



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for May 16<sup>th</sup>

## **2 May - A Texas Prison Guard Punishes a Woman for Talking About Abortion**

*Kwaneta Harris typically keeps National Public Radio playing through her headphones. It's the only way she can block out the incessant noise.*

### **MORE:**

by Victoria Law (*The Nation*)

Harris is incarcerated in Texas's Lane Murray Unit. She's in segregation, the state's name for solitary confinement, where she spends nearly 24 hours each day locked in her cell. But although she is physically alone, she is constantly bombarded by noise from the corridor and adjoining cells. To talk with one another, women must yell through the vents connecting their cells or, if their friends are further, through the small window of their cells' metal doors. It's a constant cacophony. Hence the headphones.

One Wednesday in mid-April, Harris removed her headphones and heard the younger women shouting through their cell doors. That in itself wasn't unusual, but the conversation soon had Harris at her own door. They were giving advice about avoiding pregnancy—and all of their advice was wrong.

"You gotta let him in yo butthole before yo biscuit and be a toaster strudel, not a twinkie," they shouted to a woman who was scheduled for release within a few months.

Translation: To avoid pregnancy, a woman should have anal sex before vaginal sex. She should also be sure that the man ejaculated on her, not inside her.

Harris had been a nurse before her incarceration. Alarmed at the egregiously wrong advice, she went to her door to make sure that the women were armed with facts rather than myths that would lead to unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections.

Although many of the women who cycled through the segregation unit where Harris has spent the past seven years are in their 20s, many had grown up in foster care. Few had a trusted adult to teach them about their bodies. Texas does not require its public schools to teach sex education. Those that do must emphasize abstinence.

Research has found that states that emphasize abstinence-only education have higher pregnancy rates than the states that emphasize comprehensive sexual health education. In Texas, that could not be more clear: The state consistently ranks among the top 10 states for teen pregnancies. Furthermore, of the 7,058 women entering Texas prisons in 2022 alone, 98 were pregnant. Seventy gave birth while imprisoned that year. Among the programs that the prison offers to new mothers, including one that allows select mothers to remain with the babies born while in custody, none listed birth control or family planning.

"I never understood why everybody was pregnant within a few months of release," Harris told *The Nation*. But hearing their advice, she understood—and decided to set their understanding straight.

She started with sex education, and then she moved on to talk about consent, trying to explain what it was—and what it wasn't. She wasn't as successful at that, she told *The Nation*. Many of the young women had already been sexually exploited by adult men in their short lives, she said, but because they had accepted favors or items, or because the person had not forced them into sex, they believed they had consented.

Then, a woman asked about so-called "partial birth abortion," a nonmedical phrase the anti-abortion movement created to stigmatize later abortion care.

"There's no such thing," Harris told them. She explained that most abortions are now medication abortions, meaning that a person need not undergo a procedural abortion to terminate their pregnancy.

That was what drew the ire of the guard on duty—a young man in his early 20s whom Harris had never noticed before. But that day, he made his presence—and his views about abortion—known.

From her cell, Harris could see in only one direction. She did not see the man during the first part of her impromptu sex education discussion. But once she began dispelling myths about abortion, he stormed into view, yelling at her to shut up and threatening not only a disciplinary ticket for violating prison rules but even a new criminal charge, which could lead to additional prison time.

In response, the younger women cursed him out, even telling the officer that he was a "partial birth abortion."

The officer took Harris's identification card to write a disciplinary ticket and he threatened to file a new criminal charge against her, Harris said. After he stormed off, Harris began making phone calls from her prison-issued tablet to find out if the state had passed any post-Dobbs laws that might allow new charges to be brought against her.

"The legislature has not passed a law that criminalizes speaking about abortion," Sara Ainsworth, the senior legal and policy director of If/When/How. Even Texas's SB 8, which prohibits abortion after six weeks and allows individuals to file civil lawsuits against anyone who "aids and abets" an abortion, does not criminalize abortion itself or talking about abortion.

