



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for May 14th

29 Apr - How Free Mumia Movement Prevailed Over “Progressive” Prosecutor

A late December ruling by the Philadelphia County Court of Common Pleas Judge Leon Tucker re-opened pathways for long-time political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal to litigate his freedom.

MORE:

by Jared Ware & Miles Quarles (*Shadowproof*)

“Progressive prosecutor” Larry Krasner’s appeal of the ruling stood in the way until Wednesday, April 17. At issue was whether Ronald Castille—a former Philadelphia District Attorney, Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice, and Krasner transition team member—had a constitutional duty to recuse himself from Mumia’s appeals of cases Castille’s office had prosecuted as DA.

One of Mumia’s attorneys, Judith Ritter, described Tucker’s December decision as “a straightforward application of federal and Pennsylvania law requiring cases to be decided by judges whose impartiality cannot reasonably be questioned.”

Tucker’s ruling gave Mumia the right to relitigate appeals that were denied by the state Supreme Court between 1998 and 2012.

While many in Philadelphia were surprised by Krasner’s appeal, organizers who mobilized for Mumia’s freedom for decades were prepared for it. They organized to influence Krasner’s decision and eventually pressure him to drop the appeal.

The latest effort, reinvigorated by the December decision, launched on January 5. Roughly 200 people rallied in the rain for over an hour outside Krasner’s office. City buses, taxi cabs, and other vehicles honked their horns in solidarity.

Protesters marched through the streets, briefly shutting down traffic around City Hall and on South Broad Street.

The action ended with food, speeches, discussions, and strategizing in work groups. Organizers came together from across the country and discussed Krasner’s then-pending decision, acknowledging that despite the promise of new appeals for Mumia, his road to freedom would be a major fight, regardless of whether or not Krasner appealed.

A couple of days later, petitions with nearly 4,000 signatures were delivered to Krasner. Wayne Cook, Mumia’s nephew who delivered the petition, bears a striking resemblance to his uncle.

Organizers Confront Krasner

Mike Africa Jr. is the son of recently released MOVE members Michael and Debbie Africa who are a part of the MOVE 9, a group of nine political prisoners who were sentenced to 30-100 years in prison, after police raided their home in 1978 and one officer was shot and died in the process. Against the grain of press coverage at the time, which often demonized MOVE, Mumia was an award-winning Philadelphia journalist who covered the city’s repression against MOVE closely.

Africa Jr. spoke with *Shadowproof* before Krasner appealed Tucker’s ruling.

“Krasner should not stand in the way of justice” Africa Jr. explained. “I think that Seth Williams stood in the way, I think that Ed Rendell and Lynn Abraham stood in the way, and at this moment right now I think that Krasner should not stand in the way.”

“He does some things that people would see as progressive. He’s taken some people who’ve had first-degree murder charges down to third-degree murder, and the whole cash bail out thing, but at the same time, he’s a politician.”

“Politicians, judges, officials they’re controlled by pressure,” Africa Jr. continued. “So I think it’s really up to the people and how they deliver the message to get Krasner to kind of move toward justice. I think it’s up to the people and the way we handle things that’s going to determine what happens with Krasner and what he does.”

After Krasner decided to appeal Tucker’s ruling, organizers increased the pressure at the district attorney’s public events, putting him increasingly at odds with protesters he often claimed to represent on the campaign trail, including some who actively campaigned for his election.

Activists attended a panel Krasner convened on parole and probation in late January to ask pointed questions about why he opposed Mumia’s path to freedom.

Krasner smugly implied protesters did not understand the ramifications of Tucker’s ruling, remarking, “The opinion that the judge wrote, is one that agreed with us in large part, and disagreed with us in a small part. And in the small part it has broad implications, because if we take the judge’s opinion as written it would not only affect that case, it would affect potentially thousands of cases.”

One of the audience members interrupted Krasner to say “Yes, and that’s good!”

Krasner replied and continued, “Well, I don’t agree sir.”

The district attorney was later probed at the meeting by Philadelphia Coalition for Racial Economic and Legal Justice (Philly REAL Justice) organizer Megan Malachi, who noted that she and her family “don’t even support electoral politics” but still came out and organized to support his campaign.

Krasner responded with a frustrated tone, claiming he had done a lot for Malachi’s family and a lot to protect her freedom of speech. He asked how many people wanted to talk about probation and parole, suggesting protesters intended to “hijack” the event. He then said he had “no further comment on [Mumia].”

Activists were intentional to not override the concerns of predominantly black and brown working class people seeking to engage Krasner’s administration on issues that could mean freedom for their family members. But Krasner’s appeal affected not only Mumia’s case, but as he said, potentially thousands of others, who may have faced similar judicial bias

Though Krasner’s attempts to engage the public seemed conveniently timed with criticisms from the left for his handling of Mumia’s case, he was also under intense scrutiny from hard right “tough on crime” figures within the Trump Justice Department for positions they feel are too lenient.

Krasner’s decision also put him at odds with sectors of movement lawyers, who have otherwise revered his attempts to craft a more “progressive” approach to prosecution as part of “ending mass incarceration.”

Days after the probation and parole event, Yale’s Rebellious Lawyering conference (RebLaw)—the largest student-run public interest law conference in the United States—disinvited Krasner from delivering a keynote address, inviting Mumia instead, a prominent jailhouse lawyer in his own right.

“Mumia’s case is marred by injustices, including clear evidence of systemic racial bias, political targeting, conflicts of interest, and police corruption. In short Mumia’s case illustrates many of the pervasive injustices that Krasner campaigned against,” read a statement disinventing Krasner from RebLaw.

Conference organizers “strongly urged him to drop his appeal,” asking the DA “to join activists in a conversation about the promise and perils of ‘progressive prosecution,’ including directly discussing his decision to appeal Mumia’s court decision. The DA declined to take part in such a conversation.”

Mumia delivered his keynote on rebellious lawyering from a prison phone at SCI Mahanoy prison highlighting the legacy of lawyers Fidel Castro, Nelson Mandela, and Clarence Darrow. He didn’t miss the chance to take a couple of shots at Krasner in the process.

“No so-called progressive prosecutor can or will unbuild [mass incarceration]. That’s because it took the entire system, DAs, judges, cops, defense lawyers, and prison administrators, not to mention the media, to collaborate on a monstrous project like mass incarceration. Only mass resistance can abolish mass incarceration,” said Mumia.

On February 11, when Krasner spoke before a crowd at one of Philadelphia’s public libraries, organizers distributed fliers about Krasner’s decision with regards to Mumia. They featured a picture of Mumia on the back and text that said: “Drop the Appeal.”

People throughout the crowd were seen holding up the image as Krasner spoke. As he finished, Pam Africa—MOVE’s Minister of Confrontation and Chairwoman of the Concerned Friends and Family of Mumia Abu-Jamal—stood to ask Krasner a question. He quickly left the stage with his police security detail.

The event was live-streamed and activists simultaneously launched a weekly communications zap of Krasner’s office, demanding the DA “retract the appeal” and “release Mumia now.” This communications zap was also distributed through email listservs up until Krasner’s office agreed to drop the appeal in mid-April.

Krasner was peppered with questions from organizers about his handling of the Mumia case at an event on March 9.

