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Updates for July 17th

18 Jun - Update: Jury finds 5 men not guilty of assault during 2017 Berkeley protest

The jury has found all five defendants not guilty of misdemeanor assault, and not guilty of assault causing great bodily injury, also a misdemeanor.

MORE:

by Emilie Raguso (Berkeleyside)

About 30 supporters of the defendants were in the courtroom for the reading of the verdicts, which began at about 3:40 p.m. Some cried quietly as the clerk read the decisions for each person. After the reading, there was a brief round of applause before the judge released the jury.

One of the defendants, Scott Hedrick, said it was a relief for the case to be over.

“It’s been over a year of this,” he said. “It was intense. We’re all just ready to move on with our lives.”

The men, who met through the underground punk scene, said they now plan to hold benefit concerts to help raise money for their attorneys.

Several jurors told Berkeleyside the group found itself in agreement relatively early on regarding the not guilty verdicts. But they wanted to make sure they worked through the process carefully. They deliberated for nearly a day. Ultimately, they said, they were not convinced a crime had occurred. There were other viable explanations for what took place, they said.

Original story: March 4, 2017, brought a day of violent political clashes to downtown Berkeley’s Civic Center Park. The event, dubbed the “March on Berkeley” by its pro-Trump organizers, was the first of several large protests in the city in 2017 that would pit pro- and anti-Trump activists against each other. There were verbal altercations and street brawls. And despite efforts by some to keep events peaceful, nearly every rally resulted in violence and arrests. Both sides have blamed the other for provoking the fights.

Wednesday, a trial began in Alameda County Superior Court where jurors have been asked to decide if five self-described “anti-fascist” defendants are guilty of attacking Trump supporter Moshe Daniel Quillinan during his evaluation by Berkeley firefighters for a large cut on his head that ultimately required 10 staples to close, according to testimony last week.

Prosecutor Jim Logan, with the Alameda County district attorney’s office, told jurors Friday during closing arguments that he wouldn’t blame them if they found Quillinan’s political views repulsive. But Logan said that didn’t mean Quillinan deserved to be attacked as he sat near firefighters, with a bandage wrapped completely around his head, waiting for a friend to take him to the hospital: “Just because the victim is dislikable doesn’t mean the rules don’t apply,” Logan said. “The defendants don’t get to decide ... punishment on the street. That’s what the courtroom is for.”

Defense attorney Shanta Driver told the jury it was Quillinan who provoked an argument with a group of passers-by that included some of her clients. She said they only tried to defend themselves, as Quillinan tried to strike them with a wooden shield, and argued that Berkeley police were “treating Mr. Quillinan as a victim, and as somebody whose rights were denied, while treating these five [defendants] as villains and perpetrators of violence.”

Driver — who is representing Taylor Fuller, Scott Hedrick, Nathan Perry, Jeff Armstrong and Dustin Sawtelle — told jurors during her closing arguments Friday that they had witnessed “a political trial that’s being conducted in a political era, the Trump era: an era in which lies and fantasies can be substitutes for the truth and reality.”

From Wednesday through Friday, jurors and Judge Alison Tucher heard testimony from a parade of witnesses for the prosecution and defense. Dozens of supporters of the five defendants have been in court for the bulk of the trial. They have made their feelings known, with laughter and sighs of derision, hissing, applause and other outbursts. At one point, a member of the audience held up a political flier, facing the jury, urging the court to “drop the charges” against the activist group.

Tucher repeatedly admonished the crowd to keep on their “poker faces,” or risk ejection, telling them it was a “courtroom, not a political rally.” She said there should be “no snickering, laughing, catcalling” or any other reactions in response to the witnesses: “You can think whatever you want to think inside your heads,” she said. But the proceedings continued to be marked by interruptions and audible reactions, despite her numerous announcements for order.

It wasn’t the only logistical challenge. Throughout the first day and much of the second, during breaks, jurors stood outside the courtroom and rode the elevator within earshot of defense supporters who loudly discussed their views and criticized the prosecution. Jurors are under strict orders to focus only on evidence presented in court, and to have no outside discussions or external exposure to the case to ensure an unbiased process. Eventually, during the second day of testimony, Judge Tucher ordered jurors to spend all breaks inside the jury room, and had the bailiff keep them separate from the crowd.

