



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for February 20<sup>th</sup>

### **5 Feb - Jessica Reznicek Held in Segregation**

*Jessica Reznicek is a land and water defender who, among other things, fought against the Dakota Access Pipeline, in Iowa.*

#### **MORE:**

In 2021, Jessica was designated a domestic terrorist and sentenced to 8 years in prison (for one count of conspiracy to damage an energy facility).

Jessica is currently being held in disciplinary segregation (for a total of 60 days). Therefore, her communication is limited and she will not be able to respond to letters as quickly as before.

For instructions on how to write letters to Jessica, check out [supportjessicareznicek.com/contact](https://supportjessicareznicek.com/contact)

For information about Jessica and her case, check out [supportjessicareznicek.com](https://supportjessicareznicek.com)

### **6 Feb - Support Chris “Big Tex” G**

*Call to support Chris “Big Tex” G, a community organizer in North Texas who is being targeted by fascist and anti-Semitic groups.*

#### **MORE:**

Chris “Big Tex” G. is a community organizer from North Texas who was arrested after a cop riot at a drag show in Fort Worth and indicted by a grand jury on bogus charges. Tarrant County officials immediately assigned a white-collar special prosecutor who has acted at every turn to stall his requests for trial.

Subsequent to his arrest, Chris was served with a quarter million-dollar lawsuit on behalf of the New Columbia Movement. NCM is a self-described “Christian-fascist fraternity” that has generated a personality around bullying those they don’t agree with. [Editor’s Note: According to investigative journalist, Steve Monacelli of the Texas Observer, self-described “Christian Fascist” Kelly Neidert is a member of the New Columbia Movement. Neidert has called for “rounding up” those who attend Pride events.]

In North Texas, this has looked like protests alongside more overt neo-Nazi formations in and around drag shows, attempting to force their way into drag shows and LGBTQ-centric events to harass and dox attendants, and harassing those seeking reproductive healthcare.

The lawsuit has thus far amounted to a fishing expedition on behalf of NCM’s wealthy benefactors to dissuade anyone of the more Left persuasion from political participation.

Aside from typical police aggression and harassment, Chris has been the victim of continued and ongoing five month long stalking campaign lodged by private investigators retained by New Columbia Movement.

Chris is seeking community support to bolster his legal funds for his criminal trial and to fund his litigation process through the civil trial slated for later this year. More info: [spot.fund/g7t41sc](https://spot.fund/g7t41sc)

### **6 Feb - Bail Bill in Georgia Jails More People Pretrial, Attacks Bail-Funds**

*The bill requires people be held on bail for dozens of new, small-time charges—and virtually eliminates charitable bail funds after nonprofits posted bonds for many anti-Cop City protesters last year. Gov. Brian Kemp is expected to sign the measure into law.*

**MORE:**

by Elizabeth Weill-Greenberg (*The Appeal*)

Today, the Georgia House passed a Republican-backed bill that guts charitable bail funds and will send more people accused of misdemeanors to the state’s deadly jails. The proposed legislation, Senate Bill 63, mandates cash bail for more than two dozen additional offenses.

The bill effectively eliminates charitable bail funds. It states that no “individual, corporation, organization, charity, nonprofit corporation, or group” may post more than three cash bonds per year. A person who violates the ban would be charged with a misdemeanor.

The bill was co-sponsored by multiple high-ranking state Republicans, including Senate Majority Whip Randy Robertston and Majority Leader Steve Gooch. The bill passed by a vote of 95 to 67.

Some advocates say this legislation is an attack against community members protesting the Atlanta Public Safety Training Center—better known as Cop City. Local authorities have arrested dozens of anti-Cop City protesters, including senior citizens and faith leaders. The new offenses that would become bail-mandatory include racketeering and domestic terrorism—charges that have already been levied against the anti-Cop City protesters in moves that have alarmed civil rights organizations. Last year, members of the Atlanta Solidarity Fund, which provides support to arrested demonstrators, were also arrested and accused of money laundering and charity fraud.

The new bill requires charitable bail funds to submit to the same regulations as bail-bond companies—including undergoing background checks, paying fees, and having an application approved by a local sheriff’s department.

“This is very much an act of retribution against people who have been involved in the Cop City protests,” said Michael Collins, Senior Director for State and Local Government Affairs for the criminal justice reform group Color of Change. “It’s potentially going to have a chilling effect on protest in Georgia.”

Local advocates say the bill will also have catastrophic consequences for low-income and unhoused people accused of low-level offenses. The legislation mandates cash bail for people accused of forgery, unlawful assembly (another typical charge levied against peaceful protesters), and possession of marijuana. Judges would also be required to set bail for accusations typically related to poverty, such as trespassing or theft by taking, provided that it is the person’s second or subsequent offense.

Advocates have long said that the best way to address the ongoing human rights crisis in Georgia’s jails is to reduce the number of people held on low-level offenses, but Bill 63 will do the opposite.

“People who were released on unsecured judicial release so that they could go to a treatment bed; so that they could take advantage of pretrial intervention; so that they could simply go home and take care of their children—those people will now also be held on cash bail,” said Tiffany Roberts, Director of the Public Policy Unit at the Southern Center for Human Rights, an Atlanta-based civil rights group. “Then, on the flip side, this legislation says that organizations can’t help those folks.”

Before the vote, several members of the House spoke out in opposition to the bill, stating that it would jail people accused—but not convicted—of crimes simply because they cannot afford to pay.

“What is most scary about this bill is the criminalization of churches and religious institutions that have historically been on the front lines of social justice and civil rights justice for black and brown people in this country,” State Rep. Tanya Miller said before the vote. “I do not believe that it is appropriate today or

any day to tell parishioners and people of faith who pull their money together who want to bail mothers out on Mother’s Day, who want to bail fathers out on Father’s Day, who want to bail children out on Christmas Eve that this body believes that they should be charged as criminals unless they go through the process of becoming bail bondsman.”

Republican Governor Brian Kemp is expected to sign the legislation, which already passed the State Senate, according to local news reports. Kemp’s office did not respond to a request for comment.

Several of Georgia’s jails have attracted national attention—and condemnation. Last summer, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) opened an investigation into the Fulton County Jail after Lashawn Thompson was found inside a squalid cell covered in lice and feces.

At the time of his death, most people held in Thompson’s unit—which housed individuals with mental illness—were unable to care for themselves and were so malnourished that they had developed a wasting syndrome typically found in people with advanced-stage cancer.

Last week, Georgia Sens. Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock, as well as Rep. Nikema Williams, asked the DOJ to prioritize its investigation into the jail, noting that at least seven people had died since the investigation began. In 2023, 10 people in the sheriff’s custody died. Fifteen people died the previous year.

Serious concerns have also been raised about Georgia’s Clayton County Jail. Last year, detainees told *The Appeal* that they feared for their lives, were forced to live in squalor, had limited access to toilets, and that some people had to sleep on the floor. In September, Ossoff, citing *The Appeal*’s reporting, requested a federal investigation into the jail.