On March 26, Tucker responded to Krasner’s procedural notice of appeal (known as a 1925(b) complaint), and articles soon hit the Philadelphia press discussing the judge’s legal excoriation of the DA’s position.

Krasner Drops The Appeal

Finally, on April 17, Krasner’s office dropped the appeal. But Krasner suggested Tucker’s opinion had “been modified consistent with our primary concern — that ruling’s effect on many other cases.”

Shadowproof spoke with Rachel Wolkenstein about Krasner’s analysis of Tucker’s supplemental opinion. Wolkenstein is an attorney who represented Mumia from 1995 until 1999.

“It’s just totally a lie, a misrepresentation of what Tucker just wrote to accept as accurate Krasner’s description of what it is,” said Wolkenstein.

Krasner maintains that Tucker’s decision is no longer broad and only applies to people who kill police officers. Wolkenstein argued that is not supported by Tucker’s supplemental opinion, which was “not a concession to Krasner. It was an absolute devastation of Krasner’s points.”

“All the articles that have come out take as good coin that what Krasner’s describing of Tucker’s decision is correct, and it’s just false,” added Wolkenstein, “I spoke to at least two of those reporters directly, went

through all this, and they sort of said, ‘yeah, you’re right,’ and then either they or their editors wouldn’t [print it].”

A cursory read of Judge Tucker’s March 26 supplemental opinion seems to undermine the DA’s statement. Tucker writes that his original December 27, 2018 Memorandum Opinion “still stands without modification.”

Tucker provides clarifications that read as a scathing chastisement of Krasner’s intent to appeal the original ruling:

Appellant’s [Philly DA] 1925(b) complaint that this court’s conclusion will potentially require ‘any lead prosecutor who becomes a jurist to recuse in every case that was pending in that persons office when the now-judge was the lead prosecutor,’ is not valid. But yes, in every case where there was a conclusion, and the case then comes before that former lead prosecutor, now judge, from the same judicial district, for examination, recusal is necessary. That prosecutor, now judge, must appreciate that his personal desires and ambition to serve on the court do not surpass a defendant’s (Appellee’s) constitutional due process rights. [emphasis not added]

Tucker goes on to say that Krasner “alludes to the high number of cases that would result in recusal by this court’s conclusion. Whether there is one (1) case that warrants recusal, or substantially more than one (1) case, the number of potential cases affected by recusal must not be a consideration when determining the guarantee of due process.”

He also adds that Krasner’s objections to this ruling regarding Mumia are inconsistent with their handling of similar claims, noting his office “withdrew its appeals in seven (7) similar cases where this court found jurisdiction as in the instant matter.”

Regardless of Krasner’s rationale for dropping his appeal, Mumia will now have the opportunity to bring a litany of legal issues before a tribunal that is ostensibly free from the bias of a court that contains one of the DAs who formerly prosecuted him.

The struggle continues for those fighting on behalf of Mumia from outside the prison walls. Several of Mumia’s long-time advocates mixed messages of hope and celebration with the brutal realities of struggling against the U.S. criminal justice system at a press conference the day after Krasner’s decision.

“This is a historic win. It’s a historic day. DA Krasner’s reversal of his decision to appeal Judge Tucker’s unique historic decision in and of itself against judicial bias in the criminal injustice system is the first time we have had a direct legal pushback against the hold that the FOP has had on Mumia, since he was framed up for the murder of Daniel Faulkner,” Wolkenstein declared.

CUNY Baruch professor Dr. Johanna Fernandez stated, “If Mumia comes home, do you know what’s going to happen? The entire establishment of Philadelphia is going to be on trial.”

And as Pam Africa said on April 18, “Krasner was forced by international pressure to drop the appeals, but Krasner hasn’t stopped lying yet. The fact is Mumia is innocent, and we can accept nothing [less] than Mumia’s release based on police, prosecutorial misconduct, and judicial misconduct.”

Outside support for Mumia’s freedom will continue to be necessary as organizers work to overcome the decades-long Pennsylvania establishment and police union position against Mumia, which has always been that Mumia will never live outside of a jail cell again.

2 May - May Day Initiative To Free Jalil Muntaqim

Many of you know that Jalil has been fighting for his release since 2002, when he first became eligible for parole. He has been to the Parole Board 10 times, each time denied, for reasons related to the nature of the crime – something that will never change.

MORE:

by Jalil Muntaqim's Support Group (*San Francisco Bay View*)

After the last parole hearing and denial, pursuant to New York State Constitution Article IV, Section 4, Jalil filed an Application to Commute the Sentence to Time Served with New York Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo. Gov. Cuomo has the authority to grant the application and order Jalil's immediate release from New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (NYS DOCCS) custody.

Since the application's submission, it has been revealed that New York's Board of Parole had a "secret deal" with the New York City Police Benevolent Association (PBA) permitting members to submit letters of opposition to parole applicants directly to the Board of Parole through their website. These letters negatively influence decision-making processes and ensured Jalil would not receive a fair and impartial parole hearing. During Jalil's 2014 hearing, he was told that "current and former members of law enforcement" were parole commissioners. Many of them decided to deny his release.

On Dec. 4 and 5, 2016, the *New York Times* published an extensive exposé titled, "The Scourge of Racial Bias in New York State's Prisons," informing readers that "the racism can be felt from the moment a Black inmate enters New York's upstate prisons." This implacable racism has been institutionalized throughout the entire parole system, instilling biases in parole commissioners and influencing their decisions.

Since the submission of Jalil's application, Gov. Cuomo has received many letters and communications urging him to grant Jalil parole. However, due to the revelation of political collusion between the Board of Parole and the PBA, the media backlash and the scrutiny of the release of Jalil's co-defendant, it has become necessary to launch this May Day Initiative in support of Jalil's application.

On May 1, 2019, May Day, we are requesting that for all of May, friends and supporters call, tweet, email and text Gov. Cuomo's office and appeal to him to grant Jalil's Application to Commute the Sentence to Time Served. We also request that this initiative be widely posted on social media platforms, encouraging freedom-loving people around the world to join in our May Day Initiative.

Write, call, email and/or tweet Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo to commute Jalil's sentence and release him immediately. Communications to Gov. Cuomo's office must refer to Jalil as: Anthony Jalil Bottom, 77-A-4283, Sullivan Correctional Facility.

Write:

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of the State of New York
Executive Chamber

State Capital Building
Albany, New York, 12224

Call: 518.474.8390

Email form: governor.ny.gov/contact/governor-contact-form

Tweet: @NYGovCuomo

2 May - Imam Jamil Al-Amin (H. Rap Brown) Update

Below is a report from Imam Jamil Al-Amin's May 3rd hearing.

MORE:

The oral arguments went well. I agree with the Judge who stated that our argument was "very well presented." Much appreciation as always to Attorney Allen Garrett and our entire Kilpatrick Townsend team/family. Once the transcript of the oral arguments are available, I will be doing a video breakdown of them from my perspective for you all Insha Allah (2).

The support from around the country was beautiful and in some instances overwhelming in the best way. It's a blessing and Allah truly sends the help. I was feeling kind of alone because support wasn't present in places where I thought it'd be a given but masha Allah (3), Allah truly sends the help and we are thankful for you all. Now we will be waiting for the Court to make a decision.

In the meantime, we must continue our efforts to spread the TRUTH.

Also, Thank you to Doug Richards (11 Alive News) for his fair reporting thus far.