Driver, who is a national organizer for the political activist group By Any Means Necessary, or BAMN, put all five of her clients on the stand to testify about March 4. She also called on fellow BAMN leader Yvette Felarca, as well as another Berkeley activist, to testify. Much of the testimony on the defense side related to events at Civic Center Park during the March 4 rally — in the hours before the alleged assault in this case — including physical altercations and intimidation that witnesses and defendants attributed to Quillinan.

Prosecutor Logan repeatedly drew the jury’s focus to the incident on Milvia Street shortly after 3 p.m. where two firefighters and a Berkeley police officer said they watched the group swarm Quillinan, as he sat on a concrete ledge near Berkeley High School, then unleashed 10-20 punches and 10-15 kicks over an estimated 15 seconds to a minute. They left when police and firefighters interrupted the alleged attack. Logan asked the jury to decide whether they believed the first responders to be liars, or the defendants who have said they are innocent.

Logan also told jurors to be skeptical of the testimony of the defendants, who all described the altercation with the “same six facts.” He asked the jury to recall the demeanors of the defendants during the three-day proceeding, their smiles and their laughter: “These defendants think it’s a joke,” Logan said.

Driver said the prosecutor’s description of events was “a real challenge to imagine.” She said her clients had shown up to Berkeley to provide medical aid during the rally, and to ensure the “free speech rights of everyone.” She said there were too many inconsistencies among the witness testimony on the prosecution side. Driver said her clients had simply tried to walk by Quillinan on their way to their car — and had not attacked him in plain view of nearby firefighters.

“You would have to be an idiot to do something like that,” she said.

The defense team had filed a motion before the trial began to ask the judge to exclude “references to ‘black bloc,’ ‘anarchists,’ ‘antifa,’ or ‘people wearing masks’ and statements about violent actions taken by anti-Trump non-defendants on that day.... Such references have no probative value and cause substantial danger of undue prejudice, confusing the issues, and misleading the jury.”

Last week, throughout the week, the defense team sent out email updates to supporters and the media describing the defendants as “the Berkeley Anti-Fascist 5.” They blamed police and prosecutors for engaging “in a conspiracy” with Quillinan, and described all charges as “false.” The goal of the prosecution, they wrote, was “to advance Trump’s agenda in the direction of a police state.”

Some of the defendants testified they had known of Quillinan and his views before the March 4 rally. Others said they saw him in the park being aggressive. They testified that they had been walking to their cars when they found themselves crossing Milvia Street from Kittredge Street, and were surprised to see Quillinan sitting near some firefighters. They said they hadn’t been able to see Quillinan from Kittredge because a fire engine was blocking their view. Defendants said three other men, who had joined their group a block or so earlier, walked with them, but ran off before their arrest. They also said defendant Hedrick had split off from the group before the interaction with Quillinan, then ran back to them afterward to see if they were all right.

Defense attorney Driver at one point filed a motion to ask the judge to allow her clients to sit among the audience so witnesses would have to identify them from among the crowd. Judge Tucher said that would be “unusual,” and that she was “not inclined to grant that,” in part because Driver had cited no related case law.

The prosecution

Berkeley Police Sgt. Jesse Grant testified that he was sitting in an unmarked vehicle at Milvia and Kittredge when he heard words exchanged between the seated Quillinan and a group of pedestrians. Grant saw Armstrong punch Quillinan in the head and Perry kick Quillinan in the leg, he said. Several others then “closed in” around Quillinan, as Grant saw “arms and legs flying.” Grant, the only police officer at the scene, jumped out of the car and called for back-up, then ordered the group to leave. Firefighters also yelled, to break up the fight, and the group “took off” south on Milvia. The defendants were arrested by other BPD officers a short distance down the street.

Grant said he asked Quillinan if he wanted his assailants arrested — which is required by law in any misdemeanor case — and took a statement after Quillinan said he did.

Grant watched the group as they walked a block or so south, as did Berkeley fire captains David Sprague-Livingston and Jonathan Fischer. Fischer testified that he first saw the group walking from the north on Milvia from about 20 feet away. When the group got close, Fischer said one of the pedestrians said something to his patient, who responded. There was a punch and a kick, then more punching and kicking. Fischer said the group of pedestrians “threw the first punch.”

Fischer also testified that he didn’t “recognize anybody” among the defendants in the courtroom, noting it had been more than a year since the incident had taken place. But he said the five people who were detained March 4, whom he had identified during their detention, were the same ones he had seen attack his patient.