But, Ainsworth continued, "it's not surprising that someone is misstating the law and using it to threaten someone else when so many people are confused."

The legal defense organization receives calls from across the country on its Repro Legal Helpline. In states with stringent abortion bans, callers fear that they are no longer allowed to talk about or share information about abortion. "These are people who are not incarcerated," Ainsworth noted. "They're not under the surveillance of the state in the same way, but they still fear the law prohibits them from sharing information."

At midnight, a prison lieutenant, one with whom she has never had any problems, woke Harris and moved her to a cell on the far side of the unit, away from everyone except a woman who has severe mental health issues. Harris's new window faces rows of barbed wire rather than the prison yard, where she could watch and wave at people walking by. Only by screaming loudly can she communicate with the women on the other side of the unit.

That is where she has remained since. She never received an explanation for the cell change. The officer was not wearing a name badge, so, while she filed a grievance about his behavior, she could not identify him by name.

Robert Hurst, communications officer for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, told *The Nation* that he could not give out an individual's disciplinary history. He did not answer queries about TDCJ's policies about discussing birth control and abortion.

Michele Deitch is the director of the Prison and Jail Innovation Lab at the University of Texas in Austin. Informal punishment is common in jails and prisons, typically when an incarcerated person has done something to anger an officer, like insult them or file a grievance against them, she said. These punishments can take the form of extra cell searches, destructive cell searches, or denying a person

recreation time. "The way prisons operate allow for that level of inappropriately exercised discretion," she told *The Nation*.

But she added, "That someone is being punished for the content of their speech is thoroughly unacceptable and outrageous. For it to be in the context of abortion is downright scary, because it suggests that staff can use their own views about what's acceptable speech and what isn't to exercise control over people."

What happened to Harris, she continued, may simply be one rogue guard, "but that doesn't mean it couldn't become something more commonplace, particularly if it's not addressed."

"If this is just one rogue guard, it's the responsibility of the prison to handle it—and to make sure there's no more retaliation over what people say and the content of their speech, especially if the speech is not threatening or violating prison rules," Ainsworth said.

As for Harris, she remains in extreme isolation. Only a few states limit time in solitary by law (New York and Connecticut) or by prison policy (Colorado and North Dakota). Texas currently has no limitations, although lawmaker Terry Meza recently filed a bill to limit it to 10 days.

"I walk on eggshells in fear that they can take the phone and I won't be able to talk to my kids," Harris told *The Nation*. In January, when men in solitary embarked on a 21-day hunger strike, prison staff withheld all mail and e-messages from Harris for the entire month. Now, she is unable to send or receive e-messages on her prison-issued tablet, although others on the same unit have no such problem. Instead, prison staff give her paper printouts of messages that are days old and in tiny print. For three days, she was unable to call anyone. She fears that prison officials could curtail all communication again.

At the same time, she recognizes that her informal punishment demonstrates both the state's larger politics around bodily autonomy as well as the power that individual prison staff can wield over those in custody.

And the message that her punishment sends to her and everyone else? "Shut the hell up."

## **5 May - Eric King's Regards on the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Lucasville Uprising**

*Next week is the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lucasville Uprising.*

### **MORE:**

To me, this is very important because Lucasville's lessons are as valuable today as they were then.

One of the interesting things about Lucasville is that it even happened. Every day in almost every prison in America, there exist, to a certain extent, the conditions that lead to the uprising: cold, rotten, vile food; communication either over-priced, delayed, or prevented altogether; families being disrespected or denied access when they try to visit; subhuman and totally negligent medical care; old decrepit facilities that are falling apart, moldy and dangerous; a complete lack of jobs or meaningful activities and the existing jobs paying peanuts; and administrations who totally disregard prisoners' physical and mental well-being while enacting policies that make life much worse and much more violent...those conditions haven't vanished. (See Thomson SMU and every USP)

