federal judge appointed by Obama who stepped down from the bench in protest of mandatory minimum sentences. He took on Peltier's case in 2018 after successfully obtaining a pardon from Donald Trump for a young Black man he had been forced to imprison.

According to Sharp, Peltier's clemency was still on the table until Trump's last day in office but didn't make it on to the final list of presidential pardons which was mostly former associates and white-collar criminals.

He added: "This is not about a 10-minute shootout. It's about hundreds of years of what had gone before and the decades of what's gone on afterwards. That's why Leonard Peltier was convicted, and that's why he's still in jail."

### **9 Jan - Alex Stokes Should Not Be in Prison**

*Report from One People's Project about the case of antifascist prisoner, Alex Stokes, who faces 20 years for defending counter-protesters on January 6<sup>th</sup> in Albany, New York.*

#### **MORE:**

On Friday, many in the nation observed the second anniversary of what might have been the biggest threat to democracy since perhaps the Civil War: the Insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. It seems fitting that the observance came at a time when some in Congress that are causing some of the drama of selecting a House Speaker from within their own party were among those who were supportive of what happened that day. Perhaps it was their proximity to the gears of power and the possibility of such an Insurrection happening again that prompted President Biden, as he on Friday awarded Presidential Citizens Medal, a major civilian honor, to election workers, Republican state officials and several law enforcement officers who were heralded for their actions as the events of that day unfolded, that Jan. 6 was "a reminder that there's nothing guaranteed about our democracy," and that "every generation is required to earn it, defend it, protect it."

On that day, there were those of this generation that tried to do just that, particularly against those who are part of a neo-fascist organization whose leaders will soon be on trial on federal sedition charges for their alleged role in orchestrating the Insurrection. Sadly, it is coming at a cost for one who did so.

A huge cost.

Alex Stokes is a writer, a poet, an artist and a journalist. He has made a name for himself from the Albany, NY area via his Albany Banana Corps broadcasting on local public access television which has been noted often on mainstream local news such as when he shot the video of an Albany woman who hit her head on a curb while in police custody in 2016. He has been to a few domestic hot spots around the country as well, namely the inauguration of Donald Trump, Charlottesville and a pro-Trump rally in Washington, DC that happened on the same day as a Juggalo march against Juggalos being classified as a gang by the federal government. Juggalos were none too happy with the juxtaposition that day with a rally that included American Guard and Proud Boys, those with ideals Juggalos are decidedly against. And Stokes was there to cover it because he is an antifascist and he wanted to show how antifascists handle things. He rolled with the Juggalos that day. But there is also how he has contributed to the artistic and cultural landscape of his community assisting in refurbishing murals in Riverfront Park in Rensselaer, NY.

His is the kind of work that has got him in close proximity to legendary figures ranging from DJ Grandmaster Flash to writer and professor Cornell West. But it has also made him a target of fascists and police alike. He was one of hundreds arrested during Trump's inauguration, but he was merely videotaping the day's events and saw his charges dropped. The fascists went after him for his presence in Charlottesville, marking him in a list of antifascists they compiled after the events of that day where one from their number murdered 34-year-old Heather Heyer when he drove into a crowd of antifascists. And they knew him well enough to refer to him by name at a rally also on Jan. 6, 2021 but 363 miles away from Washington, DC in Albany, NY. This one saw two Proud Boys getting stabbed after they attacked others and Alex getting arrested and charged with the stabbing.

In November, Alex Stokes Contompasis was sentenced to 20 years in prison for that stabbing after being convicted in October during what his supporters saw as a rushed three-day trial. He has received more prison time than many who have to date been convicted and sentenced for their actions that same day at the U.S. Capitol Insurrection, but accounts say his actions were in self defense. To that end, those aforementioned supporters have launched an effort to see that Alex is freed and his charges dismissed.