My father called me during the debriefing yesterday and was able to speak to those present and his request was that you remember him in your Dua (4) and remember him to your friends, family and colleagues. Keeping him alive in the hearts and minds of the people is paramount to our success and so, that is exactly what we will do Insha Allah (2).

Shukran (5) again for everything, this is just the beginning.

FOOTNOTES:

(1) English translations of alhamdulillah include: "all praise is due to God alone" (Muhammad Asad) "all the praises and thanks be to Allah" (Muhammad Muhsin Khan) "praise be to Allah" (Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Marmaduke Pickthall) (Wikipedia)

(2) 'In shā' Allāh (Arabic: **إن شاء الله**, 'in shā' a llāhu; pronounced [ʔɪ nʃ aː ʔa ɬ' ɬaːh]), also inshallah, in sha Allah or insha'Allah, is the Arabic language expression for "God willing" or "if God wills". The phrase comes from a Quranic command which commands Muslims to use it when speaking of future events. (Wikipedia)

(3) Masha Allah (Arabic: **ما شاء الله**, mā shā' a llāhu), also Masha'Allah, Ma shaa Allah is an Arabic phrase that is most often translated as "God has willed", "God willing" or "as God willed" and used to express appreciation, joy, praise, or thankfulness for an event or person that was just mentioned. (Wikipedia)

(4) In Islam, du 'ā ' archaically transliterated Doowa, literally meaning appeal or "invocation", is a prayer of supplication or request. Muslims regard this as a profound act of worship. Muhammad is reported to have said, "Dua is the very essence of worship." (Wikipedia)

(5) In Arabic "Thank you" is "Shukran." (Wikibooks)

4 May - Maroon is in the Hospital

We are writing to Maroon tonight. Here is a recent health update.

MORE:

Russell "Maroon" Shoatz was seen today in the prison infirmary where he was lucid, able to speak, but complained of nausea, abdominal pain and was unable to keep any liquids or food down. He was seen by the doctor where the decision was made to send him to a hospital for diagnostic testing. The head nurse at SCI Dallas has been very cooperative and has kept the family informed regarding his condition. Maroon is unable to make calls, receive emails or have any visits. The family is also working with Maroon's legal counsel.

The family is asking that you keep his spirits up once he returns to SCI Dallas by sending get well letters.

5 May - Pipeline Fighter Arrested After Barricading Themselves Inside Mountain Valley Pipeline

Another pipeline fighter has been arrested in West Virginia for barricading themselves inside a pipe which is part of the Mountain Valley Pipeline.

MORE:

by Appalachians Against Pipelines (*It's Going Down*)

Early this morning, an anonymous pipeline fighter barricaded themselves inside a section of the Mountain Valley Pipeline at a work site near Pence Springs, WV. The section of pipe in question is located next to the easement ditch, ready for welding to be completed before being buried. Banners located on the pipe read “STOP WORK: PERSON IN PIPE” and “MVP: THE TRUE TERRORIST” in reference to the “threats of terrorist acts” felony charge brought against a peaceful MVP protester less than two weeks ago (and retrospectively, in reference to the protester’s own charges today). Over a dozen people gathered adjacent to the site to show their support.

The person in the pipe was extracted and arrested before 10 AM, after over 3 hours in the pipe. They were charged with 2 misdemeanors (obstruction, trespassing) and 2 felonies (“threats of terrorist acts,” property destruction), and bail was set at \$8,500; they have since been bailed out of jail. A supporter who was on site was detained, driven off site by police, and released without charges.

The person in the pipe stated:

“I’ve entered this pipe in an attempt to slow the devastation that the Mountain Valley Pipeline (and the Atlantic Coast Pipeline) will cause to the ecosystem I grew to love while camping here as a child, and that I now call my home. While the fossil fuel industry and the state wish to portray us as a threat to the public, the only threat we pose is to the profits generated by these pointless projects. Still, perhaps these obstructive acts do terrify those with an interest in maintaining the status-quo. Perhaps they are reminded of the contradiction of infinite growth on a finite planet. Perhaps they realize that a world without domination and profit is possible, and tremble at the prospect.

“However, the terrorism I see is hidden in plain sight. Is a pipeline carrying explosives through your front yard not terrorism? What about the ongoing eradication of non-human species? Or the creation of a planet that is uninhabitable? What about the police occupations of poor, black, and brown neighborhoods, and the military occupations around the world? The millions of humans who are locked in cages? The need to sell our labor to survive? The surveillance and commodification of everyday life? Those with limited imagination say this subtler terrorism keeps us safe. Yet, at best, it leaves us isolated, anxious, and depressed. At worst, it leaves us dead. Chances are, you already know someone confronting these crises head on. The question is, will you join us? Everything you need is already present, and the fire of resistance has already been lit. So make your plans, scheme your schemes, and I’ll see you on the other side of the pipe.”

Neal Laferriere of Blackberry Springs Farm and Blackberry Botanicals, an affected land and small business owner from Summers County, WV, stated the following in support of today’s direct action:

“We have discovered the hard way that the agencies and organizations put in place to protect us spend most of their resources ensuring that the projects that are polluting our waters, our air, and ruining our farms, can be completed. This leave us with only one option: to stand up for our families, our neighbors, and our communities via peaceful protests and direct actions. This is the only option we have left. We have to stand up, or we just get run over.”

The Mountain Valley Pipeline is a 303-mile, 42-inch diameter fracked gas pipeline that runs from northern West Virginia to southern Virginia, with a 70-mile extension into North Carolina announced in 2018. The pipeline endangers water, ecosystems, and communities along its route, contributes to climate change, increases demand for natural gas (and therefore fracking), and is entrenched in corrupt political processes. Resistance to the pipeline has existed since it was proposed nearly 5 years ago, including a robust nonviolent direct action campaign that began in 2018.

The site where today’s action took place is less than a mile from where the MVP is slated to cross the Greenbrier River. On April 24th, 2019, the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP) modified the state’s water quality certification standards to allow MVP to construct the pipeline across water bodies using a method that had previously been deemed illegal. Changes to these state-imposed conditions include removing a 72-hour time limit for construction of pipelines across major waterways (including the Greenbrier).

6 May - Chelsea Manning Update

Chelsea Manning has been released following the expiration of the grand jury to which she was subpoenaed. Upon her release, she was issued another subpoena for another grand jury and is scheduled to appear this week.

MORE:

May 6th - Chelsea Manning: Despite Heartbreak And Hardship, Cooperation With WikiLeaks Grand Jury Not An Option

My name is Chelsea Elizabeth Manning. I am competent to be a witness, and I possess personal knowledge of the facts set forth below.

Currently, I am confined at the Alexandria Detention Center (“ADC”) in Alexandria, Virginia, following a finding of civil contempt on March 8, 2019, for refusing to cooperate in a grand jury investigation that I believe relates to events already disclosed in exhaustive testimony in 2013, including the extent of my knowledge.

Initially, after arriving at ADC, the jail placed me in Administrative Segregation (“adseg”) status, despite the stated concerns of myself and my legal representatives regarding the effects of prolonged isolation compounding the trauma I suffered in a year of solitary confinement during my previous time in confinement. I stayed on adseg for 28 days, without any misbehavior or ill will on my or anyone else’s part to rationalize such isolation. This isolation caused extraordinary pain for me.