What the Lucasville uprisers had was bravery, dignity, and a collective mindset that what would come was worth it to stand up for themselves. Organizing any level of resistance inside prison is incredibly difficult. At USP Lee, we couldn't get 10 people to join a peaceful 'Grievance Process Protest'...the reasons it is so hard can be summed up as 1) Apathy 2) Extreme Repression. For even discussing the 'Grievance Protest' I was forcibly stripped by 5 USP Lee guards and forced to wear ONLY paper underwear in a completely empty cell for a week. Imagine the bravery of the Lucasville revolters. They knew with 100% certainty that whatever comforts, family contact, and safety they felt was absolutely finished. They knew death was a possibility, either at the hands of self-serving prisoners looking to settle scores or at the more likely hands

of the cops who would be acting with rage-fueled impunity. They had the foresightedness to know and accept that there would be extreme brutality now and the chance for dignified treatment in the future. They played the long game with the hopes of feeling human and being treated as such.

I've been very blessed to be friends with people who still support some of the Lucasville uprisers. This is amazing and priceless work... The abolition movement cannot succeed without inside action, and knowing the fierce repression that they will face, inside people need to know support is there. Two hands to climb the rope out of the pit of oppression.

Horrible, tragic things happen during revolts, and they happened during Lucasville... this is not a celebration of or glorification of violence, absolutely not. It is a reminder of bravery, that some were willing to face their oppressor head-on... knowing they were living in their oppressors' dwellings, knowing there was no retreat and no way out... we need to remember them and support them and everyone who put their dignity first and play the long game. Free Joe-Joe, free Kojo...free all our elders!

### **6 May - Updates on Alfredo Cospito's health after ending the hunger strike**

*Alfredo is starting to eat again (although more slowly than he'd like, eh! eh!), he is gradually starting to eat pasta and solids, in line with the suggestions of the dietologist.*

#### **MORE:**

His overall readings are relatively good. There seems to be a slight improvement in the condition of the foot that had lost all feeling, but according to the doctors it is not possible to make any prognosis for the time being, in any case he is walking a little better.

He is still hospitalized in the prison wing of San Paolo hospital, impatient to get out of hospital as at present he does not even have access to the hour's exercise period and basically never gets out of the room/cell, moreover without even any natural light; however, the doctors are saying that he should remain there for at least another week. He is in good spirits, basically he is getting better. He will continue to get visits from his lawyer and doctor, so there will be updates to follow.

He gets hardly any post, but we invite everybody to flood the censors with letters and telegrams, make them earn their dirty wages! We remind you that to write to him the address is that of the prison of Opera even though he is in hospital.

update 2:

We learned that on May 3<sup>rd</sup> Alfredo Cospito was transferred from San Paolo hospital to the prison of Opera, still in the Servizio di Assistenza Intensificata [Intensive Care Unit] (SAI) where he has already been imprisoned in the past.

We remember that on April 19<sup>th</sup> (following the outcome of the hearing at the constitutional court) the comrade ended the hunger strike begun on October 20<sup>th</sup> and now finds himself in the difficult phase of recovering the ability to digest food.

### **7 May - Urgent Health Call-In Campaign for Political Prisoner Ed Poindexter**

*Watch the moving video of Ed's Niece and Sister at the April 26, 2023 UN EMLER Hearing in Atlanta: [youtu.be/aKwV7LQ5iww](https://youtu.be/aKwV7LQ5iww)*

#### **MORE:**

Ed needs to be released to live the rest of his life outside of prison, with his family! (His niece Ericka is now 52 years old and was an infant when Ed was targeted, stolen from his home, jailed, framed, and railroaded.)

Ed Poindexter's left leg was amputated below the knee in early April due to lack of proper medical care. Ed has diabetes and receives dialysis several days a week. He underwent triple bypass heart surgery in 2016.

**PLEASE CALL:**

- Warden Boyd of the Reception and Treatment Center (402.471.2861)
- Warden Wilhelm of the Nebraska State Penitentiary (402.471.3161)
- Governor Pillen, the State of Nebraska Office of the Governor (402.471.2244)
- Director Rob Jeffreys, Nebraska Department of Corrections 402.471.2654
- The Nebraska Board of Pardons (Email: [ne.pardonsboard@nebraska.gov](mailto:ne.pardonsboard@nebraska.gov))

Please sustain calls daily through May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023 for this intensive campaign, and thereafter as you can.

