



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for June 11th

28 May - Update on Eric King's Attack and Situation

We have word from Eric King's support network about what went down with Eric at USP McCreary. We also have a poem Eric wrote to share.

MORE:

On Friday may 13th the BOP's attempt to send Eric to the CMU or communication management unit was rejected (his SMU or special management unit transfer request had been rejected 2 months prior). The BOP attempted to send him to these high security specialized prisons as a consequence for being attacked by a lieutenant and guards at FCI Florence, but we all can see it is a consequence for his continuing to speak out against the BOP and federal prison system. Communication management units are used to place prisoners in an incredibly isolated situation to severely limit communication with the outside world. These prisons are described as torture and deprivation by those who have experienced them. The special management unit is where the BOP sends the most "violent" prisoners in the federal prison system. They decided that he deserved to go to either of them though he didn't qualify. They threw everything they could at him and it didn't stick.

Friday may 17th after a lieutenant and a guard expressed to Eric that he would be attacked on the yard (for being anti-fascist) he was placed in general population. Prisoners are often asked to choose between being safe and choosing not to walk a yard they will be hurt on or the punishment the prison imposes if they choose to keep themselves safe. Eric had already spent 280 days in segregation and the extra 6 months of solitary and the loss of commissary and potential visits was too heavy. Under duress these decisions were made. The prison reinforces prison culture that you just need to take the beating, attack that is coming to you. He chose to walk the yard and accept the impending attack. He chose to walk the yard knowing this was a setup.

On Friday May 20th Eric was called into an office by guards and again offered to accept the punishment that would be given to him if he chose to leave the yard in an attempt to avoid being attacked. To be clear, telling a prison guard that you aren't safe because you are going to be attacked by someone is snitching. Even saying you aren't safe without naming someone "checking in" will put you in a position where for the rest of your sentence you can not walk on a regular non "drop-out" yard again and is considered "dry-snitching" by some. Though they brought him into this "meeting" and asked him if he is safe and going to walk back out in the yard and verbalized they knew he was. Getting that "choice" on record that isn't really a choice at all.

As soon as Eric informed them he would go back to the yard the guards told him they decided to take him to the "chow hall" at a time that his unit does not eat. They took him to a caged area that a very large man was waiting in. With the guards watching this man began to question Eric about his anti-fascist tattoos and then attacked him. The whole week he was on the yard no one asked about or noticed his tattoos, the lieutenant on the other hand made a big point to talk about them. Take that for what you will but suddenly this man waiting for him was real curious about all of this. Eric doesn't remember defending himself but it was a big blur and was told he did. He said the guards let it happen for a bit. He estimates receiving and ducking about 20 punches. He wasn't seriously injured but did sustain significant bruising and minor injuries across his whole body. It was nowhere near the beating he received at Florence by the guards.

Eric was brought to segregation where he received a disciplinary shot for fighting. This shot coincidentally makes him eligible for the SMU again. If they choose it could be another 4-6 months or longer waiting for this process. They held a disciplinary hearing in which he was not able to defend himself. They decided

that he did indeed fight and lost 22 days of good time and 4 months of being able to purchase food for himself or other items. This is never good because the BOP only guarantees one “non-flesh” meal a day which often contains dairy. Purchasing food is super important for him.

He still is unable to talk to or visit with his family. The phone block as it stands should take years of good behavior to fall off. Its sad that to him, getting email for a week and actual real time contact with his wife was 100% worth the beating. This says a lot about the deprivation that he has experienced.

Please send Eric some love. Mail/articles are GREATLY appreciated. He can not receive books. The prison has specific mail guidelines that will be pasted below. PLEASE share what is going on with Eric with our community and show up for him. He needs us. In 80 days it will have been a year that he hasnt seen his family. No ability to call them. Its up to us to keep him going right now. If folks want to donate to travel/commissary so when they are able his family can come out to see him, do so at supportericking.org/donate-2

At the end of the day, a little over a week after the regional offices denied his CMU/SMU referrals somehow he suddenly becomes eligible again. This situation was clearly orchestrated and is super concerning. The BOP is sending a message loud and clear that they will get theirs with him no matter what. This makes us fearful for Eric’s safety during the last 4 years of his sentence.

June 4th - to Chelsea Manning

Chelsea chelsea chelsea
They kept the keys within reach
Desperate to hurt you
Fiending for vengeance
The main news focuses on a rapist
While you focus on justice
Unbending in your ethics
Maybe they thought you soft
Forgetting your iron core
Striking while most vulnerable
Promising, if you talk then you walk
How they rage out at your reserve
A jaw welded shut
Only allowing out dissident words
You’ve seen their hatred, felt the venom
Fox called you a traitor
Deserving of the guillotine or dungeon
Wearing their weighted shackles
With your neck never falling
Hopefully your freedom
next time
Will be longer

29 May - Reality Winner is serving 5 years in prison for leaking one document. Her mother says she's being silenced

The mother of the first whistle-blower arrested in the Trump era says her daughter is being held under an unjust media blackout to stop the American public learning who she really is.

MORE:

by Nima Elbagir, Taylor Barnes and Alex Platt (CNN)

Billie Winner-Davis' daughter Reality Winner, a US Air Force veteran, was sentenced to prison for more than five years in August 2018 as part of a deal in which she pleaded guilty to leaking a classified NSA document providing details of a 2016 Russian cyberattack on a supplier of US voting software.

"They don't want the world to be exposed to the real Reality Winner," Winner-Davis told CNN in a tearful interview at the small home in rural southern Texas where she raised her daughter.

"The prosecution painted her to be a very evil person, who hates her country ... who needed to be feared by the American people," Winner-Davis said. "And I honestly believe they are afraid that if America gets to know who Reality Winner really is, they are going to see that wasn't the case at all."

Instead, she said, "they are going to see a loving, caring, compassionate person who is honest and who is good. And I think that that's really why they have fought so hard for America not to hear from Reality."

Winner, 27, who worked in the US Air Force's drone program, is serving the longest sentence ever given to a journalistic source by a federal court, according to the Department of Justice.

Interview attempts blocked

CNN has repeatedly sought permission to interview Winner in federal prison, and recently accompanied Winner-Davis on the seven-hour road trip from her home to visit her daughter at FMC Carswell in Fort Worth, where she is incarcerated, but our team was not permitted to go inside.

FMC Carswell's warden has denied CNN's requests, citing the need to maintain the "safety, security, and the orderly management of the facility." Our attempts to speak with the warden over the phone to understand how journalists could address those concerns were unsuccessful.

CNN also sought to interview Winner by telephone but was told by her mother that the former drone operator has been told by prison staff not to add media outlets to her phone list.

"She has been warned and she has been frightened as far as the restrictions on her communications," Winner-Davis said. "They're telling her she cannot even have any contact with any kind of journalists or media, in any way, shape, or form."

In its official policy document on telephone usage, the Bureau of Prisons says that inmates may submit phone numbers for "any person they choose," including "members of the news media."

The Bureau of Prisons told CNN: "The warden at each facility is responsible for the orderly running of the institution and the safety and security of staff, inmates, and visitors. Thus, the decision of the warden with respect to interview requests and access to the facility and the use of recording devices is respected and final."