It was approximately an hour before the insurrectionists at the United States Capitol began their attack. The events unfolded at a so-called "Stop the Steal" rally outside the New York State Capitol in East Capitol Park was timed to coincide with was being held that day in DC. This was a much smaller group of Trump supporters numbering by some accounts only 35 people. Among them were about seven or eight associates of the Proud Boys, according to Douglas Michael Ruso, the leader of the local chapter there. A convicted felon convicted for assault in 2011 after a bar fight, he would later say that he knew Stokes all of his life and even played baseball with him, which was news to Stokes as he hadn't played baseball since he was six. Ruso came with Proud Boy Dominic Wierzbicki and his brother James P. Warner, who reportedly chooses to use his mother's maiden name and denied that he was a Proud Boy even though he was wearing their colors and logo that day.

According to Ruso's own statement given later, the Proud Boys were ignoring those that came out to oppose the rally, but at some point, one of his number began talking and walking towards them. The verbal exchange went on for several minutes and just kept getting louder. Video from the scene shows what happened next: a reputed Proud Boy who was later alleged to have a taser taking a swing at a counter protester. That sparked a brawl with not just Proud Boys but other participant in the rally, including one that attacked a woman with a flagpole. Until this point, Stokes is sitting on the sidelines watching the exchanges go back and forth, but when one of the Proud Boys tased a counter protester, that was when he rushed in to help. He is seen in the video trying to protect counter protesters from the Proud Boys who were

kicking one that was on the ground when Stokes pushed them away. When all was said and done Ruso and Warner suffering from stab wounds.

Others participating in the “Stop the Steal” rally were similarly engaged in assaulting persons. 66-year-old Colin Dermody, of Loudonville, NY attacked a woman with a flagpole and although he was arrested he ultimately did not face charges. The Proud Boys also saw no charges even though one of them reportedly employed a Taser, according to witnesses. Two other counter-demonstrators were arrested once police came onto the scene, but both had their charges dismissed eventually.

Stokes too was arrested for his role in the melee and from the start he had tried to point out how his involvement was an act of self-defense. He was eventually released on bail and spent the next year and a half trying to generate support, even though there was reportedly a court-ordered gag-order on the case. Complicating matters was a 2004 charge of third degree attempted assault that he pled guilty to serving probation, but it was a matter that he felt he would have been able to overcome.

When the trial finally began in October Stokes and his family felt the three days it took to get to a conviction was more than a little rushed and when sentencing took place a day before it was announced they were sure something was amiss. “We’re not talking about someone who poses a threat to society on a daily basis,” Stoke’s friend Paul Kane told Cynthia Pooler in her Issues That Matter podcast. “We’re not talking about someone who’s crazy and is gonna stab you if you think something different. We’re not talking about that person. So if that’s not what we’re talking about, how in the world is twenty years fair when we’re talking about this situation?”

But the story does not end here. Plans are underway to appeal and Stokes’ supporters are raising funds for the legal fight. He is being supported by groups like Antifa International, an organization whose mission has been to raise money and other support for antifascist political prisoners around the world. Meanwhile, family and friends created FreeAlexStokes.com to bring more attention to the case.

The Proud Boys as an organization are going through turmoil because of their actions on January 6 not only in Washington, DC, where today the sedition trial for their leader Henry “Enrique” Tarrío begins but also in Olympia, Washington where Proud Boy Tusitala “Tiny” Toese is facing felony charges for storming the Governor’s mansion there. The Proud Boys who were in Albany that day however have been allowed to go on with their lives with few media outlets even mentioning their names. Still, they were stopped that day before they caused possible harm to more people. Now the next part of that fight begins: working to free the person who stopped them.

### **10 Jan - Wadiya Jamal remembered as a 'force of nature'**

*Wadiya Jamal was a devoted and determined advocate for justice, standing beside her husband, Mumia Abu Jamal, during his tireless fight as a political prisoner.*

#### **MORE:**

by Michael Z. Muhammad (*The Final Call*)

Her passing leaves a palpable hole in the community. However, her Janazah (Islamic funeral service) held at the Kadijah Alderman Funeral Home on December 30 attended by hundreds, celebrated her loving life, and will serve as an anchor of hope to those she left behind.