[Any relief for Ed will be announced via email and social media].

**Sample Message:**

*"I'm calling to urge that Ed Poindexter, #27767, be given immediate compassionate release.*

*In April 2023, Ed's niece and brother found out that Ed's leg had been amputated earlier in the month. And it happened without notice to Ed's family! This was all within the 'skilled nursing facility' at the Reception and Treatment Center, which specializes in behavioral issues and suicide watch, and is not primarily a rehab medical unit.*

*Ed is on dialysis several days per week and is wheelchair bound, and is not able to shower or change without a lot more direct support than he is currently getting.*

*The Nebraska Department of Corrections admits that their facilities are severely overcrowded and understaffed.*

*I join Ed's family in demanding that Ed be given Compassionate Release, and that he be immediately released to hospice at home."*

**8 May - Anarchist Political Prisoner Dan Baker Needs Support!**

*"Your efforts to shine a light of awareness on our situations as political prisoners is all that keeps the cops from murdering us with impunity." -Dan Baker*

**MORE:**

Daniel Baker is an anti-fascist activist who was arrested on January 15, 2021 for social media posts that called for defense against possible far-right attacks in the wake of the January 6<sup>th</sup> riots. Daniel was facing up to 10 years for two counts of transmitting a communication in interstate commerce containing a threat to kidnap or injure. On October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021 he was sentenced to 44 months in prison and 3 years of supervised release.

Recently, Dan has been going through an exceptionally hard time, and began a hunger strike in March to protest his conditions. He is currently in the SHU, has been attacked by a right-wing bigot, and is being denied his right of a timely transfer to a halfway house, and contact with his lawyer has been limited. Here is a call for letters to let the BOP know Dan has people on his side on the outside, and that we want him to be treated humanely, and released soon.

Please check out Dan's Book list and send him something read:

**[amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/XVSE0XEP9TJM](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/XVSE0XEP9TJM)**

Supporting political prisoners such as Dan is vital, especially in moments such as this. In Dan's own words: "...please don't be overwhelmed by the number of comrades in prison. Instead, take 5 minutes every day to write to a different political prisoner and reply when they write back. Your efforts to shine a light of awareness on our situations as political prisoners is all that keeps the cops from murdering us with impunity."

NYC ABC is asking you to join us in writing to political prisoner Daniel Baker. Send him books. Pay attention to his campaign. Send him some love and show your support for a comrade!

## **8 May - Judges Uphold Domestic Terrorism Charges Against Stop Cop City Activists**

*Report from the Atlanta Community Press collective on the ongoing situation faced by forest defenders and Stop Cop City protesters in so-called Atlanta, Georgia.*

### **MORE:**

In separate preliminary hearings on May 4, Magistrate Court judges in both Fulton and DeKalb Counties upheld charges of domestic terrorism against one individual arrested after a protest on Jan. 21 and three more individuals arrested at the South River Music Festival on March 5.

In DeKalb County, Magistrate Judge James Altman upheld domestic terrorism charges against Luke Harper, Fredrique Robert-Paul and Victor Puertas. The three DeKalb defendants were the last people still held at DeKalb County Jail from amongst the 23 individuals arrested at the music festival and charged with domestic terrorism after a group of about 200 individuals set fires, destroyed equipment and knocked down security camera poles at the Cop City construction site a half-mile away from the festival.

In Fulton County, Judge Ashley Drake upheld a total of eight charges against Emily Murphy, including one of domestic terrorism. Murphy and five others were arrested Jan. 21 in the vicinity of a Defend the Forest protest three days after the killing of climate activist Manuel Paez “Tortuguita” Terán.

Preliminary hearings are held to determine whether the State has probable cause to charge someone with a crime. The threshold for probable cause is much lower than the threshold to convict someone of a crime.