While in adseg, I suffered many of the ill effects of prolonged isolation as described by former United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture Juan Mendez. For instance, consistent with the research of former Harvard Medical School professor Stuart Grassian, I experienced difficulty keeping attention on anything, sometimes referred to as a “dissociative stupor.” Thinking and concentrating get harder. Anxiety, frustration with minor things, and a spiraling inability to tolerate each symptom take hold. At one point, I started feeling ill during a short visit in a non-contact visit booth while struggling to have even a normal conversation. After weeks of under-stimulation, I became nauseated with vertigo and vomited on the floor, ending my visit prematurely. Such symptoms make up what Grassian describes as a special psychiatric syndrome caused by prolonged solitary confinement. Many of the effects last permanently after only fifteen (15) days of isolation.

After two months of confinement, and using every legal mechanism available so far, I can—without any hesitation—state that nothing will convince me to testify before this or any other grand jury for that matter. This experience so far only proves my long held belief that grand juries are simply outdated tools used by the federal government to harass and disrupt political opponents and activists in fishing expeditions. Without committing a federal crime, and after exhaustive testimony at a trial several years ago, I am again ripped from my life by a vindictive and politically-motivated investigation and prosecution. The way I am being treated proves what a corrupt and abusive tool the grand jury truly is. With each passing day my disappointment and frustration grow, but so too do my commitments to doing the right thing and continuing to refuse to submit.

My decision not to testify before grand juries is rooted in the study of history and philosophical principles. Many times in the nation’s history, people who speak out or express dissent against the government face disproportionate repression. One of the most common tools to silence dissent, the grand jury, attempts to sow distrust within activists’ organizations and communities through secrecy and compelling exhaustive and redundant testimony aimed at identifying other members of that community.

I understand that this grand jury related to my disclosures of classified and unclassified but sensitive information and records in 2010. I acted alone in these disclosures. The government is still preoccupied with punishing me, despite a court-martial, sentence, and presidential commutation nearly two years ago. This can be seen in statements and actions by several administration officials, especially the current secretary of state, who threatened Harvard University over a low-paid speaking engagement in 2017, when he was director of Central Intelligence [CIA]. This speaks compellingly to my rationale for both my

disclosures, for which I already served my time, and my present refusal to cooperate with an increasingly frightening and untrustworthy government. Let me state clearly, again, that my actions were my own.

I believe my principles allow me to focus on helping others and to challenge the use of power to coerce or manipulate people. Such coercive power forms what I define as “violence” and the “threat of violence,” which powerful institutions attempt to accumulate to obtain more power.

I do not believe nor do I possess any reasonable evidence to believe that participating in this grand jury could lead to any new theories of criminal liability for any person. I took responsibility for my actions over six years ago. I find it difficult to comprehend that the Department of Justice believes that my redundant testimony could actually provide any value to an investigation. Their stated reasons appear disingenuous at best and outright malicious at worst. The government’s theories contradict not only my testimony but the forensic evidence the military possesses. Therefore, I suspect they are simply interested in previewing my potential testimony as a defense witness and attempting to undermine my testimony without the benefit of reviewing forensic evidence. This justifies my theory that participating in this investigation functions simply to abuse the justice system for political ends.

I believe this grand jury seeks to undermine the integrity of public discourse with the aim of punishing those who expose any serious, ongoing, and systemic abuses of power by this government, as well as the rest of the international community. Therefore, participating in this fishing expedition—which potentially exposes other innocent people to the grand jury process—would constitute an unjustifiable and unethical action. Now, after sustaining serious psychological injury from my current confinement, I don’t wish to expose any other person to the trauma and exhaustion of civil contempt or other forms of prison or coercion.

In jail at ADC, I try every day to maintain my physical, mental, and intellectual capacities, as well as some modicum of human dignity. I live a quiet social life in a housing unit that holds a dozen people, who rotate frequently. I try to occupy myself with crossword and sudoku puzzles in the absence of good reading material. I try to stay positive despite the aftermath of isolation and the knowledge that my life once again is put on hold for a few more years, potentially. With limited books, I read what I can, though most are books that are either already read by me or are simply bad. I am re-accustomed to the intrusion and lack of privacy of frequent searches and heavy surveillance.

I arrived at ADC with concerns and anxiety about my physical health, particularly so soon after gender confirmation surgery in October. My post-surgery regimen requires delicate and regular self-care at least twice daily, including the use of anti-bacterial soap and dilators. Otherwise, I risk serious medical complications, including permanent injury or deadly infections. I worry about dilating in an environment rife with poor hygiene and with limited time and no privacy. I worry about seeing medical professionals with knowledge about post-operative care if complications develop, which I have reason to believe has already happened. I worry about regular access to daily hormones. Unfortunately, despite initial assurances by jail and U.S. Marshal Service (“U.S.M.S.”) officials, such efforts normally come slower and are very limited.

It appears that I have already developed complications during my stay at ADC. Medical staff acknowledges they lack expertise to examine or assist me appropriately. In response, I requested outside professionals at my own expense over three weeks ago. Despite this, I remain unseen by a professional competent to treat me. Every passing day further complicates my medical care and health, exposing me to permanent, intractable complications. The intrinsic bureaucracy and formality of ADC and USMS policy risks me to permanent harm. I do not know how serious these complications are, but I may need costly reparative surgery upon my release, causing me even more permanent injury and psychological harm, not to mention the expensive medical bills.

In an ideal world, agreeing to cooperate would avoid this situation. However, this government abuses the grand jury process and forces me to choose between an unethical decision and suffering intimate and

permanent consequences for doing the right thing. I am not willing to compromise for my own physical benefit.

This decision comes at an overwhelming cost. My physical and mental health deteriorate rapidly in conditions normally reserved for short-term confinement. I am almost entirely without sunlight. My skin regularly breaks out from bacterial infection. I gain weight due to poor nutrition, currently at nearly twenty pounds since March.

Sleep and concentration remain difficult. Mental health access remains limited, without access to comprehensive treatment for complex post-traumatic stress—stemming in part from previous confinement conditions.

My business now falters without me able to appear at speaking engagements or professional consultations. I recently laid off a valuable and trusted employee. Numerous existing contracts remain vulnerable, likely needing renegotiation or outright cancellation. My friends and colleagues suffer from the impact of my absence, causing me to worry endlessly about their health and well being. I missed the premiere event of a documentary about my commutation in which dozens of my friends united afterward.

I sometimes see visitors but only in a non-contact booth with inches of glass between us. This makes visitation uncomfortable, surreal, and saddening.

I receive between dozens and several hundred letters a day. I lack the resources or time to respond to even a small fraction of these. The impact on my friends and supporters feels overwhelming and makes me feel lonely.

I receive enormous support from all around the world. My family and close friends all support me and express their pride of me. It's emotionally overwhelming sometimes to see their unwavering generosity. I receive warmth and strength from colleagues, educators, lawyers, diplomats, activists, factory workers, veterans, journalists, union leaders, store clerks, gardeners, chefs, airplane pilots, and politicians from all across the U.S. and the world at large, every class, culture, and age imaginable.

Despite the heartbreak and hardship, cooperation with this grand jury is simply not an option. Doing so would mean throwing away all of my principles, accomplishments, sacrifices, and erase decades of my reputations—an obvious impossibility.