Wadiya Jamal passed away unexpectedly on December 26 in Philadelphia after many years of vigor and support. In Mumia's words, she was a loving and beautiful presence in his life. She stood with him through his trials and tribulations, providing a supportive shoulder for him to lean on until the very end.

Her story was noted in an obituary that immortalized her legacy. Ms. Jamal challenged the standard American way of life, instead opting to embrace her African and Islamic roots. Her unyielding spirit,

armed only with Philadelphia public school education, was remarkable as she forged a unique path for herself, one rooted in cultural identity rather than societal norms.

She tirelessly dedicated her life to activist efforts and was one of the most influential disruptors of her era. As a mother of five, she found personal fulfillment in raising and nurturing a loving family, but this only fueled her passion for fighting for what she believed would help ensure their future in an unjust society. Ms. Jamal consistently participated in events such as forums, rallies, and cultural activities meant to bring attention to injustices against Black people, making her a highly-respected figure throughout the African Diaspora.

Mr. Jamal's former attorney, New York-based Rachael Wolkenstein, told *The Final Call*, "Wadiya Jamal, a fierce warrior for Mumia after his arrest in 1981, has devoted her life to securing his freedom. She was one of the first advocates to challenge his conviction and demand his release when advocacy for his case began again around 1989-1990."

Ms. Wolkenstein characterized Ms. Jamal as a woman of immense strength and courage. "Ms. Jamal showed no hesitation in broadcasting her belief that Mumia was innocent (of the 1981 murder of police officer Daniel Faulkner for which he was convicted) at public events attended by Dave Richardson—an act of defiance that could be said to have inaugurated many years of sustained activism," she said. Dave Richardson, the late Pennsylvania state senator, advocated on behalf of Mr. Jamal.

"Her commitment continues even today and extends beyond herself to include her five children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren," added Ms. Wolkenstein.

During an interview with *The Final Call*, Jamal ibn Mumia, the son of Mr. Jamal, spoke about his memories of Ms. Jamal. "Wadiya Jamal was an extraordinary woman whose influence permeated her family, community, and beyond. She personified the best of humanity, always willing to help fight for justice and equality for her people," he said.

"For over four decades, she remained the pillar of strength for my father and many more. Her sage advice provided guidance in more ways than one. Not only did she teach us how to resist the oppressive systems of our society, but also to share love and warmth with those around us. Her unique blend of compassion and strength gave her such a remarkable spirit that will be remembered," he said.

"She was a revolutionary force of change and compassion. In addition to supporting her family, she provided steadfast support for the people in her community, displaying an unwavering commitment that extended well beyond her immediate family," he concluded.

Ms. Jamal was preceded in death by her beloved daughter Samiya, devoted parents, and three respected brothers. She leaves behind fond memories with her children Erik, Jade, Jaleel, and Atiya, and much-loved members of her extended family, including daughter-in-law Tyanisa; siblings Yusuf, Muhmina, Kevin, Sherry, Mark, Kyle, Charles and a host of grandchildren, great-grandchildren and extensive circle of loving nephew's niece's cousins and friends.

### **14 Jan - Eric King Due For Release This Year, Please Support Him!**

*Eric is due to be released this year and we cannot wait to hear he is out and surrounded by his friends and family!*

#### **MORE:**

via *UNOFFENSIVE ANIMAL*

We hate prisons, they are designed to destroy people and communities and no one comes out of these twisted and malicious places unscathed. Eric King has had it rough in prison since he was sentenced in 2016. He has been systematically attacked by prison guards, who on one occasion took him to a closet

with no CCTV to beat him up due to his anarchist and anti-fascist beliefs. They also retrained him for 6 hours afterwards. He has spent much of his long prison sentence kept in solitary confinement, isolating him as a means of torture.

In 2019, he was falsely accused of attacking a guard and faced an additional 20 years in prison, he was found innocent but the prison system is still set on making his life as hard as possible and transferred him to MAX.

In much lighter news, Eric is due to be released from prison this year and is desperate to be free and reunited with his family. There is currently a GoFundMe set up. Donations will help him do things like see a doctor, have some family days out and just take a bit of the burden off.