### **DeKalb County**

Judge Altman explained that he decided whether to uphold the charges based on two criteria. The first was whether prosecutors provided enough evidence to satisfy the conditions set forth in the Georgia domestic terrorism statute, § 16-11-220, namely the threat to critical infrastructure. The second criteria prosecutors needed to meet was identification, or their ability to show that Harper, Robert-Paul and Puertas were each a party to the alleged crimes committed on March 5.

Prosecutors Lance Cross and Peter Johnson of the DeKalb County District Attorney’s Office presented the case for the state, and across all three DeKalb hearings the background facts presented remained relatively the same. Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) Special Agent (SA) Ryan Long was the primary witness for the state. A second witness, Atlanta Police Department (APD) Sergeant Scott Farais testified at the 9:00 a.m. hearing in DeKalb County, but prosecutors explained he was unavailable at the later hearings due to the ongoing active shooter situation in Midtown at the time.

In his opening arguments, Assistant District Attorney Cross described the Defend the Forest Movement as being well funded and having a “pretty good propaganda arm” on social media. Upon Cross’ witness examination, SA Long testified to his view of the general structure of the Movement. He described the movement overall as a pyramid scheme, with each of the different names like “Stop Cop City” and “Defend the Forest” as subgroups designed to attract new members and subordinate to the leadership of a main group under what he called a command structure. SA Long asserted that activists present as ecologists one day and anarchists the next as necessary to further their cause. The latter label, however, stands at odds with the claim that the movement operates under some sort of command structure.

Prosecutors’ discussion of defendants’ social media accounts presented another troubling issue. Several times throughout the DeKalb preliminary hearings, prosecutors described defendants’ social media posts as illustrating an awareness of the nature of the Defend the Forest Movement as prosecutors painted it. In one

instance, prosecutors cited Puertas's social media posting labeling himself an "anti-capitalist" and "anti-colonial" as proof of criminal intent. While Judge Altman stated these social media posts did not factor into his decision regarding probable cause, prosecutors' suggestion that supporting a movement or self-identifying as anti-capitalist or anti-colonial is evidence seen by prosecutors as an implication of guilt carries with it troubling ramifications for free speech.

Prosecutors also attempted to paint legal support resources as evidence of guilt. In the arrest warrants signed by SA Long on March 5 against the 23 individuals charged with domestic terrorism, frequent mentions were made about individuals having a jail support hotline phone number on their body. The next day, March 6, at the first appearance hearing for the 23 people arrested at the music festival, Cross described the Atlanta Solidarity Fund, which serves as both a bail and legal defense fund for activists in the city, as a central part of the Defend the Forest Movement, saying, "they're being investigated as a part of this whole thing."

Throughout the United States, it is a frequent practice for activist groups to distribute jail support numbers in anticipation of police repression. This practice is common for protests of all types, from simple marches to direct actions, and speaks more to the constant threat to freedom of speech by police than it does to the intent of any individual protester. Similarly, the proliferation of bail and legal defense funds is a response to the harm created by the cash bail system in the US and political prosecutions of social, economic and environmental justice activists.

For all three of the DeKalb defendants, Judge Altman held that the first criteria for upholding the domestic terrorism charges had been met because the act of setting fire to the construction site close to a power line tower was a direct threat to critical infrastructure, even if the defendants did not themselves start any of the fires. Judge Altman recounted a 2017 case he presided over involving an individual charged with the setting of a fire that went out of control and destroyed a bridge over I-85 near Piedmont Road. He stated the 2017 fire started far smaller than those at the construction site on March 5. If the fires at the construction site had taken down the power line tower, Altman said, they would have caused a power outage to hundreds of thousands of people.

As for the second criteria on identification, Judge Altman ruled that prosecutors provided enough evidence against Harper and Puertas to make them at least party to the action at the construction site. Prosecutors showed images of who they identified as Harper on the construction site, which the judge quickly determined was sufficient identification. His decision on Puertas took more time since prosecutors could not provide photographs or video of Puertas in the crowd at the construction site or marching to it. The only identification evidence against Puertas was SA Long's testimony that other officers saw Puertas leaving the woods near the living room and running from a Georgia State Police (GSP) officer. Judge Altman ruled that this was sufficient evidence for identification.