On Wednesday, the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, a non-profit group, wrote to the warden at FMC Carswell, urging him to reconsider media requests to interview Winner.

The RCFP's legal director says she understands that in addition to refusing CNN's requests, the warden has also turned down interview bids by another journalist, Sonia Kennebeck, who has been in touch with Winner in prison via email.

She said Winner's case was the "subject of intense public interest" which "has not abated since her sentencing."

"In high-profile cases ... like the prosecution of Ms. Winner, it is essential for the public to have an accurate, complete, and balanced narrative, which requires the public to hear directly from the inmate at issue," she said.

The apparent clampdown stands in contrast to other whistle-blowers who have communicated with media outlets while serving prison sentences, such as former Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning and former CIA officer Jeffrey Sterling.

CNN also spoke with another high-profile inmate who spent time with Winner inside FMC Carswell and gave media interviews while she was there.

Crystal Mason, a Texas mother who came into the national spotlight when she was sentenced to five years in prison for voting in the 2016 election while on supervised release from a previous felony conviction, said she had spoken with news outlets both by phone and e-mail.

"She had no problem with media," said Mason's attorney, Kim Cole.

Espionage Act conviction

The government secured Winner's conviction under the World War I-era Espionage Act, though prosecutors do not call her a spy, and in her plea agreement, government attorneys recognize that the document she leaked was sent to a news outlet rather than a foreign adversary.

In an official press release, US Attorney Bobby L. Christine called Winner the "quintessential example of an insider threat," and insisted that the case "WAS NOT A VICTIMLESS CRIME."

"The document Winner compromised did, in fact, contain TOP SECRET information about the sources and methods used to acquire the intelligence described in the report," Christine said in the statement.

Winner's advocates compare the severity of her sentence with that handed down to retired General and former CIA Director David Petraeus, who shared notebooks that contained classified information with his biographer and lover. Charged with a misdemeanor -- mishandling classified material -- he was sentenced to two years' probation and handed a \$100,000 fine.

Her supporters also argue that other figures in the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election have received far more lenient treatment. Maria Butina, who pleaded guilty to conspiracy to act as a Russian agent, received a sentence of a year and a half.

Butina has given a series of interviews -- including two to CNN -- while incarcerated. She recently told National Public Radio that she was able to speak to their reporter from prison because "you guys in the US have a First Amendment right."

Winner-Davis said her daughter should never have been charged or convicted under the Espionage Act. "She's not a traitor. Reality served her country," she said. "She protected and defended us."

"What did she release? She released something that actually helped us to defend ourselves against an attack by Russia," she said.

'Meritorious service' medal

Winner served in the US Air Force from 2010 to 2016. A linguist fluent in Pashto, Farsi and Dari, she worked as a translator and language analyst.

The family home is dotted with labels written in Arabic from when she was studying: sura on a picture in a frame, hamam on the bathroom door.

In 2016, she received the Air Force Commendation Medal, for members who have distinguished themselves by "meritorious service."

Then in 2017, while working as a federal contractor assigned to the National Security Agency in Georgia, she leaked a classified NSA document providing details of a 2016 Russian cyberattack.

The document served as the basis for a June 2017 article by *The Intercept* -- the online news outlet says they received it anonymously -- but Winner was arrested before it was even published online.

Winner-Davis told CNN that her daughter "didn't have a criminal heart, or a criminal mind," and did little to cover her tracks, but that she felt she had to take action.

"It was very frustrating for her, day after day, to hear the news, to know that the country was struggling with not knowing the truth, and then seeing that she had the truth right there ... in front of her on her desk.

"She printed that document out and she kept it on her desk for a couple of days before sending it. This is not something that she just did on a whim ... in her mind, this was the right thing to do for America. This is what needed to be done."

On June 3, Winner's family and friends will mark the second anniversary of her arrest with a protest in Washington. They plan to lobby their representatives in Congress and to call on US President Donald Trump to pardon her.

"I've seen recently that he has pardoned people," Winner's mother said. "I know that this is something that weighs heavily on him. She is not a threat to society, she is not a dangerous person."

Despite everything her daughter has been through, Winner-Davis said she had done the right thing.

"She has paid the price, but I wouldn't change what she has done because I think that what she did was noble, and I think that what she did was patriotic."

30 May - Black Panther Ed Poindexter Denied Media Access by Nebraska Prison

Nebraska prison officials want to keep Ed Poindexter out of sight, out of mind, and unheard.

MORE:

by Michael Richardson (*Richardson Reports*)

Edward Poindexter, Nebraska's most controversial prisoner, and one of the state's longest imprisoned at forty-eight years and counting, has been denied a news media visit. While on book tour to Nebraska for FRAMED: J. Edgar Hoover, COINTELPRO & the Omaha Two story I notified the Department of Corrections to schedule a interview with Poindexter. My request was refused and I was not even allowed to visit with Poindexter minus the recording equipment previously permitted.

Poindexter and David Rice (later Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa) were convicted in April 1971 for the 1970 bombing murder of Omaha Patrolman Larry Minard. The two men were leaders of a Black Panther affiliate group and targets of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's clandestine COINTELPRO program which targeted the black activists. Both men denied any involvement in Minard's murder. Mondo died at the Nebraska State Penitentiary in March 2016 while serving a life without parole sentence.

Director of Corrections Scott Frakes personally vetoed my interview with Poindexter. Laura Strimple, the Corrections chief of staff cited regulation changes under Frakes that now ban all cameras and recording devices inside the Nebraska State Penitentiary.

Compounding the camera ban was my removal from Poindexter's visitation list without notice to me or Poindexter. Strimple speculated that I was previously permitted to visit without being on a visitation list. Strimple also cited the need for a background check. However, I underwent such a check in 2016 when I last visited Poindexter.

In an attempt to comply with Frakes' directives, I requested a background check form from Strimple, who did not supply me with the document, thus ending my attempt to visit with Poindexter during my book tour to Nebraska.

The restrictions on news media visits with the ban on recording equipment and requirement to be on an inmate's personal visiting list of friends and family is a setback to prisoner access to the community. Frakes' media ban overturns a longstanding free press tradition in Nebraska that permitted news organizations access to prisoners. The ban now not only limits prisoners, but also censors the public from an independent view inside the prisons.

Edward Poindexter, denied a new trial and denied parole, is now also denied an opportunity to tell his story to the outside world. A voice now surrounded by a wall of silence. Locked up out of sight, out of mind, and unheard.

31 May - Veronza Bowers Appeal Denied

We received the following message from Veronza Bowers, via a comrade and close supporter of his.

MORE:

My appeal has been denied. The way i look at this news is that it is neither bad nor good. It just IS what it is. And once received, then we can move forward. i do appreciate very much that people are very concerned about me. Please let folks know that i am fine. i talked with my Freedom Team today and they are busy preparing our next step. In short, we are not giving up...and i am confident that truth and justice are on my side and that i will be taking my long overdue, long walk to FREEDOM in the not too distant future.

It is YOU and the good Brother Doctor/Bay View, my Legal Team, all of you who continue to show your Love and concern, and of course, my entire Family and Friends...who provide the WIND under my wings that allows me to hold my head high and soar to the heights where only Eagles dare fly—on wings unbroken!