We have just sent 150USD to Eric for his release, why not join us?

If you can support our comrade Eric then do it, solidarity is everything: [gofundme.com/f/release-funds-for-political-prisoner-eric-king](https://gofundme.com/f/release-funds-for-political-prisoner-eric-king)

For further updates and more info about Eric and his experiences as well as a number of poems he has written while inside, check out [linktr.ee/supportericking](https://linktr.ee/supportericking)

### **January 17<sup>th</sup> - 1/17 Update!!**

Eric is so grateful, overwhelmed and humbled by all of the support that has been coming in. Taylor Swift news. Feedback on his writing. Books, notes, letters. He had tears in his eyes this weekend when he was told about it. Life afterward has been on his mind a lot. Getting out, surviving and raising children. And also wrestling with the inadequate feelings when it comes to job prospects, housing and an incredible foreign world. When he entered prison there was not a ton of people lining up his support him. It took months to get a book purchased from his list. Seeing real tangible support is helping quiet those fears. Thinking about cars, computers and capitalism and how much closer he is to working it all out.

Outdate fundraiser link here (we started at a small goal to help him see a little bit of stability <3 we will be fundraising in different ways as well as adjusting the goal a bit as we get closer): [gofund.me/a7a87920](https://gofund.me/a7a87920)

He Has been having some really intense neck problems some he has been seeking help for 3 plus years. some new and affecting his movement and ability to respond to letters right now. He wanted us to tell everyone how the letters have been so amazing but it has been so painful to write he has found himself out of necessity needing to shorten his responses as he waits for mri scans

Things have been ok. He has finally has his first phone call with his family since 2018, and first visit since the week after trial. He is a bit overwhelmed by the difference in respect that comes from the guards around him. Well trained guards, because the ADX demands that. Guards that know the law and are asked to follow it. It has definitely caused some reflection and wonder... what would it have been like if he were met with guards like this in Englewood? Florence medium? Leavenworth, USP McCreary? FTC Oklahoma? USP Atlanta? USP Lee?

He is safe and thinking about what it will be like ending this year on his way to freedom <3 We have added some notebooks to his Amazon book list because he needs some paper that is a manageable size. As well as his current obsession and the goal reading every book Colum Mccann has written: [amazon.com/hz/wishlist/l/OEWNQ9RMQGZR](https://amazon.com/hz/wishlist/l/OEWNQ9RMQGZR)

### **15 Jan - Update on Ladislav and How to Support**

*On our last update, we mentioned that Ladislav was going to be released in January of this year. Unfortunately, there was a mix up of dates and miscommunication and his release date had not changed, so he is still scheduled to be released in January 2024 instead of this year.*

**MORE:**

We can only apologise for the wrong information being shared. That means that we still have time to raise funds for his release, helping him get back on his feet after many years suffering the prison system.

Our comrades at Philly ABC have a fundraiser event which is still open for donations and we would like to encourage everybody to donate even if it is just a few coins, so when he is out he is able to fend for himself whilst getting his head around being back out in society! The fundraiser has been up for a month and it has only managed to raise 10% of its goal. Can we all do a big push of support and double it?

You can donate at [fundrazr.com/027Cec](https://fundrazr.com/027Cec)

If you cannot support (and even if you can!), you certainly should send him a letter and let him know about the outside world.

**19 Jan - Justice for Tort**

*A dedication for Tortuguita, an anarchist who was shot and killed by police while defending the Weelaunee forest in Atlanta, Georgia on January 18<sup>th</sup>.*

**MORE:**

by Atlanta Community Press Collective (*It's Going Down*)

We are devastated by the loss of our friend who was killed by the police. Tortuguita was a kind, passionate, and loving person, cherished by their community.

They spent their time between Atlanta, defending the forest from destruction and coordinating mutual aid for the movement and Florida, where they helped build housing in low-income communities hit hardest by the hurricane. They were a trained medic, a loving partner, a dear friend, a brave soul, and so much more. In Tort's name, we continue to fight to protect the forest and stop Cop City with love, rage, and a commitment to each other's safety and well-being.