Judge Altman also declined to change the no-bond status previously set by a Superior Court judge for Harper and Puertas, citing his belief that they were flight risks. Judge Altman told defense attorneys they could file a motion for a reconsideration of bond status hearing for the two defendants in front of a Superior Court judge.

Judge Altman did not rule on probable cause against Robert-Paul, whose hearing ran about a half-hour over the allotted time. Robert-Paul's defense attorney Holly Waltman had another court appearance scheduled and had to leave before she could present her closing argument against prosecutors' probable cause evidence. After Waltman's departure, the judge offered to rule on Robert-Paul's bond condition, saying that if he granted bond then, the defense would not need to make their closing arguments. Matt Bass, the second attorney representing Robert-Paul, agreed to have the judge rule on bond in lieu of a probable cause ruling. Judge Altman set Robert-Paul a \$25,000, with conditions that she surrender her passport, not return to Intrenchment Creek Park, not have any contact with her co-defendants and not post anything on social media regarding the Stop Cop City movement.

## **Fulton County**

In Fulton County, the prosecution, led by state Deputy Attorney General John Fowler, argued that Murphy was a party to the alleged unlawful assembly and subsequent riot, arson and property destruction committed on January 21.

In closing arguments before Judge Drake, Fowler said that a repayment from the “Forest Defense Fund” to Murphy, who uses they/them pronouns, for supplies they purchased to set up a welcome station at a summer Week of Action in 2022 was evidence that Murphy was well positioned in the movement and knew what was going to happen at the protest January 21.

As in the DeKalb preliminary hearings, the prosecution argued that a social media post by Murphy sharing a flyer for a “night of rage” on January 20 was further evidence of their culpability but did not explain a connection between the flyer for January 20 and the alleged events of January 21.

Fowler invoked the outside agitator narrative against Murphy, saying, “[They are] from Michigan and there is no evidence that [they are] here for any other reason. What there is testimony of is that there are people from states all over the place — even out of the country — that are coming here solely for the purpose of Defend the Atlanta Forest. There is no other evidence of why [Murphy] is here. It’s not school, it’s not work, it’s not to visit anybody. It’s for the purposes of Defend the Atlanta Forest.”

“The whole trope of outside agitator has a long history in American history,” Professor Peniel Joseph at the University of Texas at Austin said in a 2020 interview, “and it’s been used by everybody from plantation owners in the South during antebellum slavery to big corporate industry magnates... to civil rights activists such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X, and certainly black power activists, including the Black Panthers and Stokely Carmichael.”

In more recent history, Joseph argues in the same interview, “[the outside agitator narrative has] been utilized against activists who are trying to transform the criminal justice system in the United States. Basically, what it’s meant is that whatever conflict, political rebellion or demonstration is happening, it’s not organically home grown, it’s not authentic. That none of these troubles would happen if not for outside agitators.”

The use of the outside agitator narrative in the city of Atlanta strikes particularly strange, with city leaders quick to invoke its status as the birthplace of Martin Luther King Jr. at any available chance. King himself addressed the outside agitator narrative in his Letter from Birmingham Jail, writing, “I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial ‘outside agitator’ idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider.”

Fowler also drew an extreme comparison between the Defend the Forest Movement and the 9/11 attack in New York City two decades ago saying, “[Protesters] were trying to knock out the windows of 191 Peachtree Street. That is a dangerous situation. That’s a twin towers.”

The 191 Peachtree building is the home of the Atlanta Police Foundation. It is by no means a symbolic or cultural touchstone for the city of Atlanta, nor has the building ever been under any threat of serious damage. In the almost two years since the start of the Stop Cop City movement, the building’s windows have been smashed several times, but that is the extent of the damage. The hyperbolic nature of Fowler’s comments underlines the State’s habit of categorizing any dissent as an extreme threat to the entire nation, which opens the door to deeper cycles of repression against those who protest systems injustice in this county.