31 May - Chelsea Manning's Legal Team Challenge Harsh Fines Levied By Court

The legal team for Chelsea Manning requested a hearing to challenge the harsh fines levied to force her to testify before the grand jury investigating WikiLeaks.

MORE:

by Matthew Barakat (*Washington Post*)

Manning's lawyers filed court papers Friday asking a federal judge to reconsider his decision to send Manning to the Alexandria jail for refusing to testify to a grand jury investigating WikiLeaks.

The motion argues that a new indictment of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange on espionage charges makes Manning's testimony irrelevant.

"What remains to be seen is whether the government can claim with a straight face to have an ongoing need for her testimony," lawyers Moira Meltzer-Cohen, Sandra Freeman, and Christopher Leibig wrote in their

motion, which says Manning is suffering physically as a result of her incarceration and is in the midst of losing her home because of the financial effect it is having on her.

Manning has been jailed for civil contempt since May 16. She could remain in jail for up to 18 months — the length of the grand-jury term. Judge Anthony Trenga also ordered fines of \$500 a day to kick in after 30 days of confinement and \$1,000 a day after 60 days.

This follows a two-month jail term earlier this year for refusing to testify to a previous grand jury.

Manning's lawyers say the fact prosecutors have obtained a superseding indictment under the Espionage Act against Assange is particularly significant. In particular, they say it is unlikely that any additional charges against Assange will be filed because the U.S. faces a June 12 deadline for finalizing its extradition request for Assange to Great Britain, and bringing new charges after that deadline could complicate the effort to obtain his extradition.

"After the submission of the extradition packet, the need for Ms. Manning's testimony will diminish ... precipitously," the lawyers wrote.

Joshua Stueve, spokesman for the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Eastern District of Virginia, which is prosecuting Assange and seeking Manning's grand-jury testimony, declined comment Friday.

Under federal law, a recalcitrant witness can only be jailed for civil contempt if there is a reasonable belief that incarceration will coerce the witness into testifying. If the jail time has no coercive effect and is purely punitive, the recalcitrant witness is supposed to be released.

Manning has said she believes grand juries in general are an abuse of power and that she would rather starve to death than testify. Judge Trenga, in sending Manning to jail, said there is no dishonor in testifying to grand juries, which are referenced specifically in the U.S. Constitution, and that he hoped time in jail would allow Manning to reflect on that.

Manning, in response, penned a lengthy letter to the judge reiterating her rationale. She included a lengthy history on the use of grand juries around the world, and says that many Western countries have abandoned the system because it operates in secret and in a one-sided fashion to the benefit of prosecutors against those accused.

"I am positive that the founders never intended the grand jury to function like those we see today," Manning wrote.

Manning spent seven years in a military prison for delivering a trove of classified information to Assange. Her 35-year sentence was then commuted by then-President Barack Obama.

June 3rd - Chelsea Manning's Resistance Is Aimed At Abolishing The Grand Jury Once And For All
by Kevin Gosztola (*Medium*)

When Judge Anthony Trenga ordered Chelsea Manning back to jail for refusing to testify before the grand jury investigating WikiLeaks, he urged her to "reflect on the principles she says she's embracing" as well as "whether those views are worth the price she's paying for them."

Trenga maintained there was "no dishonor" in cooperating with a grand jury because the United States Constitution codified the grand jury.

Manning took Trenga's admonishment seriously and responded with a letter containing research she did with the help of her attorneys. It presented her position on the grand jury in a very clear and compelling manner.

In doing so, Manning further demonstrated her resistance is about much more than defying an investigation into a dissident media organization. It is about publicly discrediting the institution and all its corruption once and for all.

Manning, who is in jail at the William G. Truesdale Adult Detention Center in Alexandria, Virginia, was held in civil contempt of court on May 16.

The federal court not only sent her back to jail but also imposed a fine of \$500 per day after 30 days and a fine of \$1000 per day after 60 days if she continues her resistance.

If Manning “persists in her refusal” for the next 16 months, according to her legal team, she will face a total amount of fines that is over \$440,000. Both jail and fines may violate her Eighth Amendment rights under the Constitution, especially since these sanctions are supposed to be coercive, not punitive.

In her letter, Manning contended the modern grand jury barely resemble the grand jury, which the framers enshrined in the Constitution. She acknowledges much of her opposition comes from their use against activists but also makes it clear she believes the institution generally undermines due process for all citizens.

“I am certainly not alone in thinking that the grand jury process, which at one time acted as an independent body of citizens along the lines of a civilian police review board, slowly transitioned into the unbridled arm of the police and prosecution in ways that run contrary to the grand jury’s originally intended purposes,” Manning stated.

Scholarship on the grand jury shows Manning’s views are well grounded.

In 1996, Mark Kadish wrote for the Florida State University Law Review, “The American grand jury originally began, not as an arm of the executive, but as a defense against monarchy. It established a screen between accusations and convictions and initiated prosecutions of corrupt agents of the government.”

“Outright resistance to the monarchy” became the function of the grand jury as the Revolutionary War neared.

For example, Kadish recalled, “Three successive grand juries refused to indict John Peter Zenger, whose newspaper criticized the withdrawal of jury trials and the royal control of New York.”

Colonial grand juries stood up to the King by denouncing Great Britain and issuing “stirring defenses of their rights as Englishmen.” Newspapers “often republished these criticisms.”

“The original grand jury was more than an investigator. They were supposed to protect citizens not just from unjust indictments but from unjust laws,” Manning suggested. “In England, grand jurors who even allowed a prosecutor to come into the grand jury room were seen as having violated their oath.”

‘Prosecutors Can Repeatedly Bring the Same Charges’

Additionally, Manning highlighted the reality that “jeopardy doesn’t attach with a grand jury,” which means “prosecutors can repeatedly bring the same charges” against individuals. Having to show new evidence or prove empaneling a grand jury is in the public interest has hardly ever been an obstacle.

...Thomas Jefferson had to convene three separate grand juries in order to indict Aaron Burr for sedition, but he was able to continue to convene those grand juries until he obtained that indictment. Additionally, in the Antebellum South, grand juries routinely indicted anti-slavery activists for sedition, while those in the North sometimes refused — but charges would [be] presented to new grand juries until they stuck. In 1968, a San Francisco Grand

Jury was asked by Mayor Alioto to investigate the Black Panther Party. They refused, and the foreman gave a press conference about political overreach. Unfortunately, in 1969, a new grand jury began an investigation...

Manning further highlighted how the grand jury may be employed to coerce defendants into giving up their trial rights and take a plea, “both by threatening to indict for more severe charges than are warranted (which we know can be done easily), or by threatening to call a defendant’s loved ones before a grand jury as witnesses.”

“The very threat of the secret proceeding is in itself terrifying to people. The secrecy of grand jury proceedings fuel paranoia and fear, running contrary to our ideals of open courts and stoking our disdain for secret testimony,” Manning wrote. “I find, when I explain the secrecy of grand juries, people are often truly shocked that they are constitutional, and frequently compare them to the Court of [the] Star Chamber.”

The Court of the Star Chamber was unlike most of the courts in England. From the 1400s to the 1600s, it was largely used to pursue political and religious people who had “sinned” against the crown.