“There appears to be a pattern and practice of civil rights violations in this jail that result in preventable deaths and jeopardize public trust,” the senator wrote. He later added that reports “of medical neglect at the facility shock the conscience.”

In Ossoff’s letter, he named several detainees who had died, including 32-year-old Alan Willison, who died of testicular cancer complicated by medical neglect, according to the Clayton County Medical Examiner’s Office. The Office concluded that unhygienic living conditions at the jail, malnourishment during his detention, and physical abuse—perpetrated by both guards and detainees—also contributed to his death.

As *The Appeal* previously reported, Willison had repeatedly begged for help for almost two months. Willison had been held on a third-degree forgery charge—another charge that will become bail-mandatory under the new bill.

“NEED TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL,” Willison wrote in a Nov. 23, 2022, request for medical care, which *The Appeal* obtained. “I HAVE MAJOR PAIN AND SOMETHING WRONG WITH PRIVATE PARTS.”

He was not diagnosed with cancer until Jan. 19, 2023. He died a week later.

If Bill 63 becomes law—as expected—advocates say these tragedies will become more common.

“You will see more jail deaths,” said Collins. “In some cases, the legislation will represent a death warrant.”

## **6 Feb - New Podcast Series About Jamil Al-Amin**

*Radical* is an attempt to tell the story of political prisoner Jamil Al-Amin. You can listen at [podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/radical/id1716418988](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/radical/id1716418988)

**MORE:**

On March 16, 2000, two police officers were shot in one of Atlanta's oldest neighborhoods. One officer died and the other claimed the shooter was Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin, the leader of a local mosque. Once known as H. Rap Brown, a charismatic leader of the Black Power Movement, and an honorary officer in the Black Panther Party, Al-Amin was convicted and sentenced to life in prison. But was Al-Amin truly guilty? Or was it payback for decades of work against the establishment?

## **6 Feb - ICE's Use of Solitary Confinement "Only Increasing" Under Biden**

*U.S. immigration authorities locked thousands of people in solitary confinement in 2023 as the United States continues to flout international human rights standards in its sprawling network of immigration detention facilities.*

### **MORE:**

by Spencer Woodman (*The Intercept*)

A new report by Harvard University-affiliated researchers and the nonprofit group Physicians for Human Rights found the dangerous confinements have not only persisted over the past decade, but also increased in frequency and duration under the Biden administration.

The report highlights the gap between President Joe Biden's campaign rhetoric and the lived reality of an estimated 3,000 immigrant detainees held in isolation last year, often for prolonged periods — a practice that the United Nations warned can amount to torture.

"This is a sheer failure of the Biden administration to stop egregious human rights abuses," Tessa Wilson, a senior program officer for Physicians for Human Rights and a co-author of the report, told the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, or ICIJ. "The use of solitary confinement is actually only increasing."

The adverse effects of solitary confinement — generally defined as isolation without meaningful human interaction for 22 hours a day or more — are well documented. It can cause psychological and emotional distress, and lead to sleeplessness, chronic depression, hallucinations, self-harm, and suicidal impulses.

In the U.S., home to the world's largest immigration detention system, solitary confinement has become a go-to tool to manage the swelling number of detained immigrants. More than 38,000 people, including long-term U.S. residents and people seeking asylum, were in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody as of January 28, 2024.

In 2019, ICIJ and *The Intercept* published *Solitary Voices*, an investigation that examined the misuse and overuse of solitary confinement, labeled "segregation," in detention centers under the agency's control. A review of more than 8,400 internal ICE incident reports from 2012 to 2017 revealed that many detainees were placed in isolation cells for weeks or months at a time, including people with preexisting mental illnesses and other vulnerabilities.

The investigation found that solitary confinement was used to punish some detainees for offenses as minor as consensual kissing or giving haircuts to one another. ICE also segregated hunger strikers, LGBTQ+ people, and people with disabilities.

One of ICE's directives acknowledges that isolating detainees — who aren't considered prisoners and aren't held for punitive reasons under federal law — is "a serious step that requires careful consideration of alternatives." And yet the new report found the agency recorded more than 14,000 solitary confinement cases from 2018 to 2023.

Researchers said the number is likely an undercount due to ICE's poor recordkeeping. They filed multiple Freedom of Information Act requests, beginning in 2017, to obtain the relevant data from ICE and other agencies, and eventually resorted to litigation.

The average length of the recorded confinements was 27 days, researchers found, stretching well beyond the 15-day period that meets the threshold for "inhuman and degrading treatment" defined by the U.N. special rapporteur on torture. The data revealed dozens of examples of facilities holding people in solitary confinement for over a year.

Through more than two dozen interviews with detainees, researchers also gathered accounts of the grueling conditions inside isolation cells. Interviewees described cells that were freezing cold; constantly lit, causing sleep deprivation; or had toilets only guards could flush.

"The light is on 24 hours a day ... the guards wouldn't dim or turn them off at times," an unnamed 30-year-old female former detainee told the researchers. "We went crazy."

Echoing ICIJ and *The Intercept's* previous findings, researchers found that solitary confinement was often used as a disciplinary measure for minor infractions and to segregate transgender detainees in "a pattern of systemic discrimination and neglect that contravenes ICE's own policies."

Since 2019, the number of detainees with recorded mental health conditions placed in solitary confinement jumped from 35 percent to 56 percent in 2023, the report states. U.N. experts have warned specifically about the grave dangers of isolating people with mental illness.

Mike Alvarez, a spokesperson for ICE, said that the agency had not yet received the report and declined to answer specific questions about it. But he defended the agency's practices in an emailed statement.

"More than 15 internal and external entities provide oversight of ICE detention facilities to ensure detainees reside in safe, secure, and humane environments, and under appropriate conditions of confinement," Alvarez said. "The agency continuously reviews and enhances civil detention operations to ensure noncitizens are treated humanely, protected from harm, provided appropriate medical and mental health care, and receive the rights and protections to which they are entitled."

### **"Inappropriate and Inhumane"**

The new report also highlights ICE's troubling use of solitary confinement for "medical isolation" of detainees who are sick, disabled, or experiencing a mental health crisis.

"ICE's failure to ensure adequate medical resources in detention centers created life-threatening conditions for immigrants in solitary confinement," the report states.

Katherine Peeler, a co-author of the report and an assistant professor at Harvard Medical School, said that in many of the cases researchers reviewed, ICE should have sent detainees to outside medical facilities.

"Every ICE detention center has a relationship with a local hospital, so there's always a better option than solitary confinement," she said. "The conflation of medical isolation and solitary confinement is inappropriate and inhumane."

The report is a collaboration between Harvard Immigration and Refugee Clinical Program, Harvard Medical School, Harvard Law School, and Physicians for Human Rights.

In 2019, ICIJ and *The Intercept* identified at least 373 instances of detainees being placed in isolation due to suicide risk — and another 200-plus cases of people already in solitary confinement being moved to "suicide watch" or other forms of observation, often in altered solitary cells.