Ultimately, Judge Drake upheld the charges against Murphy. Like her counterpart in DeKalb County, Judge Drake told the defendant that the bar for probable cause is low, and that prosecutors would need to reach a much higher standard when the case goes to trial.

Prosecutors and the defense attorneys representing Murphy agreed to a consent bond on April 24, but Murphy chose to remain in jail to force the preliminary hearing. Murphy's bond was paid after their hearing, and they were released from Fulton County Jail in the early hours of May 4.

### **10 May - Neither Condemned, nor Persecuted! Solidarity with Miguel Peralta**

*Statement from Indigenous Yaqui political prisoner, Fidencio Aldama, in solidarity with Indigenous Mazatec politically persecuted prisoner, Miguel Peralta.*

#### **MORE:**

My name is Fidencio Aldama Pérez. I join the call for solidarity with my compañero Miguel Peralta. After nearly five years of imprisonment, living through a burdensome and lengthy legal process, Miguel achieved his freedom after it was proven that there was no evidence to convict him of a crime. Due to the same situation, for more than eight years, six compañeros have remained in prison without sentences, and fourteen others are being persecuted for supposed "justice." Better said, for the manipulation of certain people, and the abuse of power.

On March 4, 2022, the Supreme Court of the State of Oaxaca revoked Miguel's freedom, issuing a new arrest warrant seeking again to impose a prison sentence of a half-century, or fifty years.

In the face of this sentence and political persecution, I want to express my solidarity with my compañero Miguel Peralta, calling on everyone to resist this case of injustice. His case is similar to mine. For the defense of our territories and self-determination, our customs and traditions, they unjustly imprison us. They do so to intimidate us. Through the intervention of those in power, and the corruption linked to them, those allied with money can carry out their objectives.

Yet we continue in the struggle for self-determination, for our customs and traditions. We make a call out for action, to demand that the court attend to the appeal filed in this case, so that they do the work which corresponds to them.

Compañero Miguel Peralta, neither condemned, nor persecuted!

### **11 May - Prison Life: Same People, Different Uniform**

*Joshua Williams is currently held captive by the state of Missouri in consequence to his participation in direct action within the Ferguson Uprising in 2014.*

#### **MORE:**

As I sit in my cell in prison, I look at these COs and say to myself "they just like the police but without the gun on they hip." I ask a question to the staff of every prison across the map, I ask "what make it ok to beat inmates bloody, what make it ok to kick an inmate's teeth out they mouth, better yet, what make it ok to stomp a person out near death?" It's not ok at all, these are people sons and daughters. These are humans, but you heartless pigs don't give two fucks about that America.

If you really look at this prison thing it's just a plantation dressed up. We get chained down to benches, chained up every time we walk outside. We get maced like dogs and locked in cages. This is not just punishment; this is cruel and unusual punishment. Whoever had the idea for prison is a sick minded person. These COs say they here to help us but are the same people that's putting you in the hospital on life support. They say they here to help you be a better person but paying inmates to jump on other inmates. They say they here for you but find you guilty of everything you do, so when we speak on police brutality it's not just on the streets, it's behind the walls of prisons too.

I didn't know my people was being treated like this till I put myself behind bars. I couldn't believe what I was witnessing. one day I was sitting in my cell, I heard a loud bang next door and a struggle, and heard an inmate yell out in pain "my head, my head, God make it stop, they beating me". Y'all this is not a fairytale. I'm telling you this is real life y'all, our people need help on the inside. Drugs are crazy infested in these prisons and it's being brought by the very people carrying a badge and took an oath. Y'all, I seen a total of 10 overdoses since being down. 5 of 'em i was close to, seeing your friend getting a white sheet pulled over their head and the EMTs saying "sorry we did all we could". Not a good feeling bro. The COs don't care we get to live with that in our heads forever.