Sprague-Livingston testified that he was “certain” the five defendants were the men he saw commit the March 4 assault. In court, he identified each of them as someone who had taken part in the attack, and said

the people stopped by police were the ones who assaulted his patient. “I had clear views of the incident the whole time,” he told the jury. “They’re the folks that came by.”

Sprague-Livingston said, during cross-examination, that he could not recall any specific actions he could attribute to any particular defendant due to the nature of the attack. But he said he did see a punch thrown, then an attempt by Quillinan to defend himself by holding up his wooden shield as punches and kicks continued. He said, when he identified the defendants after police detained them, he remembered them because of their faces and their clothing.

Quillinan, a Berkeley antique dealer, testified Wednesday that he wore hockey kneepads and a motorcycle helmet to Berkeley on March 4 “for protection.” He carried with him a yellow-and-black flag on a wooden pole, and a thick wooden shield, which he called “my poster board,” that he said Kyle Chapman made for him. The crowd laughed when Quillinan said, “Sometimes violent people show up, so I wanted to be safe.”

He said he had been in the park along with “conservative pro-Trump Republicans” and “communists, Marxists [and] antifa” when someone grabbed him from behind. He was “thrown the ground, mobbed and beaten,” and sustained a “large gash” in his head when someone removed his motorcycle helmet. Quillinan said that attack happened when he was “trying to break up another fight” by swinging his flagpole at people in the park. (That incident is separate from the one that is before the jury.)

After he was taken out of the park, firefighters moved Quillinan down the street on Milvia to make sure they were a safe distance away from the crowd. He said he saw a group approaching, and then one person said something to him that was “probably mocking.” One person kicked him, and then others held him and beat him for 15-20 seconds. He said the five men police stopped nearby — the five defendants — were the ones who attacked him. He said he recognized at least four of them “for sure,” but one of them — Hedrick — was “familiar but I don’t recognize for sure.”

Quillinan testified, during cross-examination, that he had tried to attend a talk at UC Berkeley in early February last year by Milo Yiannopoulos. Counter-protesters shut down the event, and Quillinan said he saw someone attacked in front of him while he was streaming video live to Facebook. Driver asked Quillinan if he was a fascist, and if he was a white nationalist. He said he was neither.

As the hearing ended for the day, the crowd spilled into the hallway.

“I can’t believe he lied about being a Nazi,” one member of the group of supporters told another.

The defense

After Quillinan’s testimony ended, the five defendants took the stand along with BAMN leader Felarca and another local activist. Sawtelle, an Oakland tattoo artist, said he’d attended many political rallies, and came to the March 4, 2017, event in Berkeley because a lot of the promotional materials leading up to it had indicated there could be violence against leftists. He said he was aware of Quillinan and Chapman, and their posts online, before the rally.

The defendants said they knew each other through the music scene, and that some perform in local bands.

Sawtelle said he and Perry had picked up medical supplies to help with basic first aid because “police and firefighters don’t typically go rushing into the scene” during contentious political events. Sawtelle said he did not bring any weapons with him to the rally but, according to court papers, police recovered a knife among his possessions during a search when he was arrested.

The defendants said they were prepared for fights that day, based on what they had seen at prior events of a similar nature.

“I knew for a fact there would be an altercation or violence,” Hedrick, a machine operator who lives in Oakland, testified. “I don’t think it would bring out someone wanting to debate.”

Sawtelle said initially there was political debate between the two sides, and “some heated talking,” but then Chapman, Quillinan and some others showed up and the dynamic changed. Sawtelle said the new arrivals shoved people and shot pepper spray into the crowd. People on both sides began yelling.

Sawtelle said he helped several people who were injured. He said he and his four friends “got between a lot of things” to stop assaults that day, and to defend people who could not defend themselves. He said, at one point, he saw a group that did not include Quillinan going after Felarca, and he intervened. He later saw Quillinan dragged out of the park after people kicked and punched him, and pulled off his helmet.

Eventually, the pro-Trump crowd began a march toward downtown, and Sawtelle said he and the others decided to leave.

“We were all tired and covered in pepper spray, and had been there all day,” he said. Armstrong, a union organizer who lives in Oakland, said it had been “a very violent day,” and that they were all ready to be done.