"This is the equivalent of pouring gasoline on a fire," Kenneth Appelbaum, a professor emeritus of psychiatry at the University of Massachusetts Medical School who has examined ICE's segregation practices as a consultant for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, said at the time.

### "A Tipping Point"

Democratic and Republican lawmakers have publicly acknowledged concerns over the widespread use of solitary confinement by ICE but have done little to fix the problem.

As a candidate, Biden pledged to end the use of solitary confinement. His proposed ban, as outlined on his campaign website, would have "very limited exceptions such as protecting the life of an imprisoned person."

Likewise, Vice President Kamala Harris, as a U.S. senator and presidential candidate, also advocated for ending solitary confinement. In late 2019, Harris, along with other senators, introduced extensive legislation that would outlaw locking detainees in solitary confinement in most instances as a punishment. The bill did not advance.

The new report is not the first time the Biden administration has been criticized for its handling of solitary confinement in its immigration detention centers.

In 2022, whistleblower Ellen Gallagher, a supervisor within the Department of Homeland Security, which oversees the vast U.S. immigration detention apparatus, told ICIJ that there "continues to be a stunning level of inaction." She said she was "not aware of any systemic change in this area" at that time.

Gallagher first went public with her concerns about ICE detention policies in interviews with ICIJ and *The Intercept* as part of the 2019 investigation. "People were being brutalized," Gallagher said at the time.

She expressed dismay at the new report's findings.

"As this report makes clear, despite a plethora of data displaying profound human suffering, existing executive and legislative oversight mechanisms have failed to stop this madness," Gallagher said. "If there is a tipping point, I hope it's now."

### **6 Feb - Honoring Leonard Peltier on Global Day of Solidarity**

*February 6<sup>th</sup> was the Global Day of Solidarity with Leonard Peltier and marks 48 years of Mr. Peltier's incarceration. The Water Protectors Legal Collective offers the following solidarity statement.*

#### **MORE:**

On this day in 1976, the FBI arrested and extradited Leonard Peltier from Canada, violating international treaty obligations and using improper tactics including fabricated evidence obtained by pressuring and terrorizing an Indigenous woman into writing a witness affidavit; the person who signed the affidavit has since recanted.

Leonard Peltier is the United States' longest-serving Political Prisoner and it is no coincidence that he is also Indigenous. The Water Protector Legal Collective stands in unity with advocates worldwide in reiterating the call for President Biden to grant immediate clemency to 79-year-old Indigenous (Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa/Dakota/Lakota) activist Leonard Peltier.

Leonard Peltier has endured time in solitary confinement, serving two life sentences for a crime he did not commit. Despite concerns about the fairness of his trial, Leonard has been consistently denied parole.

In October 2023, during the United Nations review of U.S. compliance with international human rights obligations under the ICCPR, Vice Chair of the Human Rights Committee, Dr. Changrok Soh acknowledged how Death by Incarceration continues to disproportionately impact Black and Indigenous Peoples in the US, including Mr. Peltier. While in Geneva for the U.S. review, WPLC authored and submitted a Joint Statement regarding the Release and Freedom of Political Prisoner, Leonard Peltier to the U.S. government. The letter – signed by Water Protector Legal Collective, the Center for Constitutional Rights, the Abolitionist Law Center, among others – calls for the United States to definitively and concretely recognize the need to right a historical wrong and free Leonard Peltier.

We urge the administration to uphold its commitment to human rights and justice by promptly granting Leonard Peltier clemency on humanitarian grounds.

**February 6<sup>th</sup> - “Keep Fighting”: Leonard Peltier Message to Supporters on 48 Years Since Arrest**

My life was taken 48 years ago, at 11:00 am. The sweater that my adoptive mother Ethel and her daughter Donna placed on my shoulders as I was taken in the cold of Canada was a kindness that I still remember.

I could not foresee that 48 years later I would be entombed in a lockdown nightmare. I live in lockdown, for no reason other than that they can get away with it.

If I had been tried with the others, I would be a free man. They were rightly found not guilty by reason of self-defense. We were under attack. We were facing the extermination of our people.

Justice never came for those they killed. I was chosen to be the sacrifice to cover up the crimes committed on that reservation. I am not here because I committed a crime. I am here because I stood in the way of their greed and corruption.

James Reynolds, the State Attorney who supervised my prosecution, has admitted that they could not prove I committed any crime. He stated, "We were not able to prove that Mr. Peltier himself committed any offense on the Pine Ridge Reservation."

Time has become so twisted with these lockdowns that night blurs into day, a miasma of time that has no sense to it. All hours are the small hours of the night. Life itself is suspended. We wait for a brief glimpse of what life looks like. We exist in cold, filthy cells, and we wait. The voices of those murdered on Pine Ridge Reservation are a constant echo in my mind.

Time has become a weapon they use to try and annihilate the essence of who I am. They have done their best to break me. They started by holding me in a lightless cell block in Canada, telling me that I was awaiting my execution, to try and force a confession.

But no one can break the spirit of a Sundancer.

I have fought for my freedom every single day of these past 48 years.

You, my people, my supporters, my family in a very real way, lift my spirit and enable me to hold fast to the beliefs they want me to denounce. You get me through these hours that last for days or years.

Keep fighting. Fight the parasitical influence of colonialism. Fight the lies, the greed, the corruption of the oppressor. Fight for the survival of our people.

The greed and corruption of the colonizers is infectious. My own Committee, which has stood behind me and been a training ground for activists for over four decades, was lost to the parasite of greed and corruption the colonizers infected us with.

The very greed and corruption that imprisons me will be the undoing of those who take too much. Power arises from truth, from the willingness to give voice to that truth, from lifting the voices of your brothers and sisters when they speak their truth. Truth is power. That is why they try to silence us, you know. You also know they are losing their ability to silence us.

Take care, my relations. Ask the Creator to set your path before you. Live in ceremony. When I choose my actions, I watch carefully to make sure those actions come from spirit, not ego. Sometimes the greatest enemy we will face comes from within. At times I want to lose myself to rage. The rage of being unlawfully imprisoned, the rage that drifts through the air here, a haze you can almost see, that arises from men caged in conditions that would be illegal for dogs.

If I allow that rage to take me, I may never come back. That is not who I am. I know who I am. That is why I am still here – I will not lie, grovel, or beg. I will not denounce my beliefs. I will not betray myself.

I know you are out there, my relations, my friends, my supporters. You know the meaning of Mitakuye Oyasin. You give me the courage to stay strong and face these eternal twilight hours of lockdown. I know you are fighting for me, fighting with me, fighting for an end to the oppression and tyranny that take so many of us, in so many ways.

I have heard of a new cry going out. NOT ONE MORE YEAR. It has been said that I am a common man who stood up to an uncommon enemy.

People think of me as a symbol. I suppose I am, but I'm a man. A man who wants to go home to his family.