Civil liberties attorney Michael Deutsch detailed the improper use of the grand jury for the Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology in 1984. Following World War II, “urbanization of the United States, the proliferation of crime, and the expansion of federal criminal jurisdiction” transformed grand juries into rubber stamps of approval for prosecutorial requests for indictments. The subpoena power also became a “valuable tool for wide-ranging governmental investigations.”

Highlighting the black nationalist movement, Deutsch reasoned prosecutors were investigating black liberation activities specifically for the purpose of swiftly jailing them.

“The government is intent on pursuing a policy of subpoenaing before grand juries political activists, who it is well aware will not testify or otherwise cooperate as a matter of political principle,” Deutsch declared. “The only result of such a policy is the imprisonment of activists without specific charge or trial for the exercise of their political right to silence.”

A Tool Of Internment

Manning did not broach the issue of forced immunity in her letter to the judge, but by the 1950s, many subpoenaed progressive activists invoked their Fifth Amendment right to silence. The government moved to end this trend by passing a law that granted transactional immunity to anyone subpoenaed to provide testimony.

“This was the first time that legislation provided for compulsory testimony in return for immunity in an area concerning political thought and activity,” Deutsch recalled. And as a result of anti-communist hysteria during the Cold War, a prime mechanism for using the grand jury for “political inquisition” and a “tool of internment” was put into place.

The Nixon Justice Department’s use of the grand jury was highly politicized. Deutsch mentioned Leslie Bacon, a 19 year-old anti-war activist, was “arrested on a material witness warrant in Washington, D.C. on the eve of May Day demonstrations.” Authorities flew her to Seattle, where she was brought before a grand jury “allegedly investigating the bombing of the nation’s Capitol Building.”

“She was brought before the grand jury thousands of miles from her home without adequate consultation with a lawyer and questioned for several days in great detail about her personal and political life,” according to Deutsch.

Flourishing as a tool of repression, the grand jury was turned on solidarity movements. Manning highlighted how federal agencies had multiple Puerto Rican independence organizers arrested at gunpoint for contempt of court when they refused to provide testimony.

The grand jury indicts everyone but police officers. Referring to an article in *The Guardian*, Manning wrote, “In Dallas over a stretch of several years, more than 80 police shootings came before grand juries. Only one returned an indictment.”

“Grand juries have protected police officers since the slave patrols. They were used to indict abolitionists but not people capturing and reenslaving people seeking freedom from bondage.”

Like Manning asserted, there are alternatives to the grand jury. The U.S. and Liberia are the only two “common law systems of justice” to still use the process. But countries and jurisdictions, such as Australia, Belgium, Canada, England, France, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Sierra Leone, and Scotland replaced the grand jury with a “preliminary” hearing system.

The U.S. military uses a process of preliminary hearings, instead of a grand jury, to help protect military members’ due process rights. Manning endured the process, which involved an Article 32 hearing, where a military judge referred charges to a full court-martial, and yet, she recognizes it was vastly preferable to what she is subjected to currently.

Putting A Face On Grand Jury Abuse

Slavery, the subordination of women, segregation, and disenfranchising citizens, who did not own land, were part of the Constitution once but removed. So, the fact that a process is enshrined in the Constitution does not make it off limits to criticism or protest.

The Constitution, as Manning recognizes, is a living document. It was never intended to constrain progress or preserve autocratic tendencies in governance, which powerful elites rely upon to cement their control over particular populations.

Anti-communist investigations launched by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) and the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations headed by Senator Joseph McCarthy are largely regarded as one of many appalling political acts in American history.

“This kind of questioning, however, routinely happens under the grand jury system,” Manning asserted. “Due to the secrecy of grand juries, the public is less aware of it, and less outraged, and therefore, it continues without interruption. However, this is because they are unaware it is happening and cannot feel its effects.”

Whether Judge Trenga cares to acknowledge this or not, Manning proves through her letter that she has a better grasp of the history of the grand jury than the federal judge who put her in jail.

Through her principled resistance, Chelsea Manning is forcing transparency on the grand jury process and educating the public about a tool, which the press too frequently ignores when reporting on government abuses.

Her openness helps the public put a face on grand jury repression. Every day that prosecutors pursue grand jury testimony and persist in punishing Manning is another day the grand jury loses more public support. Their cruelty may very well hasten the end of the grand jury in the United States.

3 Jun - Update on Russell Maroon Shoatz

Below is an update from the Shoatz family.

MORE:

On our most recent visit following our dad's hospital stay, we had the privilege and fortunate opportunity to meet, speak with, and embrace Chuck Africa. Ironically, it was Chuck Africa who put the word out to inform the family of Maroon's medical dilemma and transport from SCI Dallas to an unspecified hospital.

The family is pleased to bring you Maroon's latest message after his recent surgery:

"Had my first visit since my operation, with Theresa, Sharon, and Russell. Since I'm still in the prison infirmary, it had to be approved by the doctor, and I was in a wheelchair; though I CAN and DO walk a little every day. Medically, all I choose to say is that it has been like NOTHING I have ever experienced! More pain than I have ever had to deal with; though A LOT of PRAYER has made it EASIER. During my two-week stay in the outside hospital, the ENTIRE hospital staff treated me in a professional manner, as did the prison security details that accompanied me. (Written while laying on a reclining hospital bed after the dressing was changed on the navel-to-sternum gash from my surgery. Thankfully, it's healing well, and there is less and less pain with the daily changes.)"

3 Jun - Trump pushes up to 20 years in prison for pipeline protesters

The Trump administration is seeking to dramatically escalate federal penalties for pipeline protesters.

MORE:

by E.A. Crunden (*Think Progress*)

Under newly proposed changes, pipeline protesters could face up to 20 years in prison for disrupting the construction of oil and gas infrastructure. The move echoes similarly harsh penalties for anti-pipeline activists being adopted in several states.

Updates proposed to the Transportation Department's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) released Monday would make interrupting pipeline construction or damaging existing pipelines a federal crime.

According to the proposed PHMSA updates, first reported by Politico, "vandalism, tampering with, or impeding, disrupting or inhibiting the operation of" pipelines would be met with fines or potentially many years in jail. Under current law, damaging existing pipelines can lead to up to 20 years jail time, but those "under construction" are now a consideration as well along with "disruption" to pipelines.

Other components of the PHMSA updates include changing the threshold for damages incurred by a pipeline accident before an operator is required to report a problem; the proposal would double the \$100,000 threshold currently in place.

The administration argues that the changes are key to ensuring safety.

At least one fossil fuel industry group immediately welcomed the updates. The Natural Gas Council (NGC) called the proposed changes a "positive step" and said that the organization looks "forward to reviewing PHMSA's specific recommendations and to participating in the process to produce a bill that enhances the safety of the industry and the communities that we serve." The NGC includes the American Petroleum Institute (API) and the American Gas Association (AGA) as members, among others.

But environmental groups and activists will likely oppose the proposed measures and are expected to seek legal action against the Trump administration. The updates are also likely to spark alarm among environmentalists as the proposal positions the federal government against pipeline protesters, marking a new frontier in the acrimonious relationship between the White House and fossil fuel infrastructure opponents.