As before, I cannot regain the lost time—which may again extend to years. Repairing the damage to my relationships and both my physical and mental health might never come to pass. Whatever one might make of my principles and decisions, I shall continue to make hard choices and sacrifices rather than relinquish my ethical positions in exchange for mere trinkets of personal gain or self-pleasure in the form of being released.

Over the past decade, I grappled with bouts of depression. I can think of nothing that could exacerbate those struggles more than pretending to live as someone I am not once again and turning my back on everything I care about and fight for. Jail, and prison, exist as an archaic institution hiding the basest stream of dehumanizing and humiliating behaviors by the government—a trail of mounting loss and pain. Here, behind the event horizon, I remain certain that losing the approval, trust, and acceptance of my friends, family, and supporters would make this situation worse.

I wish to return home. I want to return to my work—writing, speaking, consulting, and teaching. The idea I hold the keys to my own cell is an absurd one, as I face the prospect of suffering either way due to this unnecessary and punitive subpoena: I can either go to jail or betray my principles. The latter exists as a much worse prison than the government can construct.

I digress a bit, but the point is, I'm not going to change my mind. Not now, not ever. So be it.

May 9th - Chelsea Manning Released, Served New Grand Jury Subpoena

by Sparrow (*The Sparrow Project*)

Earlier today Chelsea Manning was released from the William G. Truesdale Adult Detention Center in Alexandria, VA. Chelsea's release follows the expiration of the term of the EDVA Grand Jury that previously demanded her testimony. Chelsea was in jail for 62 days, after she was found in contempt of court for her refusal to give testimony. The following is a statement from Chelsea's legal team:

"Today marked the expiration of the term of the grand jury, and so, after 62 days of confinement, Chelsea was released from the Alexandria Detention Center earlier today.

"Unfortunately, even prior to her release, Chelsea was served with another subpoena. This means she is expected to appear before a different grand jury, on Thursday, May 16, 2019, just one week from her release today.

"It is therefore conceivable that she will once again be held in contempt of court, and be returned to the custody of the Alexandria Detention Center, possibly as soon as next Thursday, May 16.

"Chelsea will continue to refuse to answer questions, and will use every available legal defense to prove to District Judge Trenga that she has just cause for her refusal to give testimony."

A more detailed statement from Chelsea is forthcoming.

9 May - Parole justice moves forward in New York State despite police union publicity stunt

The tide is turning on parole injustice in New York, and the police unions do not like it one bit.

MORE:

by Naomi Jaffe (*San Francisco Bay View*)

In early March, a newspaper article revealed that the New York City Police Benevolent Association was outraged to learn that a secret direct link from their website to the website of the New York State Parole Board had been discontinued. The PBA had used the link to allow any one person, with one click, to generate hundreds (perhaps thousands) of messages of opposition to parole for anyone whose release the PBA opposed.

Then the PBA claimed that thousands of people had written letters against that person's release, and the Parole Board, in its rejections, often cited "community opposition" as a factor. Although the link was discontinued, the cozy relationship between the PBA and the Parole Board, and the politics of endless revenge that drove so many parole rejections, continued.

In April, the PBA unloaded a giant wall of boxes at Parole Board headquarters, claiming they were filled with "800,000 letters" of opposition to parole that should have been considered by the Parole Board but weren't because the website link had been discontinued. No investigative reporter asked to look in the boxes to see if they contained even a single actual letter written by an actual person.

The illegal and discriminatory privileging of access to the Parole Board for a special interest group, such as the police, has long dominated parole decision-making in New York – but the winds are shifting. The police, the tabloids, the prison guards, the prosecutors and the right-wing legislators whose politicized pro-prison agenda has until now trumped justice, mercy and legality are on the defensive.

From the point of view of advocates, family members, incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people whose persistence has begun to bring about some changes, the time for justice is long overdue. People who pose no danger and would be an asset to their families and communities are still locked inside for decades

beyond their parole eligibility dates. The person's original crime, which they can never change, still often outweighs everything positive they have done during their years in prison and their low risk of re-offending.

Elders, whose recidivism rates are close to zero, are still being denied parole based on a politicized culture of punishment instead of rehabilitation.

John MacKenzie was one such elder. He was incarcerated for more than 40 years for killing a police officer during a robbery. Despite a sterling prison record and outstanding programming accomplishments, year after year he was denied parole due to his original crime.

When he received his 10th two-year parole denial in 2016, MacKenzie appealed on the grounds that a denial based solely on the underlying conviction was illegal. A judge agreed and ordered a new hearing. When the new hearing produced exactly the same result as all the previous ones, John MacKenzie took his own life.

Shortly after MacKenzie's death, the court held the Parole Board in contempt for failing to follow the law and the court's orders in MacKenzie's re-hearing. On May 1, 2019, an appellate court, in an unprecedented move, upheld the lower court's finding of contempt against the Parole Board.

In that decision, the judge stated that "the Board may not deny an inmate parole based solely on the seriousness of the offense" – a major victory for parole justice advocates.

The courts are not the only place where the times are changing. The parole commissioners who hold the hearings and make the parole release decisions are appointed by the governor, with the approval of the – until this year – Republican-dominated Senate. They have typically been drawn from the ranks of law enforcement and prosecution.

Last year, Gov. Cuomo, pressured by the reform community, appointed a handful of new commissioners drawn from social service and other non-law enforcement backgrounds. One of the new commissioners was even married to a formerly incarcerated person. The relationship was kept secret until "outed" by opponents, but the concept that directly impacted people should have a voice in the process had crept in by the back door.

This year, advocates are demanding that the understaffed Parole Board be filled with people who believe in rehabilitation, have experience in human services and have a background that allows them to be impartial evaluators.

The third arena of change is the New York State Legislature, where Democrats this year gained control of both houses. Although Democratic control by no means guarantees good legislation, it does open up possibilities that, until now, were completely closed. The Republican-controlled state Senate had tried to increase criminalization, lengthen sentences and impose harsher conditions – such as charging prisoners for medical care.

This year, some criminal justice reforms have already passed and others have a chance at passage. One that has a chance is the HALT Solitary Confinement Bill, which, if it passes without being watered down, will impose by far the greatest limitations in the country on the length, the conditions and the vulnerable populations subjected to solitary confinement.

Parole reform is admittedly a heavier lift, because it affects people who have been convicted of serious crimes. By the same token, however, it poses a deep challenge to the punitive ideology of mass incarceration and the demonization and racist imagery directed toward people in prison.

Over nearly a decade, advocates in New York State have built a series of parole reform coalitions fighting against that ideology. They agreed to hold the line against compromises which “throw under the bus” people convicted of certain crimes, such as killing a police officer.

Jose Saldaña, director of the coalition member group Release Aging People in Prison, says, “In our communities, the life of a police officer is not considered more valuable than the lives of our children.”

Out of this history, and a partnership with legislators who are committed to criminal justice reform, have come two strong parole reform bills which, if passed, would greatly improve the fairness of the parole process: the Elder Parole Bill, which would allow a parole hearing for incarcerated people age 55 and older who have served 15 or more years and who, because of the length of their sentence, are not parole eligible; and the Fair and Timely Parole Bill, which would require the Parole Board to release parole applicants unless there are demonstrable factors showing the person is a current risk to public safety.