Let this be the year that common sense prevails. Let this be the year that "liberty and justice for all" are not words that ring hollow. Let this be the year that America learns to live up to its own principles.

We will prevail. Our children will know who they are and know they are cherished. All of them, not just a privileged few, while the rest go hungry and lose their connection to Earth. That connection is everything.

Never, ever forget who you are. Mother Earth births us. She fires the blood that runs through our veins. She takes us back to her womb when our journey ends.

We will prevail. I can see a world that is not powered by lies, manipulation, greed. This will not happen by magic. We must come together, my brothers and sisters in solidarity, and let our truth illuminate the dark recesses of society. It is time.

In the Spirit of Crazy Horse.

## **6 Feb - Mom & Author Denied Bail After Halting Mountain Valley Pipeline Drilling**

*Report from Appalachians Against Pipelines on recent lock-down action at a pipeline construction site and a solidarity rally that was organized nearby.*

### **MORE:**

Early Monday morning, Appalachian author and mother Madeline Fitch locked herself to a Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP) drill on the Virginia side of Peters Mountain in the Jefferson National Forest, preventing MVP from drilling under the Appalachian Trail. Nearby, a rally of supporters gathered on a Forest Service road. Banners at each site read "MOUNTAIN MAMAS SAY NO MVP," "MOMS OF THE WORLD UNITE – STOP THE PIPELINE," and "FROM THE RIVER TO THE SEA, FROM THE HOLLERS TO THE HILLS."

Madeline prevented MVP from using their equipment and drilling under the Appalachian Trail for nearly 8 hours. At that time, she was extracted from her blockade by law enforcement, arrested, and brought to the



Giles County Magistrate. She was given trumped up charges including 4 misdemeanors and 1 felony and is being held without bail at the New River Valley Regional Jail.

“I think being a parent has helped me be more fearless, more bold, get my priorities straight with what’s important,” stated Madeline. Madeline is the author of the 2019 novel “Stay and Fight,” a finalist for the PEN/Hemingway Award and the Ohio Great Reads pick for the 2023 National Book Festival. “I take my cues from other mothers who make great sacrifices every day to protect their children and families. I’m thinking right now in particular of mothers and families in Gaza trying to protect their children while the bombs are falling, knowing that no one in power is standing up for them and their families like they should. And I also have a huge amount of respect that Appalachian families, especially Appalachian women, have been pushing for years to make sure there is clean water and clean air for their children to drink and breathe in a place that is too often seen as a sacrifice zone. I think mothers have common sense, fearlessness, and a no-nonsense sensibility to bring truth to power.”

Madeline’s action took place on Peters Mountain at the site of the first tree sits that blocked the path of the Mountain Valley Pipeline for 95 days in 2018, preventing tree clearing on the easement near the Appalachian Trail. The support rally down the mountain took place at the gate that was held closed by the monopod (another type of aerial blockade) for 57 days in 2018. Both of these actions prevented MVP work in the Jefferson National Forest and kick started a direct-action campaign that has been disrupting MVP for nearly 6 years. Since those blockades, MVP has lost their permit to cross National Forest land multiple times; each time, it has been reinstated with no real plan to protect the land, ecosystems, and communities in the pipeline’s path.

Erika, also a mother, stated the following in support of Madeline’s action: “I’m part of this movement because of the future generations. Mountain Valley Pipeline is one of many pipelines that are being built around the country, around the world, and they are poisoning the land and the water. We are leaving a destroyed world for the future generations. If we don’t resist the poisoning of the water and the earth, then we’re handing over a dead world to our children.”

Recently, Mountain Valley Pipeline again delayed the projected in-service date for their \$7.2 billion pipeline to 2024. The pipeline is now \$3.7 billion over budget and nearly 6 years behind schedule. The Mountain Valley Pipeline is a 42-inch diameter fracked gas pipeline that would cover 303 miles of Appalachia if completed. The project has a long record of hundreds of environmental violations and court battles about failures to hold on to key permits, and is emblematic of both the struggle to transition away from fossil fuels and the short-sighted destruction of local communities, water supplies, and ecosystems in the name of gas export and fossil fuel company profit. In June 2023, the pipeline was fast-tracked by Congress, despite local residents voicing their opposition and concerns.

Mountain Valley Pipeline has recently escalated its legal intimidation of pipeline fighters, filing numerous Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP suits) and collaborating with local law enforcement in multiple jurisdictions to charge protesters with erroneous felonies to discourage resistance. The pipeline resistance, including Madeline, refuses to be intimidated and continues to fight to protect Appalachia from this toxic and disastrous pipeline.

### **6 Feb - Words From Chilean Anarchists Aldo and Lucas Hernandez**

*A year ago, various homes were raided in the course of the investigation for the explosive attack against the National Gendarmerie Headquarters, ending with the pretrial detention of two comrades for the Gendarmerie Case and another three for crimes of flagrancy.*

#### **MORE:**

*via Act for freedom now!*

At dawn on December 22 of 2022, in an operation that was carried out in the metropolitan region and Valparaíso, different buildings were raided resulting in 4 arrests. The order from the south prosecutor was

to find and detain Anarchist comrade Aldo Hernandez, who is accused of being responsible for the attack on the national gendarmerie headquarters in December 2021.

Anarchist comrade Lucas Hernandez was also detained in these raids. Both found themselves in preventative prison. Lucas found himself in Santiago 1 prison, while the first day of his detention Aldo was transferred to La Gonzalina prison in Rancagua.

After marking a year since this movement of power, our comrades remain imprisoned while the investigation continues. We call for the extension and spreading of solidarity gestures, to visibilize their situation and political position faced with this imprisonment.

Today more than ever it's necessary to position ourselves from a practice of active solidarity, in gestures that give back the love and dedication that our comrades have given through the bars with each offensive action. Show the prosecutors, gendarmes, and police that our comrades aren't alone, that if they hit them we will respond, if they need us we'll be there. Because prison doesn't detain the process nor the advance of anarchist ideas and practices.

We don't expect or ask anything from power, and even less from the courts.

We are their declared enemies since we embrace anarchist ideas and practices. Action as unequivocal embrace of those who have received hardships from the state machinery and the powerful. May the gestures of solidarity and complicit actions multiply. Until it all falls. For the expansion of anarchist action, fire to the prison.

A complicit embrace of solidarity for Anarchist comrade Francisco Solar, who confronts an extensive and exemplary sentence from the state and those who sustain it.

### **7 Feb - Conviction upheld against Juan Sorroche**

*We report below a brief update taken from the internet site "Il Rovescio" regarding the ruling of the court of cassation of January 26<sup>th</sup> as part of the trial against fellow anarchist Juan Sorroche.*

#### **MORE:**

*translated by Dark Nights via La Nemesi*

Juan Sorroche is currently imprisoned in the AS2 section of the prison in Terni, for the action against the League's headquarters in Villorba (in the province of Treviso) on August 12, 2018 (two devices, the first deflagrated, the second unexploded and defused by police forces).