Activists have relied on pipeline protests as a successful protest tactic used to protect vulnerable communities, including indigenous tribes and low-income people of color who often suffer the

consequences of fossil fuel impacts. Many also see protest as critical to addressing climate change, an approach that has met with legal success.

During the Obama administration, pipeline opponents scored major wins, including the blocking of the Dakota Access pipeline following outcry from indigenous communities and allies. But President Donald Trump has sought to erode those gains, pushing for pipeline expansion and overruling pushback from impacted communities.

In April, Trump signed executive orders clearing the way for oil and gas pipelines to be built more quickly. Those orders target the power of states controlled by pipeline opponents, like New York, that have long exercised their ability to limit fossil fuel infrastructure. Meanwhile, pipeline-friendly states (which are mostly controlled by Republicans) are ramping up their efforts targeting protesters.

Last month, the Texas legislature passed a bill making it a felony for protesters to disrupt pipeline construction. The bill, supported by Gov. Greg Abbott (R), would make “impairing or interrupting” a pipeline punishable by up to two years in prison. And if this took place during construction it would be considered a third-degree felony punishable by up to a decade of prison time in the state — the country’s leading oil and gas producer.

Texas isn’t alone in cracking down on pipeline protesters. Louisiana, South Dakota, Pennsylvania, and other energy-rich states have similarly sought harsh penalties for pipeline opponents, who they accuse of hindering safety and the economy. In addition to targeting protesters on the scene of anti-pipeline demonstrations, some lawmakers have also proposed targeting supporters of those protests even when they are not physically present.

But protesters have fought back, many arguing that their free speech rights are compromised by such laws. In May, environmental groups and demonstrators sued to challenge Louisiana’s law, after being arrested in 2018 near the controversial Bayou Bridge pipeline, then under construction. Texas advocates have said they are monitoring the progress of legal efforts in Louisiana for an indicator of how they might fare in challenging the Texas legislation.

4 Jun - How Sharing Books w/ My Dad in Prison Made Life Bearable for Both of Us

Tyler Wetherall on Why All in Prison Should Have the Right to Read

MORE:

by Tyler Wetherall (*Literary Hub*)

When I was a teenager, my father and I shared books. We didn’t share the physical copy, at least not often—my dad was serving a ten-year sentence in California, and I was at school in Bath, England—but we did share the imaginary landscape offered within its pages, a place we could occupy together from afar.

I would find the books Dad was reading in my local library branch. Wilbur Smith’s *The River God*, Sophie’s Choice by William Styron, a handful of Michael Crichton novels—the books themselves didn’t matter. While I curled up with my library-stamped copy of *The River God* before bed, he was reading his, 5,000 miles away in his prison bunk. These words offered a point of connection between us, when there were few others to be found, and, for him, a touchstone to the world outside, the world he would one day rejoin.

Dad was lucky. He had family and friends who regularly sent him books and he had funds in his personal disbursement account to purchase what he wanted. He was also a college-educated white man who had already benefited from a lifetime’s access to education and literature. The majority of people do not enter the American prison system with these privileges. For the majority of the 2.3 million Americans currently incarcerated, access to the books they want to read is severely restricted—and increasingly so.

Some prisons have libraries, but they are woefully understocked, with books often shared amongst thousands and left threadbare. A former inmate told me that sometimes the final chapters of a prison library book had fallen out, which he would only discover, to his devastation, once he reached the end. People in low-security facilities and camps can receive books from their families and charities, but at most medium- and high-security facilities they must be sent directly from the publisher or bought from prison-affiliated vendors, often at prohibitive prices for those without an outside support network. For those in punitive segregation—who are in their cell for between 17 and 23 hours a day—there is, at best, a fortnightly book cart wheeled past the cell with a limit on the number of books the individual can take out.

The situation is worse now than it was during my father’s incarceration in the 1990s. And prison authorities continue to put forward policies that, in practice, deny inmates’ right to read. In a 2017 measure ostensibly to counter contraband, the New York State Corrections Department piloted a policy that eliminated package deliveries from family members, mail catalogues, or online retailers, and banned all used books.

It is worth noting that there is no publicly available evidence of used books being used to smuggle in drugs, though a more general 64 percent increase in package-room contraband between 2013 and 2017 has been cited as a rationale. The program was suspended in January 2018 after significant backlash. But 30 other jurisdictions in the US have implemented similar policies. A bill to bring libraries to all New York jails recently faced opposition from the Corrections Department.

Access isn’t the only problem; censorship is broad and the motives for banning books arbitrary. Charlie Brown Christmas and The Essential Gore Vidal—amongst the estimated 15,000 books banned in Texas—hardly seem likely to incite a riot. According to federal regulations, officials can censor material which is sexually explicit—The Nude Female Figure: A Visual Reference for the Artist included—or that is “detrimental to the security, good order or discipline of the institution,” and “might facilitate criminal activity.” The latter category becomes a black hole, swallowing up whole shelves of books on political history, the civil rights movement, and social justice.

*

We are gathered in the dusty basement of Freebird, a secondhand bookstore in Cobble Hill. There are no windows and the ceiling is low enough that the silence of our work is occasionally punctuated by the bang and curse of someone hitting their head. We work our way through a pile of letters sent from prisons around America with a request for literature. This is the de facto HQ of Books Through Bars NYC, an all-volunteer group that sends books to prisoners. They currently fulfill over 700 requests per month.

The handwritten letters feel personal. Requests vary from the specific (indigenous stories from the Amazon, Lee Child novels) to the general (crime fiction, coloring books). Our task is to match a letter with a handful of books and package them according to that prison’s regulations. I dissect each letter compulsively, scanning for signs of the writer’s personality. I long to furnish the sender with the right book, a book that will offer a momentary reprieve from reality. This longing speaks to my child self, when a book was one of the few things I could send my father to make his time better and one of the few gifts that made it past prison authorities.

Each package takes me too long, and I’ll never know if I chose well. It is a one-sided conversation, the package of books in place of a response. For some indigent or segregated prisoners, these packages could be their only point of contact with the outside world. One man wrote the organization this note: “I would like to thank you for the books you sent me last month. I’m going to be executed May 30th but I’d like you to know these books will give me much pleasure in the days remaining to me.” The letter was dated May 9th.

My dad started writing while in prison. There were three typewriters in the library, each on its own desk. They were usually empty. He visited during the hours between meals and counts (when you had to be at your bunk at prescribed times). He worked on his memoirs and, later, on a screenplay. A friend

recommended he read Anne Lamott's *Bird by Bird*, and so I ordered a copy as well. Together we studied the craft of writing—me at 14, him at 54—on opposite sides of the Atlantic. It gave us something to talk about on those crackling long-distance phone calls, brainstorming plot and character development. I wanted a dad who came to school plays or awkwardly shook the hand of my teenage boyfriends; that was never going to happen, but this was something we could share instead.

Dad wasn't interested in being a writer prior to his incarceration, but he applied himself with seriousness once inside. It was a way to engage his mind and curb the regretful thoughts that crowded his breeze block cell during unoccupied hours.