As they headed back to the car, three strangers joined them, Sawtelle said, and they “grouped together for safety.” They walked west on Kittredge, he said, and crossed to the west side of Milvia. Hedrick turned right to go to his car, which was parked elsewhere. Sawtelle said they only noticed Quillinan after crossing the street, from about 100 feet away. But the sidewalk was about 8 feet wide, he said, and the group didn’t see any reason to steer clear.

“Aw shit, here we go again,” Armstrong recalled thinking. “We can’t get rid of these people.”

“Lots of hands flying all over the place”

Sawtelle said the group agreed to ignore Quillinan as they passed, but Quillinan “started staying stuff,” then made a “high-pitched squeal” that Sawtelle said Quillinan had used at the park earlier as a “war cry.” Armstrong said he saw Quillinan “kick his leg up” on one of the other men.

Sawtelle, who had passed Quillinan, turned back around and saw him making “chopping motions” as he swung his shield, Sawtelle said. Armstrong said he “shot my arms up and got out of the way.” He said he “absolutely” tried to take away Quillinan’s shield, and was trying to hold onto it: “I didn’t want to get hit with that thing.”

Sawtelle said he tried to grab the shield, but failed, then a police officer — Sgt. Grant — shoved him from behind.

“He attacked us,” Sawtelle said he told Grant, of Quillinan.

“No, he didn’t,” he said Grant responded.

“He shoved me and told me to leave,” Sawtelle said, of Grant.

Fuller, a bar-back and door man at area bars, who lives in San Francisco, said “it was hard to tell what started the altercation.” But he saw Quillinan swing his shield and thought he may have hit someone. Someone tried to take the shield, he recalled, but no one kicked or punched him. He said he saw what looked like movement “to restrain” Quillinan, but he was behind the others during the “brief little struggle,” with mace still in his eyes from earlier in the day.

“I couldn’t tell who touched who where,” he told Logan, on cross-examination. “I’m not sure whose hands were doing what.”

Perry said he saw “lots of hands flying all over the place” as people tried to grab the shield. But he was 5 feet away and was not involved, he said.

Fuller said it had been “kind of a surprise” to see Quillinan sitting on the ledge, but “with him busted up, I didn’t think he was too dangerous.” “I kind of figured all the violent shit had ended for the day,” Armstrong testified.

Hedrick said he ran back to the group and saw Quillinan looking tense and upset, crouched over, “but I didn’t see him hit anybody.” He had come from the corner of Milvia and Allston Way when he saw his friends “backing up,” and “it looked like something was going on.”

After the incident, Sawtelle said the three strangers who had joined their group ran off to the east down Milvia and turned a corner. He and his four friends continued south. They were detained nearby by police.

On cross-examination, Sawtelle told Logan he is “not a fan of pro-Trump people” but said it would only be OK to punch them “if they’re being violent.” He said, even before the March 4 event, he believed Quillinan to be “a gross human being.” He said he saw Quillinan during the event swinging his “giant stick” and “giant wooden shield” randomly into the crowd “a lot.” He said he didn’t see any of his friends hit or punch Quillinan during the alleged attack on Milvia, however.

Felarca testified that Quillinan had “pointed his stick at me” during the rally, and that people were yelling her name: “It was absolutely a threat,” she said. She said she was part of a “community mobilization to defend Berkeley” so people didn’t get “hurt or killed.” On cross-examination, Logan briefly questioned Felarca for several minutes. He asked her to confirm that she has a felony criminal case pending, and she said she does. When she said she did not see the incident on Milvia, however, he said he had no further questions.

Sawtelle testified that he strongly opposes racism and fascism, and expresses his beliefs at rallies. Logan asked him if he thought it would be appropriate to punch someone holding a banner featuring a swastika, and Sawtelle said no. Logan asked whether filing a lawsuit might be a reasonable way to fight back.

“I don’t believe in calling the police,” Sawtelle replied. “The American justice system promotes a system of white supremacy.”

Closing arguments

In her closing argument Friday, Driver spoke to the jury about the “proud tradition” of political protest “that is in danger of being eviscerated through these proceedings.” She asked jurors to consider how the protests have been “radically different from anything we’ve seen in the Trump era” — hopeful, and positive, and a sign that “human progress can be achieved.”

She said many people might take issue with people like Quillinan, “but not a lot of people act on it,” she said. “It’s very difficult to imagine what it is to build a political movement that is a resistance to what is taking place now.”

The courtroom burst into a hearty and extended round of applause at the conclusion of her remarks.

Logan told jurors Friday that they should be “pissed off” at Driver’s argument, describing it as “a half-hour of politics.”