Recently, shortly before the hearing, the comrade published a text, for the time being disclosed only as a downloadable attachment ("Small background analysis of my latest sentence in the appeal of 14 years and 7 months during the period of solidarity struggle with Alfredo"), which we will publish as soon as possible on this website.

On Jan. 26, the Court of Cassation rejected both the defense appeal and that of the prosecutor, upholding the sentence of 14 years and 7 months in prison imposed on Juan in the appeal trial for the action against the League's Villorba (Treviso) headquarters. Love and rage for Juan and all the imprisoned comrades!

### **8 Feb - Federal and State Police Raid Three Homes in Atlanta Leading to One Arrest Amid 'Cop City' Investigation**

*A multi-agency task force raided three homes in Atlanta early Thursday morning as part of an ongoing investigation surrounding resistance to 'Cop City.'*

#### **MORE:**

*via Unicorn Riot*

At around 6:00 a.m., law enforcement agents with the Atlanta Police Department, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Georgia State Patrol, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), and FBI carried out search warrants at three separate homes across the city seeking evidence related to a July 2023 arson targeting police motorcycles at an Atlanta police precinct.

One 30-year-old Atlanta local, John Mazurek, was arrested and charged with first-degree arson in connection with the 2023 sabotage. Another unidentified person has been in police custody since the raids, though they have not been charged or booked, sources told *Unicorn Riot*.

Police detained residents of the homes and searched the people and property at the locations, sources in one of the homes raided told *Unicorn Riot*.

*Unicorn Riot* spoke to two residents from one of the houses. One resident described being woken up by a housemate who alerted him to the raid. After getting partially dressed, he could hear police entering the home while he was in his room.

“I told them I was coming out before I opened the door,” the resident, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told *Unicorn Riot*.

He opened his bedroom door and was met with lasers from police guns on his body and the sounds of a barking police dog. Officers told him to lie down and crawl toward them before grabbing him by the hair and dragging him outside, he said.

Once on the back porch of the home, officers continued to shake the resident by the hair until he lost his glasses. He was then detained for nearly three hours while agents searched the home.

Another resident described a similar experience. After hearing sirens and an announcement over a loudspeaker, the resident saw police from Georgia State Patrol approaching the structure she lives in, behind the house.

After watching police break open the home’s back door and throw a concussion grenade inside, the resident was met with flashlights and lasers from police guns shining through her window, she said.

She was searched and detained for about three hours while police searched her home and car. Despite asking several times, police never showed her a copy of the warrant they said they were executing, she told *Unicorn Riot*.

Once released and back inside the house, residents found their home tossed and disheveled. Police seized computers from the home. One resident said police had removed a revealing Polaroid picture of herself, which she had kept in storage under her bed, and put it “on display” in her room.

A copy of a warrant served at a separate raided home, shared by Atlanta Community Press Collective, shows that police took computers, cell phones, and data storage devices among other things.

At a press conference Thursday morning, Atlanta Police Chief Darin Schierbaum did not comment on what, if any, evidence related to the July 2023 arson was found during the raids.

While police from multiple agencies participated in the raid, the two residents told *Unicorn Riot* that it seemed clear that the ATF was leading the operation.

Once the raid itself was done, state and local agents left, but ATF agents remained to continue searching the home, the residents said. The federal agency is often tasked with arson investigations that span state lines.

The raids come on the heels of an escalation in Atlanta and beyond to find people who have carried out a string of clandestine attacks against those involved in the creation of ‘Cop City’ — including the Atlanta Police Department, contractors hired to construct the facility, and financial backers of the project.

In January, the Atlanta Police Department announced a national billboard campaign, funded by the Atlanta Police Foundation, seeking information on arson attacks against the facility. The billboards offer rewards of up to \$200,000 for information leading to arrests and convictions related to attacks against the facility.

Six days before the raids at the three Atlanta homes, flight data obtained by *Unicorn Riot* shows an Atlanta Police Department helicopter circled the residences targeted with search warrants.

Those in the movement against ‘Cop City’ began coordinating responses to the early morning raids in the hours afterward.

Supporters have called for a rally outside the Atlanta Police Foundation’s headquarters Thursday afternoon to support Mazurek and denounce the raids, while others have called for further attacks in response to the raids.

A message circulating among movement-adjacent chat loops reads:

*“[I]f you have been working on a plan with your comrades, now is the time to execute it. If you have not, without hesitation or impediment, now is the time to make a plan with your comrades that you can put into action immediately. The contractors, politicians, and their support networks must have consequences for what they’ve done this morning. If you are unable to mobilize in that way; organize fundraisers, make propaganda, mobilize media contacts, and do research than can undermine the police and contractor’s initiatives.”*

Schierbaum told reporters at a press conference Thursday that there will likely be more arrests in coming weeks as the investigation continues.

### **February 12<sup>th</sup> - Write to Jack!**

Jack was arrested after an arrest warrant was issued in relation to an arson against a police vehicle fleet related to the Atlanta Forest.

He has been locked without bail and will have to wait until the first hearing to see if he will be released. Until then, you should send him letters of love and support!

Remember to not talk about the case. Instead, chose a topic from the list below:

“Jack loves rock climbing, history, Pilates with Nicole, Buddhism, poetry, vegan prison recipes, hip hop, straight edge, punk, carpentry/diy construction, sewing, he wants to hear anecdotes that felt special to you from just everyday things. You could write about a sunset or a wholesome gathering or a way a song made you feel.” His birthday is March 1<sup>st</sup>.

Letters must be:

- black or blue ink only.
- any length
- not discussing the case
- containing a return address with a name and surname or name of organization.

### **9 Feb - Bill Would Change How New York Disciplines Abusive Prison Guards**

*The New York state corrections department would gain the power to remove abusive guards from its prisons under a state senate bill filed on February 5<sup>th</sup>.*

#### **MORE:**

by Joseph Neff and Alysia Santo (*The Marshall Project*)

Currently, the commissioner of the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision does not have the ultimate authority to fire guards accused of serious misconduct and often must defer to third-party arbitrators who determine disciplinary outcomes. But the bill, filed by state Sen. Julia Salazar, a Brooklyn Democrat, would give the commissioner the final say in such cases.

In a memo accompanying her bill, Salazar, the chairwoman of the Senate committee on crime victims, crime and correction, said she drafted the legislation in response to an investigation by *The Marshall Project*, published last year in collaboration with The New York Times. The investigation showed that New York's prison department often tried but failed to fire corrections officers accused of abuse or trying to conceal it. From the articles, Salazar wrote in the memo, "a stark picture emerged of a staff disciplinary system that is essentially completely broken and ineffective."

Drawing on a previously secret state database obtained by *The Marshall Project*, the examination found that New York's prison department tried to fire guards accused of abusing prisoners or trying to conceal abuse in more than 290 cases over 12 years — but succeeded in terminating only 10 percent of those officers.

The current disciplinary system "often works to allow corrections officers to commit grievous abuses with impunity," Salazar said in a statement.