The campaign for the passage of these two bills involves the fourth and most fiercely contested arena of change: public opinion and the media. The movement’s own anti-incarceration media (like the San Francisco Bay View) have paved the way with clear calls against incarceration and for prison abolition.

Liberal and mainstream media have recently jumped on the prison reform bandwagon. The *New York Times* even ran a favorable piece featuring a long-time advocate for prison abolition, Ruth Gilmore.

The liberal media, like liberal politicians, often advocate for so-called “reforms” that would actually make things worse, like more electronic monitoring. They poison the waters by separating “deserving” low-level non-violent offenders from “the worst of the worst,” violent thugs (cue racial dogwhistle) who deserve endless torture. And a vast array of conservative and tabloid media, along with blogs and social media, are always calling for more prisons and more punishment.

However, a media- and social media-savvy new generation of prison justice campaigners seems to be increasingly successful at spreading the word that prisons are harmful, unfair, racially discriminatory and ineffective at protecting anyone, and the people locked up in them are our children, parents, spouses and neighbors.

The outcome for parole reform, and for wider anti-incarceration change, hangs in the balance. But for now there is a new sense of possibility, and the movement for parole justice, which has helped to create this moment of opportunity, is well positioned to make the most of it to challenge and change mass incarceration in New York State.

9 May - Trump Administration Charges Drone Whistleblower With Allegedly Violating Espionage Act

A former language analyst for the United States Air Force, who worked for the National Security Agency, was arrested and charged with violating the Espionage Act and other offenses.

MORE:

by Kevin Gosztola (*Shadowproof*)

According to the indictment filed in the Eastern District of Virginia, Daniel Hale allegedly disclosed eleven classified documents to a reporter who worked for an online news website. The documents relate to the U.S. government’s targeted assassination program involving armed drones that was expanded under President Barack Obama’s administration.

If the allegations are true, the U.S. government is prosecuting another whistleblower in its zeal to crackdown on leaks and control the flow of information, particularly on national security matters. They are also criminalizing another source, who provided information to *The Intercept*.

The timeline in the indictment aligns with the release of *Intercept* founding editor Jeremy Scahill's Oscar-nominated "Dirty Wars" film, as well as his comprehensive book on U.S. drone operations with the same title.

In October 2015, *The Intercept* published a "cache of secret documents detailing the inner workings of the U.S. military's assassination program in Afghanistan, Yemen, and Somalia." The media organization said the documents were provided by a whistleblower and offered "unprecedented glimpse into Obama's drone wars." They were called "The Drone Papers."

The Intercept granted "the source's request for anonymity because the materials are classified and because the U.S. government has engaged in aggressive prosecution of whistleblowers."

Hale also appeared in the 2016 documentary, "National Bird." He wore a pin supporting U.S. Army whistleblower Chelsea Manning and was following CIA whistleblower Jeffrey Sterling's prosecution. The FBI raided his home on August 8, 2014, while the film was in production. He reached out to attorney Jesselyn Radack for legal assistance.

The Justice Department filed an indictment on March 7, 2019, and charged Hale with three counts of violating the Espionage Act, one count of violating a code that criminalizes the disclosure of "classified communications intelligence information," and one count of stealing government property.

It is unclear why the Justice Department took so long to charge Hale with committing any offenses.

Hale was part of Joint Special Operations Task Force in 2012 and identified "targets" for kill/capture. From December 2013 to August 2014, he was a contractor at the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency.

The indictment alleges Hale searched the internet for information on Scahill in April 2013. He attended an event with Scahill at Busboys and Poets in Washington, D.C., on April 29. The following day Hale signed on to his computer to look for information related to subjects Scahill covered.

On June 8, Hale "sat next to" Scahill at another public event at Busboys and Poets," which is the government's awkward way of stating Hale appeared on stage with Scahill during the event. Hale allegedly had dinner with Scahill afterward.

The indictment alleges Scahill sent Hale an email on June 9 with a link to an article on NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden. "That same day, Hale texted a friend that the previous night he had been hanging out with journalists who were focused on this story." He believed what was unfolding might provide him with "lifelong connections with people who publish work like this."

On July 23 and 24, Hale was allegedly in New York to meet with Scahill. He shared his resume on July 25 and highlighted his experience with "payloads" on drones that were used to "support real-time kill/capture operations." He mentioned he had experience working with original classification authorities to declassify information too.

By September, Scahill allegedly urged Hale to set up a Jabber account so they could chat through encrypted messaging.

There was a drone summit held in Washington, D.C. on November 16-17 by the peace group, CODEPINK. Scahill was invited to speak and allegedly Hale wanted to know if he would be attending the summit.

At the end of February 2014, Hale allegedly printed six documents. Hale asked if Scahill could be there Monday, but Scahill was in Los Angeles for the Oscars. His documentary, "Dirty Wars," was nominated for Best Documentary Feature.

The indictment alleges Hale provided at least 17 documents to Scahill. Only 11 documents were charged because they were marked “secret” or “top secret.”

A list in the indictment offers a minimal description of each of the documents the government believes Hale provided, but the details are enough to figure out what stories Hale allegedly made possible.

For example, prior to the “Drone Papers,” a report, “Watch Commander: Barack Obama’s Secret Terrorist System, by the Numbers” was published by Scahill and Ryan Devereaux. It exposed how “nearly half of the people on the U.S. government’s widely shared database of terrorist suspects are not connected to any known terrorist group.”

“More than 40 percent are described by the government as having ‘no recognized terrorist group affiliation,’” the journalists reported.

It brought critical attention to an out-of-control watchlisting system.

In October 2015, “The Drone Papers” were published and revealed criteria for how the White House approved individuals for targeted assassinations and exposed “small footprint counterterrorism operations” that were launched in Somalia and Yemen.

TF 48-4, a special operations task force, was deployed to escalate wars in East Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. They were commanded from a center at Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti. They utilized a maritime drone platform and were supposed to hunt down members of al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and al Shabaab. The task force relied heavily on drone warfare.

New details about British citizen Bilal el-Berjawi, “who was stripped of his citizenship before being killed in a U.S. drone strike in 2012,” were revealed.

Scahill wrote, “British and American intelligence had Berjawi under surveillance for several years as he traveled back and forth between the U.K. and East Africa, yet did not capture him. Instead, the U.S. hunted him down and killed him in Somalia.”

The Intercept also published a report on “Operation Haymaker” in Afghanistan that revealed the U.S. military designated unidentified men as “enemies killed in action,” or EKIAs, without bothering to confirm whether they were the operation’s specific targets or not.

If Hale is the source, he allegedly told Scahill, “This outrageous explosion of watchlisting — of monitoring people and racking and stacking them on lists, assigning them numbers, assigning them ‘baseball cards,’ assigning them death sentences without notice, on a worldwide battlefield — it was, from the very first instance, wrong.”

“We’re allowing this to happen. And by ‘we,’ I mean every American citizen who has access to this information now, but continues to do nothing about it,” Hale added.

Hale allegedly was one of the few conscientious objectors during the Obama administration willing to take the risk to inform the public what the government was doing as it expanded drone warfare in total secrecy.

Additionally, the indictment mentions *The Intercept* advocated sources use Tor software and the Tails operating system to help them cover their tracks. Hale allegedly had a thumb drive with Tor and Tails.