Many people have reached out with memories and accounts of Tortuguita. They are remembered and cherished by many friends, loved ones, and people who they supported with mutual aid.

“They loved all life and people – especially their qtpoc community — deeply.“

“Tortuguita was a very kind person. They were always willing to help and take care people in need around them, especially the qtbipoc community. They were always attentive to others needs and offer always the best of them. Truly a warrior for the forest and the people! I miss them so much.”

We don't know what happened yesterday, but we know that the police killed them while they were defending the forest.

Please reach out with accounts of Tortuguita to honor their memory to [RememberTort@protonmail.com](mailto:RememberTort@protonmail.com)

**January 21<sup>st</sup> - 'Assassinated in cold blood': activist killed protesting Georgia's 'Cop City'**

by Timothy Pratt (*The Guardian*)

Belkis Terán spoke with her child, Manuel, nearly every day by WhatsApp from her home in Panama City, Panama. She also had names and numbers for some of Manuel's friends, in case she didn't hear from the 26-year-old who was protesting "Cop City", a planned gigantic training facility being built in a wooded area near Atlanta, Georgia.

So by midweek, when she hadn't received a message from Atlanta since Monday, she began to worry. Thursday around noon, a friend of Manuel's – whose chosen name was "Tortuguita," or "Little Turtle" – messaged her with condolences. "I'm so sorry," they wrote. "For what?" she asked.

Terán wound up discovering that on Wednesday around 9.04am, an as-yet unnamed officer or officers had shot and killed her son. The shooting occurred in an operation involving dozens of officers from Atlanta police, Dekalb county police, Georgia state patrol, the Georgia bureau of investigation and the FBI.

The killing has stunned and shocked not only Tortuguita's family and friends, but also the environmental and social justice movement in Georgia and across the United States. Circumstances surrounding the incident are still unclear and there are demands for a thorough investigation into the killing and how it could have happened.

The police apparently found Manuel in a tent in the South River forest south-east of Atlanta, taking part in a protest now in its second year, against plans to build a \$90m police and fire department training facility on the land and, separately, a film studio.

Officials say Manuel shot first at a state trooper "without warning" and an officer or officers returned fire, but they have produced no evidence for the claim. The trooper was described as stable and in hospital Thursday.

The shooting is "unprecedented" in the history of US environmental activism, according to experts.

The GBI, which operates under Republican governor Brian Kemp's orders, has released scant information and on Thursday night told the *Guardian* no body-cam footage of the shooting exists. At least a half-dozen other protesters who were in the forest at the time have communicated to other activists that one, single series of shots could be heard. They believe the state trooper could have been shot by another officer, or by his own firearm.

Meanwhile, both Terán and local activists are looking into legal action, and Manuel's mother told the *Guardian*: "I will go to the US to defend Manuel's memory ... I'm convinced that he was assassinated in cold blood."

The incident was the latest in a ramping-up of law enforcement raids on the forest in recent months.

Protests had begun in late 2021, after the then Atlanta mayor, Keisha Lance Bottoms, announced plans for the training center. The forest had been named in city plans four years earlier as a key part of efforts to maintain Atlanta's renowned tree canopy as a buffer against global warming, and to create what would have been the metro area's largest park.

Most of the residents in neighborhoods around the forest are Black and municipal planning has neglected the area for decades. The plans to preserve the forest and make it a historic public amenity were adopted in 2017 as part of Atlanta's city charter, or constitution. But the Atlanta city council wound up approving the training center anyway, and a movement to "Stop Cop City" began in response.

A series of editorials and news stories lambasting the activists began in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, the area's largest daily paper. At least a dozen articles in the last year-plus failed to mention that Alex Taylor, CEO of the paper's owner, Cox Enterprises, was also raising funds on behalf of the Atlanta police foundation, the main agency behind the training center.

At some point, Kemp and other civic leaders began referring to the protesters as "terrorists", in response to acts of vandalism such as burning construction vehicles or spray-painting corporate offices linked to the project.