Mental health is a major factor in prisons. people actually lose they mind in these cells, I seen it happen. They don't get this shit tho, why? Because they not going through this, we are. We gotta wake up every morning to the same shit. We gotta write home to our mom and loved ones. Some of us don't even get the chance to make it back to they loved ones before they pass away. That weigh a lot on us and sometimes becomes too much to bear and they turn to the only thing that help numb the pain. Drugs is used too much and they OD but that's the life of prison.

### **11 May - A Quick Update On Mel Broughton!**

*Mel has been held on remand for the last 6 months, with a trial scheduled to start on 24<sup>th</sup> July.*

#### **MORE:**

It's been a long wait inside for him and with more time to go any letters of support could really help him keep busy and stay connected with the outside world. You can also use the email a prisoner website, though letters are preferred.

Mel has been keeping up to date with the news and is interested in history, wildlife and the natural world – just in case you were stuck for a topic of conversation!

Please do not discuss any details about the case. Mel is receiving some books more easily now, although the prison staff are strict about what is 'appropriate', so (unfortunately) avoiding AR material may save you some money. You can also send cards from prison approved suppliers, details can be found through the HMP Peterborough website.

### **14 May - Mónica & Francisco: New Date for Trial**

*New date for the oral trial against Chilean compañerxs Mónica and Francisco.*

#### **MORE:**

Accused of sending explosive packages against former Interior Minister Rodrigo Hinzpeter and the 58th police station, as well as the bombing of the Tanica building, Compañerxs Mónica Caballero and Francisco Solar are facing trial for these actions.

Although the trial was initially scheduled for 19 May 2023, at the request of the defense, it was possible to reschedule on 18 July 2023.

### **18 May - In Militant Remembrance of Jordan Neely: Bystander Intervention**

**WHAT:** Brainstorm and Discussion Session

**WHEN:** 6:00pm, Thursday, May 18<sup>th</sup>

**WHERE:** P.I.T. (Property Is Theft) - 411 South 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Brooklyn

**COST:** FREE

#### **MORE:**

Join together to discuss ways to intervene when violence against marginalized folks happens in public, as was the case of a white vigilante who murdered unhoused Jordan Neely on a subway in NYC.

## **21 May - MACC Care Assembly!**

**WHAT:** Public Assembly

**WHEN:** 3:00pm, Sunday, May 21<sup>st</sup>

**WHERE:** P.I.T. (Property Is Theft) - 411 South 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Brooklyn

**COST:** FREE

### **MORE:**

Care Assembly is our monthly general meeting, open to all. The assembly includes a care exchange (mutual aid offers and requests), some basic defense training, a community meal, and a political education presentation and discussion. This month's topic is housing/squatting.

### **SCHEDULE:**

- Fight Martial arts training - no experience necessary!
- Enlight Housing/Squatting
- Bite & Invite Care exchange while we share a community meal

What is the care exchange? As we sit down to share a meal we check in and exchange our requests and offers, in the spirit of mutual aid. Requests – do you need help with anything? Offers – do you have any skills, time, or resources to offer? This is a conversation to help facilitate building and maintaining relationships among us by identifying needs and sharing what we can in solidarity.

## **23 May - Agitating through Art: The Subversive Comics and Writings of Ernest Riebe**

**WHAT:** Book Launch

**WHEN:** 7:00pm, Tuesday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>

**WHERE:** Interference Archive - 314 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Brooklyn

**COST:** FREE

### **MORE:**

Join the Graphic History Collection on May 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7pm for the launch of Mr. Block: The Subversive Comics and Writings of Ernest Riebe. We'll celebrate the launch of the book with a panel on the work of Industrial Workers of the World artist Ernest Riebe and the importance of art and humor to activism, joined by members of the Graphic History Collective and WW3 Illustrated artist Sabrina Jones.

The Graphic History Collective is a group of activists, artists, and researchers who combine art and history to promote education and social justice. They have produced a number of projects, including billboards, posters, colouring books, and several graphic books. Their projects show that you don't need a cape and a pair of tights to change the world.