Gov. Kathy Hochul, the corrections department and the correctional officers' union declined to discuss the legislation. Hochul and the union's leaders are negotiating a new contract.

Many of the officers targeted for termination since 2010 appealed to private arbitrators, who reinstated three of every four guards fired for abuse or covering it up, *The Marshall Project* found.

Under the proposed bill, arbitrators would no longer decide serious misconduct cases, which includes excessive force, smuggling contraband or sexual abuse of prisoners. Instead, a hearing officer selected by the commissioner would consider evidence from the department and the employee's union, and then recommend any discipline to the corrections commissioner, who would ultimately decide. Salazar's office said the hearing officer should not be an employee of the corrections department.

The current system, which has been part of the guards' union contract since 1972, gives the union and the prison agency equal say in choosing an arbitrator. That means "the union representing an accused officer essentially has veto power over the selection of the arbitrator for the case," Salazar's memo states.

Brian Fischer, the former corrections commissioner, praised the bill for bringing attention to the department's inability to fire abusive officers. He said the commissioner must have the final say on officer discipline, as is the practice of the state troopers and New York City police.

"We have responsibility for the safety of both the offender and the staff," Fischer said. "And if we don't have the final authority, we're left basically holding the bag."

*The Marshall Project's* investigation also found that in many abuse cases, including attacks that left prisoners dead or severely injured, the corrections department did not attempt to discipline the officers at all. The reporting also revealed how guards often worked in groups to cover up assaults by lying to investigators and in official reports.

The bill would seek to break this "blue wall," Salazar's memo states, by giving the commissioner the power to also fire officers who cover up excessive force by intentionally not reporting it or by filing false reports.

Jennifer Scaife, director of the Correctional Association of New York, a nonprofit that monitors prisons, cited a recent lawsuit alleging torture in an upstate facility as one more reason to pass the bill. The lawsuit

said officers beat a group of men at one facility and alleged that two of the men were then taken to a second prison — Great Meadow Correctional Facility — and waterboarded, which mimics drowning.

"Allegations of waterboarding at Great Meadow make the case for reforming the employee disciplinary system," Scaife said in a statement. "The head of a state agency simply must have the power to fire someone found guilty of misconduct."

Chris Summers, president of the New York State Correctional Officers and Police Benevolent Association, has previously defended the arbitration system.

"We have no influence over the decision the arbitrator makes," he told *The Marshall Project* in December. "It is a system that is independent, fair and just."

Salazar's bill closely resembles a 2018 proposal pushed by former Gov. Andrew Cuomo. The prison guards' union vehemently opposed the measure, which the Legislature did not pass.

## **9 Feb - Food Not Bombs trial rescheduled after too many jurors objected to \$500 fine for feeding homeless**

*Fifteen Houstonians called for jury duty recently filed into a courtroom...*

### **MORE:**

by R.A. Schuetz (*Houston Chronicle*)

They were there for an unusually high-profile case for municipal courts, known for hearing traffic violations and facilitating weddings.

Three of the 15 would be selected to decide the outcome of a case alleging that a woman had violated Houston law by feeding the homeless without the city's permission.

Roughly an hour later, the jury pool filed back out. The lawyers had been unable to fill an unbiased jury.

Too many of the potential jurors said that even if the defendant, Elisa Meadows, were guilty, they were unwilling to issue the \$500 fine a city attorney was seeking, said Ren Rideauxx, Meadows' attorney. A few jurors were also struck because they could not stay late that afternoon to serve on a jury.

The busted jury panel illuminates the potential difficulties the city could face in enforcing its controversial law through a jury of peers. Roughly 90 tickets have been issued since March to volunteers with the loosely organized Food Not Bombs, which serves meals to people in need near Central Library. The city has yet to win a single case. The one case that reached a verdict was decided for the defendant. City attorneys have repeatedly asked for the other cases to be reset, according to the defendant's lawyers. On Thursday, two other cases against Food Not Bombs volunteers were dismissed, said Remington Alessi, who represented the volunteers, because the city had not filed responses to motions.

In an emailed statement, City Attorney Arturo Michel said that because a dismissal was in response to complaints of delays, there was "nothing to read into the dismissals regarding strategy, policy decisions, or an overall view of the cases by the judiciary." He did not mention whether he intended to refile and did not comment on the failure to assemble a jury panel.

It's common for jury panels to be "busted" when it comes to controversial laws and issues, said Wade Smith, a criminal defense attorney and partner at Looney, Smith & Conrad. He pointed to murder and sexual assault as cases involving issues that a lot of people have strong feelings about. People who already have their minds made up can be struck from a jury.

Smith's partner, Clay Conrad, thought the issue of feeding the homeless could intersect with deeply held values so much that those values could express themselves even after an "unbiased" jury is selected. He's written a book on jury nullification, which happens when jurors believe in the defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt but still acquit.

"A lot of times, a jury will nullify the law while thinking they followed it. Because they're interpreting the facts and the law in a way to get to a verdict that they feel they can be proud of," he said. "At the end of the day, the jury has to decide: Is this guy a criminal, or is he a good neighbor? I could see the jury saying, 'This guy is a good neighbor.'

City attorneys can choose to refile the dismissed cases; they did so during former Mayor Sylvester Turner's administration after previous cases were dismissed because city witnesses did not appear in court. Phillip Payter, an associate attorney at Sullo & Sullo, said that the city also had the option to drop Meadows' case if attorneys took the busted jury as a sign it wasn't a good case to prosecute, though he did not find it likely. The city can reschedule the case for trial once more, with a new jury panel to choose from.

When asked whether he intended to continue taking action against Food Not Bombs volunteers for serving free meals outside the library, Mayor John Whitmire told the *Chronicle* on Thursday, "I'm sensitive to the homeless issue. We will be addressing it in a different conversation. But, in the meantime, we need better public safety to encourage people to feel welcome."

When speaking with the Houston Regional Business Council, Whitmire said people do not have the right "to camp out on our streets" and that "activists" should not "interfere with sound, safe, healthy plans for the homeless," according to a Wednesday Fox26 report. It was unclear whether, by "activists," he was referring to Food Not Bombs volunteers serving meals outside the library.

Food Not Bombs' website frames the distribution of free meals to those in need as a form of activism against society's moral failings, and in Houston, they'd been doing so outside Central Library downtown for roughly two decades. In 2012, the city passed a law against giving free meals to people in need without permission, but then-Mayor Annise Parker's administration gave permission to Food Not Bombs. That position was reversed by former Mayor Sylvester Turner.

The three Food Not Bombs volunteers with court dates arrived at the municipal court, which overlooks a police lot where Houston has asked good Samaritans to feed the homeless instead of near the library, at 8 a.m. Thursday. That day marked Nick Cooper's seventh time missing work and having to arrange child care for his 2-year-old daughter for a case that reset for a later date. When his case was dismissed, he stayed to watch Meadows' case.