Similarly, in the letters we receive, one prisoner writes about how books helped him rally against the "constant companions" of "despair and sheer boredom." Another man muses on the "importance of educating ourselves as opposed to wasting away." Requests come in for books to study the origins of Islam, to learn Hebrew, to start a small business, to crochet, for Nordic noir novels of the noughties. One man asks for books on dogs; his dream is to open a kennel for strays once he is free.

Without facilitating access to books and the educational or rehabilitative opportunities they represent, the American prison complex is no better than a holding pen, enacting a short-sighted punishment of segregation and deprivation. People are released back into society without the tools or support necessary to build a new life. The single most cost-effective method of reducing recidivism is education. One 2013 study showed that participating in correctional education programs lowered the odds of reoffending by 43 percent. Other countries have acted on this research; in Italy, prisoners can reduce their sentences by three days for every book they read.

Standing in the dusty basement of Freebird after packing up dozens of books bound for Texas—which operates one of the toughest book policies in the country—I ask Beena Ahmed, a Books Through Bars NYC coordinator, why she thinks prison authorities resist efforts to improve access. "It seems callous to restrict packages, but they resist anything that adds to administration," she says. More packages bring higher labor costs to process the books and check for contraband or censored material. Furthermore, private vendors, who provide services and products to government prisons, capitalize on a captive audience, charging exorbitant fees for everything from phone calls to canned soup, while lobbying Congress for lengthier sentences. Undoubtedly, these private vendors would benefit from any policy that forced the prison population to only procure books through their services.

The problem is also more insidious, though. Operating a system of mass incarceration requires an act of aggressive dehumanization, placing the needs of the individual—and the community from which that individual has been taken—beneath the perceived economic imperatives of the prison industrial complex. This dehumanization occurs at every level. Daniel McGowan, a Books Through Bars volunteer, told me: "During my own incarceration I would think, 'How is it that this guy can sit in the lieutenant's office and read a book all day, and not understand that I'm in a cage and I have the exact same needs and desires?' If you're not seeing people as people, as worthy of respect, then it's easy: 'Why do they need books? Who cares?'"

Prisoners do not have full constitutional rights, allowing prison authorities to bypass the First Amendment and practice, amongst other infractions, censorship. When challenged in the courts, however, these bans are often overturned. In a 1974 case, the late Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall ruled in favor of the prisoners' right to free speech, writing: "When the prison gates slam behind an inmate, he does not lose his human quality; his mind does not become closed to ideas; his intellect does not cease to feed on a free and open interchange of opinions; his yearning for self-respect does not end; nor is his quest for self-realization concluded. If anything, the needs for identity and self-respect are more compelling in the dehumanizing prison environment." The American Library Association's Bill of Rights, while it has no legal standing, echoed this sentiment, asserting the right of incarcerated people to read, to choose what they read, to access information, and to practice intellectual freedom.

The mass incarceration of people, and predominantly people of color, since the 1970s through the War on Drugs has stripped millions of their rights as American citizens in a manner Michelle Alexander argues is strikingly similar to elements of Jim Crow. (Ironically, Alexander's *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* was banned in several correctional facilities, a ban since challenged by the American Civil Liberties Union.) This system of oppression continues not only throughout an individual's incarceration, but for the rest of their lives, when a criminal record stands in the way of finding a job or a home. Keeping books from incarcerated people only perpetuates this cycle.

Looking at Books Through Bars' list of most requested books, there is an inherent hopefulness in the will to learn—Astrophysics: A Very Short Introduction—and the will to imagine—The House of Spirits, Black Panther. There's a hope for life beyond the prison complex, whether that life be imaginative or literal. By limiting access to books for the 2.3 million Americans in prison, they are curtailing 2.3 million minds from learning and from imagining, and from the hope of education, empathy, and—for a brief moment—escape. As C. S. Lewis said, the only people who rally against escape are the jailers.

Before my dad's release I worried about him rejoining a world that had changed in his absence. He was a few years shy of his 60th birthday. While he was inside, the Internet had happened. Mobile phones now fit in his pocket. His last two decades of business experience had been largely illegal; the logistics and financial acumen required to be an international pot smuggler didn't read well on a resumé. But Dad remained optimistic. His favorite book while inside had been *Ship of Gold in the Deep Blue Sea* by Gary Kinder, the true adventure of one man's quest to uncover a 19th-century sunken ship carrying 21 tons of Californian gold. It had everything he needed to believe in: that a quest against all odds could succeed and that, with perseverance, the riches at the bottom of life's ocean could still be his.

Dad never made his screenplay—and I don't know if that man ever started his dog kennel—but this ability to imagine a future version of himself succeeding at his quest saw him through his sentence, and out the other side.

8 Jun - Trump Policies Obscure Fight on White Supremacist Terror

It should come as no surprise that the federal government is doing everything it can to maintain systematized white supremacy.

MORE:

by Natasha Lennard (*The Intercept*)

On Tuesday, during a House subcommittee hearing, Rep. Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich., described a death threat she and fellow Muslim Rep. Ilhan Omar had received in the mail. "A good Muslim is a dead one," the letter had read. The hearing, called "Confronting White Supremacy: Adequacy of the Federal Response," featured the FBI's Assistant Director for Counterterrorism Michael McGarrity. Tlaib wondered why threats like the one against her and Omar don't qualify as domestic terrorism. "We get so many of them, and I keep asking, 'What happens? What happens to these individuals?'" She asked McGarrity, "How is that not enough to fall under domestic terrorism?"

In the U.S., there is no criminal charge specifically for "domestic terrorism." For example, white supremacist James Fields Jr., who killed Heather Heyer with his Dodge Challenger at the "Unite The Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, was described as a domestic terrorist; even racist then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions said the attack met the definition of "domestic terrorism." Yet he was convicted for hate crimes, not on terror charges.

Instead of being a legal category, "domestic terrorism" is used by federal law enforcement as a framework to organize and describe cases and investigations. But thanks to a recent shift in how the FBI classifies its domestic terror categories, the answer to Tlaib's urgent question, "what happens" to white supremacist threats, writ large, is all the harder to discover.

Over the last decade, the FBI classified domestic terrorism cases using 11 categories, including a specific grouping for white supremacists. At the end of April, the FBI and Justice Department revealed to Senate Judiciary Committee staffers that a new classification system was now in place, employing only four categories: racially motivated violent extremism; anti-government and anti-authority extremism; animal rights and environmental extremism; and abortion extremism.

The “racially motivated” category is the most problematic one. Under an administration that has made a point of drawing false equivalences between deadly white supremacist violence and anti-racist dissent, the FBI’s category collapse is as unsurprising as it is disconcerting.

According to the Anti-Defamation League, between 2009 and 2018, white supremacist and far-right extremists were responsible for 73 percent of extremist murders in the U.S. Yet the distinct and deadly threat of white supremacist violence is now unnamed and merely folded into the too-broad “racially motivated extremism” category. That category folds in “black identity extremism” — an FBI category conjured in 2017 to make the unsubstantiated claim that black organizers fighting against racist police executions were a national security threat.

The new nomenclature reflects the Trump administration’s ideological commitment to enabling white supremacists. But the new classifications are more than semantic: They render it impossible for the public, or even elected officials, to know whether the FBI is dedicating resources to investigating the very real threat of white supremacist terror or if those resources are going toward the harassment of Black Lives Matter and civil rights activists. Only the former use of government time and money would be justified, but both cases would fall under “racially motivated extremism.”