Hale is the third individual to be charged under the Trump administration with violating the Espionage Act. Former CIA agent Joshua Schulte was charged with allegedly sending “Vault 7” materials to WikiLeaks.

FBI whistleblower Terry Albury is serving a four-year prison sentence for revealing information to *The Intercept* on the FBI's racial profiling, surveillance, and informant recruitment practices.

NSA whistleblower Reality Winner was sentenced to more than five years in prison for releasing a document to *The Intercept* that she believed revealed information related to alleged Russian hacking of voter registration systems.

Other individuals, like former Senate Intelligence Committee staffer James Wolfe and former Treasury Department employee Natalie Edwards, were prosecuted for leaking but not with violating the Espionage Act.

In the words of *The Intercept*, Hale enabled a series that offered the public a long-overdue examination of the methods and outcomes used by the United States' assassination program under Obama and President George W. Bush.

"The public has a right to see these documents not only to engage in an informed debate about the future of U.S. wars, both overt and covert, but also to understand the circumstances under which the U.S. government arrogates to itself the right to sentence individuals to death without the established checks and balances of arrest, trial, and appeal," *The Intercept* declared.

Hale blew the whistle on these powers the U.S. government arrogated to itself to act as judge, jury, and executioner and designate any part of the world a battlefield. And for that, he will likely endure a cruel and traumatic prosecution that will likely end in a plea agreement, where he serves a four-to-five year sentence in prison, or worse.

10 May - New Book Review by Marius Mason

A review of Taking the Rap: Women Doing Time For Society's Crimes by Ann Hansen.

MORE:

by Marius Mason (*Fifth Estate*)

When offered the chance to review Ann Hansen's memoir about her time in the Canadian prison system, I was enthusiastic but doubtful that I would be permitted to receive such a book.

With my Communications Management status and participation in the Rehabilitation Drug Abuse Program (RDAP) while imprisoned at Carswell Federal Medical Center in Texas, it seemed unlikely that this courageous and intensely honest account of real life in all manner of jails, holding facilities, and prisons would be allowed in.

Ann Hansen is a Canadian anarchist and former member of Direct Action, a guerrilla group that bombed a factory making components for American cruise missiles. She was sentenced to life in prison in 1983, but released after eight years.

Upon hearing the sentence, Hansen threw a tomato at the judge. In 2001, the publisher of this title, issued Hansen's *Direct Action: Memoirs Of An Urban Guerrilla*.

Certainly there have been some other prison memoirs in the Carswell library from time to time, but none of them advocated for the abolition of the prison system itself. Furthermore, Hansen's candid discussion of drug use, trafficking, and smuggling into the prison system might be considered a "glorification of the criminal lifestyle," or detrimental in some way to the people in my RDAP Unit program who are trying to recover from addiction.

Fortunately, the censors decided to pass on the book. I devoured it in just a couple days, despite a busy work schedule, staying up late with my book light to read it. Hansen writes in a straight-forward way, with clearly articulated ideas and with powerful feeling.

Though the stories she tells are written in a way that protects the privacy of her fellow prisoners and friends (using composites, changing names and dates), the end result is still the truth. There were parts of her stories that concurred with events and behaviors that I witness at my prison.

With great skill and no small amount of grace, Hansen gifts her subjects with the humanity and compassion that they are so often denied in other narratives. By relating the records of facts and figures of demographics as to who is incarcerated and why to real people's stories, there is a wealth of understanding delivered that surpasses the reach of mere statistics.

When Hansen describes a particular suicide cluster over a small number of years, we, as readers, are more able to grasp these acts of despair after knowing the personal stories of some of the victims.

Hansen does not leave off at just telling the truth. She provides an analysis as to what economic forces, including the ever-increasing advances in technology and manufacture, push the planned obsolescence of human workers. These forces are leading governments to turn more and more to the carceral system as a means of social control for those members of the population who have been edged out of the economic system.

I was inspired by her frankness about figuring out a way to fully embrace and care for her prison community, responsibly, while still remaining true to her political beliefs. During my years of incarceration, this has not always been easy.

It was reassuring to read about Hansen's process of self-criticism and her willingness to acknowledge what she deemed to be mistakes in judgment. She seems to have found a way to both keep her ideals in place and to act with sensitivity towards her fellow prisoners.

Though many of her stories tracked with my own experiences in prison over the past ten years, Hansen's account of her time in the Kitchener, Ontario, Super Max unit of Grand Valley Institution for Women was really on point for me. In such a small population, the unit culture determines how your life runs.

Her interactions with the "Q," the unit alpha female as it were, as they built up to a possible physical fight, felt eerily familiar. The close confines, tiny community, and the swamp mix of stress, pent up anger, mental health issues, and a reliance upon violence to both vent and resolve dominance questions and access to resources all jibed with my memories of time at the restrictive Administrative Unit at Carswell.

Although I did years of work in prisoner support groups before being imprisoned, it didn't prepare me for how it feels to be incarcerated, how it affects your family and your life's direction. Hansen's book is the nearest thing to opening a window into the inner life of that experience.

Her narrative is framed within the context of a political vision that explains the possible evolution of this painful and generationally damaging way of addressing social problems that are the result of economic disparity and prejudice.

Hansen's book is a powerful witness to what is being done wrong beneath the pretense of protecting society.

10 May - Eric King Still in Segregation

Below is an update on Eric King from his support crew.

MORE:

Eric is still in segregation. He is not serving out any disciplinary sanctions (after a disciplinary hearing the BOP can limit phone time, visits, commissary purchases, email, et cetera). Yet he is STILL on day 267 in segregation without any of these privileges entitled to them. He isn't permitted his property and has not been returned his glasses during this time in segregation. At 180 days he became one of 467 prisoners in the BOP to have been in restricted housing for that length of time. There is no end in sight to this personal hell he is experiencing. Eric is unable to receive books, or photos currently. It feels surreal that in 100 days he will possibly be one of only 48 prisoners in the BOP experiencing this torture.

The BOP is currently perusing placement for Eric at the CMU (communications management unit). The BOP has issued a write up and a long term phone block for Eric. This means that Eric is unable to use the phone for any reason. It has been around 150 days since he has been able to speak with his family. The BOP states that Eric communicating with anyone on the outside is a danger to the order and operation of the institution (even though he was called a model prisoner during his last team meeting). This write-up is being used as evidence that Eric needs to be placed at the CMU. Upon arriving at USP McCreary he was told the process was being expedited (2-3 months) however we are nearing the 3 month mark with no updates. If he makes it to the CMU he will only be allowed (per the BOP handbook) 4-8 hours of visits behind glass a month (his family will have to travel over 15 hours to be able to visit), he will be able to send 3 emails a week and have two 15 minute phone calls a month. We cant get this twisted, the phone block, the CMU referral, all of it is an attempt to not only silence Eric but to also isolate him from his support on the outside who work diligently to keep Eric safe. They have succeeded in creating a situation where if he is attacked again by prison staff his support will not receive any update and be able to help him until he is able to write and mail a letter to someone. The BOP does not contact family unless a prisoner passes away or if a medical decision (where the prisoner is unable to make due to being incapacitated) needs to be made. This includes the decision to take the prisoner off life support.

This is the reality for prisoners, especially those in segregation. Eric is not unique in this experience and it is imperative to him that people know this. While Eric is someone we care deeply about, if we want to work towards prison abolition, this needs to include all prisoners. We cant have liberation without expanding our support. Until ALL are free, none are free.