Meadows spent most of the day waiting for her trial to start and reading "The Year of Magical Thinking" by Joan Didion. That morning, she was told to return at noon for the trial. But the courtroom didn't open until 1 p.m., and then the court reporter was held up in traffic. Around 1:40 p.m., when proceedings began, Erica Schwam, the city's attorney, said the city was still checking to see if it had any evidence that would prove Food Not Bombs had not received permission from Mayor Annise Parker. She asked to either exclude any discussion of such permission during the trial or to reset the case until they had time to look for mitigating evidence.

Judge Imelda Reyes-Castillo denied the motion, pointing out that the issue of permission was given in another case about six months prior "and so there would have been sufficient time."

The jury pool walked in, single file. A wedding party came and went in the hallway outside, heels and cameras clicking, bride beaming. Then, the men and women, too biased about the ordinance to hear the case, filed back out.

"That was crazy," one rejected juror said to another.

## 10 Feb - Mumia Health Emergency

*Since September, Mumia Abu-Jamal's health has been declining at a concerning rate.*

### **MORE:**

He has lost weight, is anemic, has high blood pressure and an extreme flare up of his psoriasis, and his hair has fallen out. In April 2021 Mumia underwent open heart surgery. Since then he has been denied cardiac rehabilitation care including a healthy diet and exercise.

Mumia Abu-Jamal, long distance revolutionary, Black freedom fighter, and Prison Radio's lead correspondent continues to battle the state for his life. He survived the state's attempt to execute him twice, three times if you count shooting him on the streets of Philadelphia. He survived decades in solitary confinement. He survived the PA DOC's refusal to give him the cure for Hep C. And he survived double bypass surgery. He is strong, but all of this takes a toll. He will be 73 in April. His health is deteriorating - join us in demanding freedom.

## **February 12<sup>th</sup> - What's Going On with Mumia Abu-Jamal**

**WHAT:** Town Hall Meeting

**WHEN:** 6:00pm, Saturday, February 24<sup>th</sup>

**WHERE:** St. Mary's Episcopal Church - 521 West 126<sup>th</sup> Street

**COST:** FREE, Register at [tiny.cc/MumiaTownHall](https://tiny.cc/MumiaTownHall)

## 12 Feb - Wet'suwet'en leader and pipeline opponents found guilty of criminal contempt of court

*A prominent Wet'suwet'en leader and two pipeline opponents were found guilty of criminal contempt of court for breaking an injunction against impeding work on the Coastal GasLink pipeline.*

### **MORE:**

by Jackie McKay (CBC News)

B.C. Supreme Court Justice Michael Tammén read his decision to the court in Smithers on Friday.

The accused were Sleydo', also known as Molly Wickham, a Wing Chief of Cas Yikh, a house group of the Gidimt'en Clan of the Wet'suwet'en Nation; Shaylynn Sampson, a Gitksan woman with Wet'suwet'en family ties and Corey Jocko, who is Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) from Akwesasne, which straddles the Quebec, Ontario and New York state borders.

Tammén found the accused guilty of one charge each of criminal contempt of court for blocking access to Coastal GasLink pipeline construction in defiance of a court order. In December 2019, the B.C. Supreme Court granted Coastal GasLink an injunction barring protesters from impeding the construction.

All three pleaded not guilty at the start of the trial on Monday.

In 2021, Sleydo' and Sampson were arrested in a cabin structure, referred to as the tiny house, on a Coastal GasLink work area along the Marten Forest Service Road, a spur road off the Morice Forest Service Road.

"There was overwhelming evidence that breach of the court order was carried out in a public way," said Tammén, in regards to Sleydo' and Sampson's cases.

The evidence included social media videos where Sleydo' and Sampson make their intentions to stop the pipeline clear.

"One of their clear goals was to prevent the pipeline construction using tactics such as blockading roads and occupying work sites," said Tammén.



Tammen also pointed to evidence that the two were made aware of the injunction in September 2021 when they had attached themselves to heavy equipment in a work site. They were approached by a Coastal GasLink worker who read them a script of the injunction.

In Jocko's case, Tammen said he was made aware of the injunction order on Nov. 14, 2021 when a Coastal GasLink worker read a script of the injunction to Jocko and a group of people blocking a road.

Defence lawyer Frances Mahon had argued that during this interaction it was unclear if the worker sufficiently made the group aware of the injunction.

However, Tammen said he disagreed. In a video, the worker could be heard telling the group that they are impeding work on the pipeline, and asking them to move the blockade.

"It is clear that the officer alerted Mr. Jocko to the operative terms of the injunction," said Tammen.

Tammen said it is presumed the copy of the injunction left that day with the group was sufficient for Jocko to have known the terms of the order even if he chose to not read the document.

"Mr. Jocko either knew that his acts were in public defiance of the court order ... or he was reckless as to that fact," said Tammen.

Sleydo', Sampson, and Jocko have filed abuse of process applications with the court on these charges, alleging the RCMP used excessive force when they were arrested and that they were treated unfairly while in custody.

Tammen will hear the applications before sentencing and the proceedings started after Tammen issued his decision Friday.

### **12 Feb - Request From Toby Shone's Solidarity Group**

*The solidarity group for Toby Shone would like to ask that anyone writing to him could also take a moment to let them know that you have sent him a letter by dropping an email to [forestcase@riseup.net](mailto:forestcase@riseup.net)*

#### **MORE:**

HMP Garth are telling him – as have other prisons he has been in – that he has no mail. The State and the pigs are desperate to isolate Toby and to make him believe that he has no support. This is stated in his probation paperwork as a goal of his probation team and the National Security Division.

Let's not let them win! We have no control over whether the prison gives Toby his mail and books. We do however have control over writing to him and letting his support group know that you have so that even if he doesn't receive it, he knows it was sent to him. A letter sent by recorded delivery so that we can tell Toby that yes, this letter arrived on such and such a date is even better.

Toby is very resilient and is always in good spirits. However, he has been very unwell, has lost a considerable amount of weight as a result of the lack of food and calorie count typical of Britain's jails and now faces a month of no visits due to confusion over bookings. So now would be a really really good time to send Toby a postcard, a letter or an email (and then let us know that you have).

### **12 Feb - Woman who testified about FCI Dublin, thrown in solitary, transferred**

*A woman who has spent years of her prison sentence at FCI Dublin, and who testified about the dire conditions there this month, was thrown in a special housing unit and transferred away from the facility, she told KTVU.*

**MORE:**

by Lisa Fernandez (*KTVU*)

"It was purely retaliation for my testimony," Rhonda Fleming wrote *KTVU* in an email. "The prison officials did not want the women to have an advocate with knowledge."

Fleming, 58, said that the same lieutenant she testified about in January before U.S. District Court Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers, had her put in the SHU, or special housing unit, shortly after her testimony.

In the SHU, she said she went on a hunger strike for seven days before she was transferred to the Metropolitan Detention Center in Los Angeles.

Fleming said she was told she was thrown in the SHU because officers found two screws in her cell, but she said that rings false: "Screws are everywhere in the buildings due to all the repairs and patching up that is done. The incident report went nowhere."