In an interview with this reporter last fall, Tortuguita was discussing how some Muscogee (Creek) people interested in protecting the forest as well felt that leaving a burnt vehicle at one of its entrances was not a good idea, and was an alienating presence in nature. The activist seemed understanding of both sides and critical of violence.

"Some of us [forest defenders] are rowdy gringos," Tortuguita said. "They're just against the state. Still, I don't know how you can connect to anything if that's your entire political analysis."

Police raids on the forest intensified until 14 December, when a half-dozen "forest defenders" were arrested and charged with "domestic terrorism" under state law – another unprecedented development in US environmental activism, said Lauren Regan, founder of the Civil Liberties Defense Center, who has a quarter-century's experience defending environmental protestors charged with federal terrorism sentencing enhancements and others.

Seven more activists were arrested and received the same charges the day Manuel was killed.

Regan and Keith Woodhouse, professor of history at Northwestern University and author of *The Ecocentrists: A History of Radical Environmentalism*, both said there has never been a case where law enforcement has shot and killed an environmental activist engaged in an attempt to protect a forest from being razed and developed.

"Killings of environmental activists by the state are depressingly common in other countries, like Brazil, Honduras, Nigeria," said Woodhouse. "But this has never happened in the US."

Manuel's older brother, Daniel Esteban Paez, found himself in the middle of this unfortunate historical moment Thursday. "They killed my sibling," he said on answering the phone. "I'm in a whole new world now."

Paez, 31, was the only family member to speak extensively with GBI officials, after calling them Thursday in an attempt to get answers about what had happened. No one representing Georgia law enforcement had reached out to Belkis by Thursday afternoon. "I quickly found out, they're not investigating the death of Manuel – they're investigating Manuel," Paez said.

A navy veteran, Paez said the GBI official asked him such questions as "Does Manuel often carry weapons?" and "Has Manuel done protesting in the past?"

The family is Venezuelan in origin, but now lives in the US and Panama, Paez said. Less than 24 hours into discovering the death of his sibling, Paez also said he "had no idea Manuel was so well-regarded and loved by so many". He was referring to events and messages ranging from an Atlanta candlelight vigil Wednesday night to messages of solidarity being sent on social media from across the US and world.

Belkis Terán, meanwhile, is trying to get an emergency appointment at the US Embassy in Panama to renew her tourist visa, which expired in November. "I'm going to clear Manuel's name. They killed him ... like they tear down trees in the forest – a forest Manuel loved with passion."

## **20 Jan - International Day of Solidarity with Trans Prisoners Statement**

*Marius Mason has written a statement for the 2023 International Day of Solidarity with Trans Prisoners and we are happy to be able to share it with you.*

### **MORE:**

Thank you for commemorating the J22 International Day of solidarity with Trans Prisoners. I was so glad to hear that some of you were able to do a support event this year. Incarcerated people everywhere in the US continue to suffer the consequences of the Covid pandemic. Though it has ebbed and flowed in cycles,

like the tides – most of us inside are still dealing with some level of restriction in visitation, programming, work, medical care access or visitation due to the measures being enforced to attempt to contain the spread of the virus. Going in and out of lock-down, as Units either test positive or negative for Covid, has caused a lot of stress, hardship and increased isolation for so many this past year.

It is against this chaotic backdrop that trans prisoners have struggled to have their particular situation addressed. If anything, the hysterical and hyperbolic propaganda of discrimination has created an even more toxic environment. A recent Wall Street Journal interview with Viktor Bout, the Russian arms dealer who was recently returned to his family in exchange for Brittney Griner's release is an example of heightened trans hate-speech. Bout's poisonous words indicting trans and queer people's responsibility for the "decline of the West" are the excuse being given for Russia to attack first Ukraine and then to sweep through Europe as the army of G..d. This calls to mind other fascist wars also described as "holy" and claiming some cultural superiority.