The worst part of this situation to him and his family is not being transferred to the CMU, considered torture by prisoners who have experienced time there...the worst part is if he is transferred there it will be a drastic improvement to what he is experiencing now. This says a lot about what Eric's 267 days in isolation have looked like.

His family has yet to be able to visit him at all. It is starting to feel very hopeless for them. He feels that he is loosing himself and his connection with the outside world. Because of this he is asking folks to PLEASE send articles for him to read. (all) News about his favorite football team Manchester United, about science, space, anything interesting, funny, weird or entertaining.

These articles MUST be in black and white on non glossy standard weight printer paper. Letters to eric must be typed or written in black ink on the same type of paper. No borders, pencil, colored envelopes, no address labels and please number the pages so he knows if something is missing.

ERIC ONLY HAS ACCESS TO 3 ENVELOPES A WEEK AND MAY BE UNABLE TO REPLY, HE WANTS FOLKS TO KNOW THAT HE WISHES HE COULD RESPOND TO EVERY LETTER AND LOOKS FORWARD TO DOING SO AGAIN.

PLEASE DO NOT SEND BOOKS as he will not receive them & there's no guarantee they'll be returned.

If folks want to help and donate to Eric and to be able to get his family out to visit him, donations can be made at supportericking.org/donate-2

11 May - Call for Art and Article Submissions: Knitting Together the Struggles

A call for art and article submissions for the 2020 Certain Days: Freedom for Political Prisoners Calendar.

MORE:

The *Certain Days: Freedom for Political Prisoners Calendar* collective (certaindays.org) is releasing its 19th calendar this coming fall. The theme for 2020 is "Knitting Together the Struggles," reflecting on the ways that different movements and groups can work toward a common goal of liberation.

We are looking for 12 works of art and 12 short articles to feature in the calendar, which hangs in more than 5,000 homes, workplaces, prison cells, and community spaces around the world.

We encourage contributors to submit both new and existing work. We especially seek submissions from prisoners – please forward to any prison-based artists and writers.

THEME GUIDELINES

We often talk about the importance of "intersectionality" in our social justice work, but are we really practicing it?

We have been inspired by examples of organizing that reaches across borders, across generations, across struggles. At the same time, we have seen groups confronted with major splits based on miscommunication, privilege, competing needs, and incompatible visions.

How can we address these very significant challenges in working to build a better world, together? What historical and current successes or missteps can we learn from? We would love to hear practical examples of groups who are grappling with these ideas and making new connections.

Some topics that could be explored include:

- Organizing across borders and in different geographical locations
- Making connections across prison walls
- Sustaining our fellow organizers as they move through different life phases and challenges
- Supporting prisoners, and families of prisoners in their activism
- The intersection of Indigenous and environmental struggles
- Confronting privilege, racism, ableism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia in organizing circles
- Bridging the gap between tactical campaigns and revolutionary change
- Indigenous healing and other non-western health practices and projects
- Examples of intergenerational groups and how they work together
- Making tangible links between local and global struggles

FORMAT GUIDELINES

ARTICLES:

- 500 words max. If you submit a longer piece, we will have to edit for length.
- Poetry is also welcome but needs to be well shorter than 500 words to accommodate layout.
- Please include a suggested title.

ART:

1. The calendar is 11" tall by 8.5" wide, so art with a 'portrait' orientation is preferred. Some pieces may be printed with a border, so it need not fit those dimensions exactly.
2. We are interested in a diversity of media (paintings, drawings, photographs, prints, computer-designed graphics, collage, et cetera).
3. The calendar is printed in color and we prefer color images.

Due to time and space limitations, submissions may be lightly edited for clarity, with no change to the original intent.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

1. Send your submissions by May 17, 2019 to [info @ certaindays.org](mailto:info@certaindays.org).
2. **ARTISTS:** Please send images smaller than 10 MB. You can send a low-res file as a submission, but if your piece is chosen, we will need a high-res version of it to print (600 dpi).
3. You may send as many submissions as you like. Chosen artists and authors will receive a free copy of the calendar and promotional postcards. Because the calendar is a fundraiser, we cannot offer money to contributors.

Prisoner submissions are due June 7, 2019 and can be mailed to:

Certain Days c/o
Burning Books
420 Connecticut Street
Buffalo, New York 14213

Certain Days
c/o QPIRG Concordia
1455 de Maisonneuve Ouest
Montreal, Quebec
H3G 1M8
Canada

ABOUT THE CALENDAR

The *Certain Days: Freedom for Political Prisoners Calendar* is a joint fundraising and educational project between outside organizers in Montreal, Hamilton, New York and Baltimore, with two political prisoners being held in maximum-security prisons in New York State: David Gilbert and Robert Seth Hayes. The initial project was suggested by Herman Bell, and has been shaped throughout the process by all of our ideas, discussions, and analysis. All of the members of the outside collective are involved in day-to-day organizing work other than the calendar, on issues ranging from refugee and immigrant solidarity to community media to prisoner justice. We work from an anti-imperialist, anti-racist, anti-capitalist, feminist, queer and trans positive position.

19 May - Anarchists Care About Books (ACAB): This Is Not A Program

WHAT: Book club

WHEN: 4:00pm, Sunday, May 19th

WHERE: Bluestockings—172 Allen Street, New York 10002

COST: FREE

MORE:

Join us to discuss *This Is Not a Program* by Tiqqun. libcom.org/library/not-program

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.

21 May - AnFem Open Meeting

WHAT: Meeting

WHEN: 7:00pm, Tuesday, May 21st

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.

21 May - Burning Frame: Compañeras/Tectonics

WHAT: Movie night

WHEN: 7:30pm, Tuesday, May 21st

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

MORE:

For May Day, two films on occupation and "claiming space:" one a testament to the strength of female workers, the other a salvo against the legitimacy of state borders.

Compañeras (Grupo Alavio, 2004, Argentina, 38 min)

Grupo Alavio is an anarchist film collective, their name an homage to the itinerant workers of the early 20th-century who would disseminate propaganda kept in their avios (knapsacks). Drawing inspiration from these fleet-footed labor activists of yesteryear, the group travels from town to town filming the struggles of laborers endeavoring to build collective strength and overcome socioeconomic injustice. These documentaries subvert many of the bourgeois tendencies common to the genre; they are self-funded and screened in the break rooms of municipal and factory workers in order to build solidarity and show the nuts-and-bolts process of workers unionizing and, in some notable cases, seizing the means of production. This particular film spotlights female Argentinian workers under diverse circumstances, united in their pursuit of personal and collective autonomy.

Tectonics (Peter Bo Rappmund, 2012, US, 60 min)

A border is both a place and an idea; it is a line on the ground that cuts through people, destroying the land onto which it is forced. But what does a border look like? What are its sounds? And how can these sights and sounds be presented in a manner that is decolonizing in its effects? Rappmund attempts this by closely observing the U.S. Mexico borderland itself, its monuments, cacti, air traffic, flags, walls and fences. These objects hide as much as they reveal, so Rappmund's methods depict this territory as both familiar and strange, resulting in a landscape documentary that is also animation. Whatever the border is, however many borders there are to know and fight, some of its realities are contained within this film.