In all her years at FCI Dublin, Fleming had never been to the SHU before.

"It was horrible and 100% out of compliance," she wrote. "The women had no shampoo, no access to the law library, [it's], freezing cold, wet cells, very small portions of cold food, and the prison officials continue to mislead the judge on what items inmates can have in the SHU."

Fleming was sentenced in 2010 to 30 years in prison because of Medicare fraud.

The Bureau of Prisons said in an email that "for privacy, safety, and security reasons, we do not discuss the conditions of confinement for any individual in our custody."

However, in general, the BOP said it is its mission to "operate facilities that are safe, secure, and humane."

Any incarcerated person with a complaint can file it through the "Administrative Remedy Program," the BOP email stated.

But Kara Janssen, an attorney who is suing FCI Dublin over the sexual abuse and retaliatory behavior at the prison in a case called California Coalition of Women Prisoners, said Fleming's transfer sure looks like it was done to get rid of her before Gonzalez Rogers visits the prison sometime this month.

Janssen and her team called Fleming to testify on their behalf because she has institutional knowledge of FCI Dublin and has been a vocal advocate for the women there, helping them speak out and writing legal briefs to document their claims.

"I mean, she just testified and then she was just transferred to LA?" Janssen told *KTVU* on Monday. "We are, of course, concerned that it's retaliation. All of a sudden, the month the judge is supposed to make a surprise visit, she's moved? Rhonda has been so vocal."

In addition, some of the incarcerated women's lawyers said that Fleming isn't alone. Other women who testified in a civil case to reform FCI Dublin have had their psychiatric medications taken away, been strip searched for no apparent reason and one woman was told her daughter cannot visit her.

Late last month, Gonzalez Rogers told Associate Warden Pat Deveney that she planned to visit the all-women's prison without much notice, so she could see how things operate. She is being asked to decide whether to appoint a special master over the prison, or impose other conditions to reign in the rampant sexual abuse and punishments there for speaking out.

The judge said she would email him one evening after 9 p.m. sometime in February and show up the next day at 5:30 a.m. or 6 a.m. That hasn't happened yet.

But she did say that she wanted unfettered access to the facility and to be able to speak to whomever she wanted.

### **February 15<sup>th</sup> - Judge holds FCI Dublin in 'contempt of court' when woman transferred, punished after testifying**

by Lisa Fernandez (*KTVU*)

A federal judge is holding the Bureau of Prison in "contempt of court" after *KTVU* published a story this week about a woman who was thrown in a punitive cell and then transferred away after she testified about the sexual abuses and retaliatory nature at the Federal Correctional Institute at Dublin.

In an order posted Thursday, U.S. District Court Judge Yvonne Gonzales Rogers told the attorneys representing the prison that they have until Saturday morning to show her why she shouldn't hold them in contempt after she learned that Rhonda Fleming was put in the Special Housing Unit, called the SHU, and then moved to the Metropolitan Detention Center in Los Angeles, shortly after she testified last month.

The judge wrote that she had specifically banned any transfers of prisoners without her say-so as she contemplates whether to put a "special master" over FCI Dublin, where eight officers, including the warden, have been charged with sexual assault. Seven have so far been found guilty.

It's not exactly clear what could come of being found in contempt of court: It could mean a fine or another type of sanction.

Fleming, who was sentenced to 30 years of Medicare fraud in 2010, has been at FCI Dublin for years, and is looked up to as a mentor among the women there.

She has been a vocal critic of the prison and often helps others write legal briefs and grievances. She regularly communicates with *KTVU*.

Fleming told *KTVU* in an email that she had never been put in the SHU before she had testified before the judge in January.

She was among several women who testified that the prison's abusive nature hasn't changed, where strip searches seem to be more common and medication seems to be withheld or taken away as punishment.

Meanwhile, the new management at FCI Dublin countered that they've cleaned house and have zero tolerance for sexual misconduct or retaliation for speaking out.

Gonzalez Rogers issued her order a day after she made a nine-hour surprise visit to FCI Dublin to see for herself what it's like there, according to incarcerated women who contacted *KTVU* and the lawyers who represent them.

Attorney Kara Janssen said she was "impressed" with the judge's diligence.

Gonzalez Rogers talked to roughly 100 women, many of them lining up to talk to her in the cafeteria and hallway. The judge visited all parts of the prison, from the punitive SHU to the camp.

Janssen speculated that Fleming was transferred out of FCI Dublin specifically before the judge's visit.

When asked earlier in the week why Fleming was moved, the Bureau of Prisons said in an email that "for privacy, safety, and security reasons, we do not discuss the conditions of confinement for any individual in our custody." However, in general, the BOP said it is its mission to "operate facilities that are safe, secure, and humane."

Gonzalez Rogers is still sorting through the interviews she had during her visit and the testimony she heard at last month's special evidentiary hearing before she decides whether to appoint a special master over the prison to make sure that judicial orders are followed.

She could also come up with some kind of other plan to keep the abuses reported at FCI Dublin in check or do nothing at all.

It has been clear from her line of questioning, however, and now, from her current contempt of court order, that she is highly critical of the prison management.

BOP spokesman Donald Murphy told *KTVU* that there has never been a special master in BOP history.

### **23 Feb - Dope is Death**

**WHAT:** Film Screening

**WHEN:** 7:00pm, Friday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>

**WHERE:** Maysles Documentary Center - 343 Malcolm X Boulevard, Harlem

**COST:** FREE

**MORE:**

Acupuncture heals! A film by Mia Donovan. This screening is co-sponsored by Mass Action Defense, North East Political Prisoner Coalition. There will be a Q&A session after, with speakers (TBA).

### **25 Feb - Stop Cop City Teach-in**

**WHAT:** Movement Discussion

**WHEN:** 5:00pm, Sunday, February 25<sup>th</sup>

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

**COST:** FREE

**MORE:**

Writers Against the War on Gaza (WAWOG) and Weelaunee Defense NYC present...

The fight against Cop City connects anti-colonial struggles across the world, from Atlanta to Palestine and beyond. In solidarity with the Nationwide Summit to Stop Cop City that is taking place in Tucson this week, we are co-hosting a teach-in at Woodbine.

Our panel will feature movement leaders and lawyers who will speak to the implications of RICO terrorism laws and other legal technologies being used to criminalize the movement, counterrepression strategies developed by groups like the SHAC7, and the targeting and incarceration of the Holy Land 5 during the early years of the War on Terror. Demilitarize Atlanta to Palestine will break down the history of deadly exchange between US and Israeli policing—in particular, the GILEE program in Georgia, which has helped shape law enforcement strategy around Cop City.

The event will also include an in-depth discussion on the current state of the movement, long-term organizational strategies and how to effectively weaken imperialism from inside the belly of the beast. We have a stacked line-up so please arrive early to ensure the program runs on time!

Following the discussion, Woodbine is hosting their weekly community dinner. Attendees are encouraged to stay and break bread with fellow comrades.