“Your job is not to think about politics, not to think about the audience,” he told them.

“Anything that happened in the park ... that’s outside of your job,” Logan said. “Set aside what happened earlier in the day. Does that mean he deserves to get his ass kicked when he’s out of the fight?”

20 Jun - Cuomo the Merciless

New York's Democratic governor has granted only a trickle of commutations, fewer than many of his Democratic and Republican predecessors.

MORE:

by Victoria Law (*The Appeal*)

In 2015, New York’s governor, Andrew Cuomo, announced the creation of an Executive Clemency Bureau to identify people in the state’s prison system who might be worthy of commutation. The announcement sparked hope among the system’s approximately 50,000 prisoners, their families, and advocates that they might soon rejoin their families.

Clemencies can take two forms. There’s a commutation, or the shortening of a person’s prison sentence, which allows an incarcerated person an earlier parole hearing or an immediate release. The other form is a pardon, which expunges a person’s criminal conviction altogether (which governors have used to prevent people from being deported). Governors have the power to issue an unlimited number of clemencies.

What does being worthy of commutation entail? According to Cuomo’s criteria, an applicant must prove that he or she has “has made exceptional strides in self-development and improvement; has made responsible use of available rehabilitative programs; has addressed identified treatment needs; and the commutation is in the interest of justice, consistent with public safety and the rehabilitation of the applicant.”

Cuomo’s criteria also requires that a person have been sentenced to at least one year in prison, that they had already served at least half of that sentence, and are not scheduled to appear before the parole board within the next year.

Cuomo encouraged attorneys and law firms to donate pro bono hours to help incarcerated people prepare their petitions. Many heeded the call and devoted significant time and resources to helping dozens of people imprisoned across the state.

But these efforts have not proved fruitful.

In December 2016, Cuomo had granted only seven commutations. One was to Judith Clark, a former Weather Underground member initially sentenced to 75 years to life; her commutation allowed her to appear before the parole board immediately instead of waiting until 2056. (Clark was denied parole and

remains in prison.) Another commutation granted an immediate release to Valerie Seeley, a domestic violence survivor sentenced to 19 years to life for the fatal stabbing of her abusive boyfriend in 1998, an act that she has always maintained was in self-defense.

About one year later, Cuomo's office announced more commutations—this time, it was only to two men. He has not granted any clemencies since then. His office did not respond to The Appeal's queries about the possibility of future commutations.

Cuomo has, however, issued a greater number of pardons to those who have already served their time. He has granted 140 pardons to adults who were convicted of nonviolent felonies as 16- and 17-year-olds, thus expunging their felony records. He also granted pardons to 18 others who might face deportation because of a criminal record.

Kathrina Szymborski oversees the pro-bono commutation efforts at the law firm Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler, which has donated the equivalent of \$1.5 million in pro-bono hours to clemency applicants. She and her colleagues rejoiced when one client, 42-year-old Michael Flournoy, who had served 21 years of a 25-to-50-year sentence, received clemency in December 2017. But, she told The Appeal, "we have many deserving clients whose applications are still pending. Our clients are dedicated and hard-working, so they continue to gather letters of support, receive stellar job reviews, and complete rehab and educational programs. They're trying to be part of society and enrich their communities as best they can from where they are, some by mentoring other prisoners, others by writing articles for publication in various newspapers and magazines. We feel that they've served their time and their further incarceration serves no purpose, so we find the lack of action on these applications disappointing."

While Szymborski notes that her clients remain hopeful, Cuomo's lack of action has disillusioned others. Steve Zeidman is the director of the Criminal Defense Clinic at the CUNY School of Law as well as Clark's attorney. While the clinic is working with about 25 people on clemency applications, he has received hundreds of requests for help. "For so many people, clemency offered the hope that after decades of punishment their quantifiable and undeniable evidence of personal growth and transformation would be recognized," he told The Appeal, "that they would be given the chance to live outside the prison walls. As I have now been told on several occasions by those who have had their hopes of clemency reduced to pipe dreams, false hope is cruel; it is worse than no hope."

Some advocates charge that Cuomo's criteria are too stringent. "Cuomo, under the state constitution, has complete discretion and ultimate power to commute people's sentences at any time and for any reason," points out Mariame Kaba, a founding member of Survived and Punished, a network that works with criminalized and imprisoned survivors of gender-based violence. "We are perplexed by the rules he set for himself. They're incredibly narrow and leave out an incredible number of people."