Earlier this month, the FBI’s inability to distinguish white supremacist, far-right terror cases in its data was made clear during a House Homeland Security Committee hearing. During his testimony, McGarrity, the same FBI official questioned this week by Tlaib, was asked by House members how many current domestic investigations were targeting white supremacists. He couldn’t answer with any specificity, save to say that 50 percent of current investigations related to the “racially motivated” category and that the “majority” of these involved white supremacists. Another 40 percent of investigations, he said, related to “anti-government” extremism, without delineating whether targets were right- or left-wing groups. So, while we can know that 90 percent of current domestic FBI investigations involve supposedly “racially motivated” or “anti-government” cases, we can’t know to what extent the agency is abusing these “terror” categories to persecute anti-racist activism and civil rights struggle — as federal law enforcement has historically done.

“The FBI knows who it is investigating, but the public does not, and lawmakers tasked with oversight of powerful intelligence agencies aren’t able to check for abuse because of this purposeful obfuscation by the Bureau,” Sandy Fulton, government relations director of the advocacy group Free Press, told *The Intercept* via email. “Black protesters seeking justice in the face of institutional and official racism are not the same as white supremacists planning attacks on innocent people. The FBI should know the difference and be more fully accountable to the people it serves and the Constitution it’s sworn to uphold.”

It would be unempirical at best to expect the FBI to end its historic practice of persecuting black dissent. Meanwhile, as the *New York Times Magazine* highlighted in a lengthy report last November, federal law enforcement has willfully ignored the growth of white supremacist extremism in the last decade, including suppressing findings in a 2009 report on the right-wing radicalization of veterans. As I noted at the time, white supremacy has not only been a blind spot for policing; U.S. law enforcement doesn’t do enough about violent racists because as an institution, it itself is violently racist and contains white supremacists in its ranks. The new categories give the FBI further cover for the same bad practices.

In a May letter to Attorney General William Barr and FBI Director Christopher Wray, six Democratic senators, including Sens. Dick Durbin, Cory Booker, and Kamala Harris, rightly expressed concern about the new “racially motivated extremism” classification. “This new category,” they wrote, “inappropriately combines incidents involving white supremacists and so-called ‘Black identity extremists,’ a fabricated

term based on a faulty assessment of a small number of isolated incidents.” By the same token, the new “anti-government and anti-authority extremism” category makes no differentiation between far-right militias or left-wing radicals, the former constituting a rising deadly threat and the latter having been responsible for no deaths in the U.S. in over 20 years. It’s worth noting, too, that while “animal rights and environmental extremism” remains a category in the FBI’s terror taxonomy, no human or animal life has ever been lost in the U.S. because of militant animal rights and environmental activism.

“The re-categorization is a significant tell,” said Michael German, a fellow with the Brennan Center for Justice and a former FBI agent. “Rather than be upfront about their methods and their use of the significant resources allocated to them by Congress, they chose to obscure this information.” As German told *The Intercept*, Congress has demanded greater transparency and more information about the FBI’s handling of white supremacist terror threats for well over six months.

In late March, following the massacre at two mosques in New Zealand by a white supremacist, Durbin reintroduced the Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act with the specific aim of forcing federal agencies to be more transparent and accountable with regards to addressing white supremacist extremism. While Durbin’s bill has not yet passed and is by no means the answer to the festering scourge of American white supremacist violence, the Justice Department and FBI’s move toward even greater obfuscation is all the more disturbing as a response. As Free Press’s Fulton put it, “Lumping ‘white-supremacist’ terrorism into the broader and more vague category of ‘racially motivated’ terrorism allows the FBI to hide the fact that it’s not putting enough resources into investigating the rising threat of violent racism in the United States.”

10 Jun - Running Down the Walls 2019: A Reportback

Here’s the rundown from NYC ABC’s 2019 Running Down the Walls.

MORE:

Running Down the Walls 2019 in NYC started in the same way many things start out here, with arriving at the crack of dawn to squat choice real estate in a public park and yelling at some yuppie asshole because he doesn’t know the basics of parallel parking. As we set up for the day, passersby stopped to check out the goings on, peruse our display of free literature, and inquire about the 5k. We have noticed year in and year out that setting up in public, with a lot of foot traffic, draws attention and helps begin great conversations with folks who, until that moment, might have never considered that there are political prisoners and prisoners of war in the United States.

By about 1:30 pm, folks started arriving to register for the 5k, as we blasted old episodes of Burning Cop Car to get the people hyped. There were plenty of participants showing up, including many comrades we see once a year, at this event, and a bunch of folks we hadn’t met before. If you want to know what makes a day like this amazing, imagine seeing Sekou Odinga riding up on his bicycle as a comrade’s toddler wanders after a dog, and a black banner of a clenched anarchist black cross fist blows in the background.

Operating on anarchist time, the 5k started closer to 2:30 than the publicized 2:00 pm, but only after taking a photo around the Running Down the Walls banner, giving folks the rundown on the route, and reading a statement by anarchist political prisoner Jeremy Hammond. With that, folks were off. Thanks to comrades from NYC Action Medical for being at the ready in case anyone needed medical attention during the event.

After around 23 minutes, the first participant had made the slightly over 5k circuit and was ready for water. After cooling down and catching their breath, they told us that partway through the run, the thing that pushed them to run harder was the knowledge of what folks on the inside go through every day and how participating in this event renewed their strength in supporting imprisoned comrades.

After all of the folks participating in the 5k made their way around the circuit, we enjoyed a huge spread of unspeakable vegan delights. When Sekou Odinga came up to the table, one of his comrades pointed at one of the dishes and implored him to quickly try it, saying, “that one, there...that one’s special.”

In the end, NYC ABC came close to reaching our goal of \$4,000. If you'd like to help push us over the hump, you can still donate at paypal.me/nycabc or check the original event listing for other ways to donate.

The remainder of the day was spent socializing and enjoying a great day in the park, surrounded by comrades old and new. Later that same night, NYC ABC tabled a music night and fund raiser for the anarchist book fair. While there, we talked to a couple of folks who told us that the reason they love Running Down the Walls so much is that it's a reminder that there is revolutionary community in NYC and that it is one of the few times in the year they know they will see a wide-ranging group of folks coming together to have fun, see each other, all while staying focused on those who are still inside. That's what's up and that's how we get down (the walls).

11 Jun - June 11 Statement from Marius Mason

As we mark the annual day of solidarity with earth & animal liberation and anarchist political prisoners, Marius Mason has written a great statement that we've added below.

MORE:

I can hardly believe that it has been another year passing and it is J11 again. I am so thankful for this annual touch point as an opportunity to reach out to my community on the outside and to take stock of the year. It is hard to take in that I have been locked up for more than a decade, and even more sobering to realize how many comrades have been incarcerated for MULTIPLE decades. They have my infinite admiration for maintaining their integrity and for keeping their vision alive through so many years.

I always want to thank all the good folks who do solidarity events to mark this day. I am sure that as I do, all of the anarchist prisoners draw much strength and courage from knowing that you all have our back and have worked so hard to send that immense love across borders and through the bars. There has been way too much hate and "othering" around borders these days. It's a powerful message to send love instead, and to question the legitimacy of any borders that separate or devalue us as living beings, all equally sharing this planet.