More than ever, trans people (and queer people) in prison need to know that you have their back. We need to hear from you that we are part of your community, your movement – and that we are family. With your help, we can begin to open the gates that have shut us out, shut us down and blocked our access to medical care that helps us live with dignity.

We are closer to that goal than ever before, as trans prisoners. This year, the Transgender executive Council began meeting again to make decisions about transitioning in the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Several prisoners, both trans men and trans women, were told that they had met the requirements for medical transition and were approved for gender affirming surgeries. I was one of these fortunate few. This felt like a huge step forward, but so far the only actual procedures that have been done were done within the state prison systems. It was reported by the Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project that a client of theirs, Mx. Doe, has been the first to receive gender-affirming surgery. This is great news, but there are so many others who are not even getting the most basic medical care or psychological supportive care.

So many are still being discriminated against and being placed in isolation or put in physical jeopardy because of identifying as trans. Dominic Barber, a trans man at SCI- Muncy, gives powerful testimony for this in his article in Let's Get Free/Winter Issue. And there are so many others whose voices are never heard.

There was a great civil rights activist in Detroit, John Conyers – who once answered, when asked by an inexperienced volunteer what issue the movement should focus on in order to succeed. He said that "Everything is everything!" It's ALL crucial; it's all equally important, it's all one more step forward. Climate change, crimes against Native sovereignty, animal and environmental oppression, impending and continuing wars, theo-fascism, homo-and trans- phobic, racist, misogynist hate crimes all demand our energy to confront and end these existential threats to our world. Solidarity with trans and queer prisoners is just one way among many, many ways that we re-shape and rebuild this broken life we share.

So what do we do?

Whatever we choose or have the capacity to do can and will move us forward. Something as small as reaching out with a letter of connection and care could save a life. Too many transfolks I have met in prison have lost their family and community connections because of being who they are – so showing them there is a place for them in the world we are creating is powerful and healing. Please become an advocate, a pen pal, an educator or counselor to trans prisoners. Just being known by someone in the free world can make them safer and more likely to be treated more humanely and more fairly in the system. We are stronger together.

Always.

## 23 Jan - Show Solidarity With Mel Broughton During His Imprisonment

*Mel has been held on remand at Peterborough Prison since November.*

### **MORE:**

His conditions have improved, after a difficult start with little to no medication or vegan food available.

Mel is receiving regular letters, but keeping in touch with news from the outside world is a great way to support and keep him busy. He really could do with uplifting letters to remind him we are all thinking about him!

Please do not discuss any details about his case. He has got very into analysing the football and watching *Dogs In the Wild* on the BBC, and he likes talking about nature and animals, so maybe you can describe your last walk in the forest!

Books can also be sent to Mel via Waterstones. Books about nature, fungi, animals and plants and about positive historical change in the world are preferred over fictional stuff.

## 28 Jan - Crush #32

**WHAT:** Reading Series

**WHEN:** 7:00pm, Saturday, January 28<sup>th</sup>

**WHERE:** Woodbine - 585 Woodward Avenue, Ridgewood

**COST:** FREE

### **MORE:**

Join us this Saturday for the next installment of Crush, our reading series of poetry, prose, and miscellaneous text hosted by Suzanne Goldenberg. To find in language the textures of our lives and the sensibilities of our world. For the pleasures of the text, for the pleasures of the voice. We are asking that all attendees wear masks at the event.

January 28<sup>th</sup> Readers: Bahaar Ahsan, James Barickman, Malvika Jolly, Alisha Mascarenhas, imogen xtian smith