Moreover, outreach has been haphazard. While word of Cuomo's commutations initiative spread quickly in some men's prisons, many incarcerated in women's prisons were unaware of it. "We're in direct contact with 30 people inside women's prisons," stated Kaba, who noted that three-quarters of those women had not heard of the governor's clemency initiative. Seeley, the only adult domestic violence survivor among the governor's 12 commutations, told The Appeal that, between 2015 and her release in January 2017, she had seen no posters or announcements about the clemency project. More recently, 61-year-old Melisa Schonfield, who is serving a five-year sentence after attempting to hire an undercover officer to shoot her daughter's abusive ex-husband, only learned about the governor's project—and the possibility of pro-bono assistance—after her family paid a private attorney to help with her clemency petition. Schonfield, whose health has been declining while in prison, told her daughter that there were no announcements about the

governor's project in the prison's common areas or even in the law library, where she recently spent many hours working on her application.

Cuomo's record on commutations contrasts poorly with that of another governor of a deep blue state. In 2017 and 2018 alone, California's departing governor, Jerry Brown, issued 49 commutations, enabling more than a dozen people sentenced to life without parole to become eligible for parole and—for at least two women who survived domestic violence—walk out of prison after decades behind bars. Even John Bel Edwards, Democratic governor of the very red state of Louisiana, has issued 22 commutations during his first year in office, 10 more than Cuomo has issued during his entire 7½ years as governor.

Perhaps most notably, the number of Cuomo commutations are small by his state's historical standards. During his two terms from 1975 to 1982, Governor Hugh Carey granted 155 commutations. While the number of commutations went into steep decline after Carey's tenure, his successor, the current governor's father, Mario Cuomo, still issued 37 commutations. Even Republican governor George Pataki, who eliminated parole for violent felonies and reinstated the death penalty, issued 32 commutations. In other words, not that long ago, commutations were much more commonplace than Cuomo is allowing them to be now. And advocates are pushing for them to become more routine again. "The governor can free anyone at any time for any reason," Kaba reminded. She notes that although *Survived and Punished* focuses on supporting survivors of gender-based violence, "we would be happy to see him free anyone at this point."

"Surely, there are numerous people among the 52,000 in New York State prison who merit clemency; who are deserving of that measure of mercy," said Zeidman, Clark's attorney. "Consider the 630 people serving life sentences for crimes committed when they were 17 or younger. Or the more than 9,000 people serving life sentences, many of whom will die long before they ever see a parole board. Or the many elderly and infirm people behind bars. Or those who endured years of intimate partner violence."

Seeley, who endured eight years of abuse from her boyfriend before stabbing him in self-defense, agrees. "I appreciate that Cuomo granted me clemency in 2016," she said. If not for the governor's action, Seeley would still be in prison awaiting her first parole hearing, which was scheduled for September 2018. Instead, in January 2017, she was able to reunite with her daughter, two grandchildren, and 90-year-old mother. But, continued Seeley, noting that the governor's last commutations were for men, "I would like to see him grant more clemency to women and really give them a second chance."

2 Jul - Support Portland Arrestees & Injured in Patriot Prayer Confrontation

Please donate at rally.org/portlantifasupport to help those injured and arrested during recent confrontations with Patriot Prayer in Portland, Oregon.

MORE:

In Portland, OR, on June 30, Joey Gibson, Patriot Prayer, Proud Boys, Nazis, and the usual assortment of alt-right nationalists showed up to hold a "Freedom & Courage Rally" at Terry Schrunk Plaza at 4 pm. The build up to this event has been a series of protests and counter-protests for the past 2 years, resulting in the occasional skirmishes between protesters and fascists (commonly aided by Portland Police Bureau). Days before the June 30th "rally", chatter amongst the attending alt-right and fascists strongly suggested and promoted an all out attack on counter protesters. Assisted by the initial shielding of DHS and PPB riot police, the fascists charged through openings in the police line that were granted to them BY THE POLICE. The violence that ensued is shocking to say the least, with imagery depicting levels of state-sanctioned street brutality against counter protesters reminiscent of the historical rise of fascist powers.

This violence has been costly to some of our comrades. Several arrests and serious injuries have thus far been reported, and the fear of future arrests for attendance and alleged actions taken by counter protesters is on many of our minds. The bravery of local counter protesters and antifascists must be recognized through the support of the community!