Things are well with me. I continue to advocate for my medical transition and to work on our diversity committee here to educate on trans issues. My transfer to the Danbury Federal Correctional Institution, in a low security facility, has revealed yet another kind of space created for incarceration. It is a very space, smaller scale (about 150 prisoners) and both more and less restrictive. I am getting to know what the ground rules are, getting to know my fellow prisoners here. I have not been a lot of places in the free world, but I feel like I have now seen a number of sides to the B.O.P. I plan on writing more about this place soon.

I get a lot of my information about the free world from books, and would like to share a little about two of those. Ann Hansen's Taking the Rap: Women Doing Time for Society's Crimes really resonated with me both in describing the effects of the different levels of personal autonomy in different kinds of prisons that she lived in (from a max to a no-fences condo/group home)- but also in how difficult it could be to navigate how a political prisoner could offer support to their fellow prisoners respectfully. The concept of accompaniment, which I first heard of from Alice and Staughton Lynd doing labor organizing in poor communities, seems really applicable to many of Hansen's observations. I have often felt this year that the best help that I could offer to other prisoners was to walk their walk with them, to comfort and to listen, to be a mentor in the RDAP (drug rehab) program at Carswell and to join in the FIT program here at Danbury – to sing with them, to engage in dynamic discussions of values and history and to encourage mutual aid and respect. It feels important to hold those who are ill or damaged, especially, as that builds strength for all of us.

This signifies a significant change in perspective on social change for me. Much of my political work has been reactive, single-issue and confrontational. I was always a firm believer in intersectionality, moving between issues, movements and identities – but I was not very effective at building or even articulating some clear vision of the world that I hoped to help create. This brings me to the second book that I found so

inspirational, adrienne maree brown's Emergent Strategies: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds. The book weaves together many voices calling for and developing collaborations to create workable solutions to shared problems in a way that embodies the egalitarian society we desire. What I loved so much about the book was its embrace of the process as opposed to focusing on the end-result...and seeing that process of change as a victory in itself.

What is true is that I have traded my freedom and everything I held dear in the free world for a chance at building a new world by resisting the old. I made many, many mistakes and some terrible decisions in that passionate quest. I am humbled by this, but not embittered. Because, if there is dialogue, reflection, and analysis – then perhaps there can be some worth-while lesson found in my experience that could benefit any resistance movement in its growth. And it is that study of our collective history and legacy of struggle that helps me to see my efforts as a small stream joining that great river of change. brown speaks of this in her book; that we can learn to be like water, ever adapting to conditions and becoming what we need to be to push us forward towards freedom.

13 Jun - Burning Frame: I'll Be Your Eyes, You'll Be Mine

WHAT: Movie night

WHEN: 7:30pm, Thursday, June 13th

WHERE: Spectacle Theater - 124 South 3rd Street, Brooklyn, New York

MORE:

The past few years have been a whirlwind: exhausting, invigorating, and ripe with potential. It's tremendously difficult, when in the thick of it, to pause, reflect, or even find a moment to catch a breath. Especially when "it" refers to the rise of fascism on a global scale, with any number of future cataclysms hovering just over the horizon. But we digress.

Join us, then, for a series that asks: if not now, when? Come for great works of radical political filmmaking, stay for the generative discussions, or even just to commiserate about how little has fundamentally changed over the past 100 years (the span of time which the films in this series will cover). The hope is that this forum for authentic representations of successes, defeats, and the messy work of political action, will be thrilling, edifying, and maybe even inspire your next organizing project.

To butcher the title of a great film for the sake of a moderately applicable pun: "Throw away your dogma, rally in the cinema."

14 Jun - Metropolitan Anarchist Coordinating Committee General Assembly

WHAT: General Assembly

WHEN: 6:30pm, Friday, June 14th

WHERE: Mayday Space, 176 St Nicholas Avenue, Brooklyn

COST: FREE

MORE:

The assembly will begin at 7:00 PM, orientation for newcomers begins 6:30 PM.

MACC assemblies are open to all anarchists, antifascists, anti-authoritarians and those interested in anarchist ideas and organizing so please invite your friends and share widely!

If you haven't attended before, these assemblies are an opportunity to get plugged in with MACC, its various committees and working groups, and other NYC based anarchist projects.

There is an orientation before the assembly starting at 6:30 PM for those interested in familiarizing themselves with MACC, the history, process and politics that undershirt general assemblies/anarchist ideas.

As with all assemblies, we encourage everyone to come with ideas about what they would like to see for future campaigns or actions and what direction they'd like MACC to take in terms of building a more powerful, militant anarchist movement.

For more information contact us at info@macc.nyc.

18 Jun - AnFem Open Meeting

WHAT: Meeting

WHEN: 7:00pm, Tuesday, June 18th

WHERE: Bluestockings—172 Allen Street, New York 10002

COST: FREE

MORE:

We welcome all women, trans, and genderqueer folks to join us and learn more about ongoing work and campaigns, and/or to start new projects. Let this be a space to talk about current projects or share ideas for new ones. A place where we can all be in the same room and get the wheels turning.

The Anarchx-Feminist Caucus (a.k.a. "AnFem") operates within the Metropolitan Anarchist Coordinating Council (MACC). MACC seeks to strengthen and support New York City's anarchist movement through the coordination of existing and emerging projects. AnFem critiques and confronts gendered and sexual violence, capitalism and patriarchy while aiming to dismantle the overlapping systems and institutions that keep oppression in place. We join a long tradition of anarchist feminist collectives that operate in smaller scale affinity groups to build trust within a community that feels safe.

AnFem Statement of Intent:

- We are a group committed to amplifying the voices of women of color and transgender, intersex, and other gender non-conforming people of color.
- We actively support anti-racist, anti-fascist, anti-sexist, and anti-transphobic strategies.
- We are sex positive and embrace polyamory as well as queer gender and sexuality.
- We align with sex workers & workers in feminized labor including care & housework, paid & not.
- We confront patriarchy & capitalism, esp. in the structures of family, marriage, & private property.
- We agree to a vision of a world that is non-hierarchical, unconstrained by gender, intersectional, and focused on attaining autonomy instead of perceived equality.

23 Jun - Anarchists Care About Books (ACAB): News From Nowhere

WHAT: Book club

WHEN: 4:00pm, Sunday, June 23rd

WHERE: Bluestockings—172 Allen Street, New York 10002

COST: FREE

MORE:

Join us to discuss News From Nowhere by William Morris, available at gutenberg.org/ebooks/3261

MACC events are open to all anarchists, antifascists, anti-authoritarians and those interested in anarchist ideas and organizing.

Bluestockings is wheelchair accessible, with no steps or platforms, and wide aisles between shelves. The bathroom is not wheelchair accessible. There is a Starbucks two short blocks down the street with an accessible bathroom (at Allen and Delancey). Metered street parking is available in the blocks surrounding Bluestockings. Bluestockings is not a scent-free space, but we encourage visitors to please refrain from wearing perfumes, colognes or other scented products (including essential oils) and smoke far away from the entrance to the space.