- Bahaar Ahsan is a poet from the Bay Area living in New York City. She is the author of *Gay Girl Hyacinth* (Eyelet 2021).
- James Barickman is the author of the seasonal chapbooks *Helluva Season* and *Down Bad*. He also works as an audio technician at the Poetry Project.
- Malvika Jolly is a poet and literary translator. She was a finalist for the 2023 Margins Fellowship, the 2022–23 Emerge–Surface–Be Fellowship, and *BOMB* magazine’s 2022 Poetry Contest, judged by Solmaz Sharif. She works as a coordinator for the arts organization Tamaas and as a Senior Editor for Poetry Northwest where she directs virtual poetry workshops to transform racial equity in literary publishing. She curates the New Third World, a political reading series inspired by the Non-Aligned Movement.
- Alisha Mascarenhas is a poet and translator, and the author, most recently, of the chaplet "Contagion Fields" in 2021 with Belladonna\*. She is currently completing a catalogue of poems on risk, one of which was recently published in *The Recluse*.
- imogen xtian smith is a poet & performer living in Lenapehoking / Brooklyn, NY. Their work has appeared in *Baest*, *B L U SH*, *Folder*, *The Rumpus*, *The Poetry Project Newsletter*, & *Tagvverk* (among others), as well as in *We Want It All: An Anthology of Radical Trans Poetics*. A 2021-22 Emerge Surface Be Fellow at The Poetry Project, imogen’s debut collection, *stemmy things*, is out from Nightboat Books.

## 29 Jan - MACC Care Assembly

**WHAT:** Care Assembly

**WHEN:** 4:00pm, Sunday, January 29<sup>th</sup>  
**WHERE:** PIT Bookstore - 411 South 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Brooklyn  
**COST:** FREE

**MORE:**

Property is Theft! Sharing is Caring! Enlight: Political Education 4:00-5:00pm. Bite: Food and Care Exchange 5:00-6:00. Fight: Martial Arts Training 6:00-6:45. You must have a negative COVID test 48 hours before attending. Rapid tests will be available at the door.

**4 Feb - Dope is Death**

**WHAT:** Dope is Death film screening  
**WHEN:** Saturday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 8pm  
**WHERE:** P.I.T. Brooklyn - 411 South 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Brooklyn, New York 11211 (Directions below)  
**COST:** Free, but we will have information to donate to Mutulu Shakur's release campaign

**MORE:**

Join NYC Anarchist Black Cross for our first installment of a winter film series. We're starting off with a screening of Dope is Death, the 2020 documentary.

From IMDB:

*In 1973, Dr. Mutulu Shakur, along with fellow Black Panthers and the Young Lords, combined community health with radical politics to create the first acupuncture detoxification program in America. This form of radical harm reduction was a revolutionary act toward the government programs that transfixed the lives of black and brown communities throughout the South Bronx. Dope is Death utilizes an abundant archive while giving us insight into how the acupuncture clinic rose to prominence and, despite funding challenges, still functions to this day. Some of those who benefited from the program became acupuncturists themselves. Dr. Mutulu's legacy is cemented within this profound story of community healing and activism.*

This event comes on the heels of Dr. Shakur's release December 16, 2022 from federal prison after serving 37 years. From Family & Friends of Mutulu Shakur:

*Today, the morning of December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Dr. Mutulu Shakur was released from prison on parole! The decision to grant parole is based on federal law guidelines for "old law" prisoners, finding that Dr. Shakur poses no threat to the community, taking into consideration his exemplary conduct in prison, his medical condition and how much time he has served. Mutulu is now with his family. This victory was secured by the steadfast support of his legal team, his family and his community comprised of all of you.*

*Family & Friends of Mutulu Shakur (FFMS) is greatly appreciative of everyone's support over the course of Mutulu's decades in prison. We ask that everyone respect Dr. Shakur's privacy while he spends the holidays with his family and concentrates on his health and healing.*

Support Dr. Mutulu as he adjusts to life on the outside by donating to his support crew directly.

Letters and packages may be sent to:

**Dr. Mutulu Shakur c/o**  
**Hirano Acupuncture Clinic**  
**1139 North Brand Boulevard, Unit B**  
**Glendale, California 91202**

**Getting to P.I.T.:**

*J/M Train* - Get off at the Hewes stop walk south on Broadway for ~half a block, turn left on Hewes Street. It will be on the corner of South 5<sup>th</sup> Street and Hewes.

*G Train* - Get off at the Broadway stop and walk north on Union Street to South 5<sup>th</sup> Street, take a left on South 5<sup>th</sup> Street and it will be at the end of the block on the right.