Donations will be used to assist in legal and other related expenses for those alleged counter-protesters arrested during the June 30th "Rally". Any additional or unused funds will be donated to Rose City Antifa for their fundraiser for medical expenses related to the violence on June 30th.

2 Jul - Support Eric King and His Family

Eric's family needs our help!

MORE:

We're here to raise money for Eric's partner, and their two children who are currently experiencing financial hardship. Life is already tough as a mother of two with her partner in prison, but she was also recently in a car accident, which thankfully left her in okay shape, but has left her car in unsafe conditions for long distance or highway driving. Even more recently she was diagnosed with thyroid cancer, the severity and treatment of which is still being determined. Treatment for the pain alone will financially destabilize the family, on top of future specialist visits, car repairs, and potential unemployment due to the chronic pain.

Eric's partner tirelessly supports him, facilitates excellent communication between Eric and the outside world, consistently advocates for his rights, emotionally supports him through the political battles on the inside, and drives hours to visit him every week, on top on tending to the needs of their children and working.

The recent developments in her life could have devastating impacts for her and her family. Donations are needed ASAP as the financial toll of these recent development have already taken effect. All of the funds donated will be used by her to support herself and her children in this difficult time in her life. Donate at gofundme.com/surviving-cancer-and-a-car-accident

3 Jul - Veronza, don't die in prison!

Please take time to read the following by Veronza Bowers.

MORE:

by Veronza 'Daoud' Bowers Jr. (*San Francisco Bay View*)

Dear People, I send each and every one of you my very warmest greetings from 31 plus years deep inside the Belly of the Beast.

Man-child Pharoah Dawson, 8, wrote to Veronza, having heard he was sick, and commanded him: "Veronza, don't die in prison." For young Pharoah's visit, he wore a T-shirt saying, "I am my ancestors' wildest dream."

My name is Veronza Bowers Jr. (so named after my Father), but many people call me Daoud. I'm a former member and captain of the original Black Panther Party, and even though government officials claim there are no political prisoners in this country's prisons and jails, it's simply not true. Having already "served" over three decades in continuous custody in federal prison, I'm one of the longest held political prisoners in the US of A. There are quite a number of us scattered about, but that's a very long story.

Your beautiful and precious Daughter, who was 5 years old when you were taken away to prison, and is now 36, sent you a top-of-the-line fashion suit of clothes so that you would be properly dressed to "step in the name of freedom, with love." She, along with three of your sisters, fly in from across the country to be there at the prison's gate to pick you up.

In fact, there will be a whole entourage of dear friends and well-wishers who will be out in front of the prison with plans to all gather at the home of a friend about an hour's new Cadillac's ride away. A grand celebration is planned: a big cook-out at which your God Mother had cooked hot-wings and your favorite home-made strawberry cheesecake. Another family of friends from the island kingdom of Tonga, in keeping with their cultural traditions, has roasted underground fresh fish and seven baby pigs. Others are bringing all kinds of food.

There will be a live band playing jazz and blues, a swimming pool etc. etc. In a word, a lot of caring people have gone through a lot of effort, not to mention expense, to welcome you into their "brave new world" far removed from the world of prison walls that had kept you on ice for so long. They are there to welcome you with unconditional love and support.

On the inside of the prison there have been "going home" gatherings put together by friends, replete with food, music and emotion-filled, open-hearted, teary-eyed talk and laughter. Everyone came together to wish you well and a prosperous life.

Picture this in your mind ... if you dare: After 30 years of being denied release on parole, despite the fact that your conduct has been exemplary for over 20 years and you have long since met the criteria to be released on parole, finally your MANDATORY PAROLE RELEASE date rolls around: April 7, 2004. Everything is set.

You'd given away to friends all of your meager possessions: watch, alarm clock, sweat clothes, running shorts and tennis shoes, handballs, weight lifting belt, visiting clothes and shoes, commissary items, rain poncho and winter coat. The only things you kept were three Tai-Hei Shakuhachi (bamboo flutes), a silver concert C flute and some books.

You'd used up all your 300-for-the-month telephone calling minutes because after April 6 you wouldn't be needing any more from the BOP. You'd made the rounds, shaking hands and hugging so many men you'd probably never see again.

You'd even tried to give words of encouragement and hope to young and old men alike who you were leaving behind in very desperate and hopeless situations. Yes, the time was growing near to leave the world of concrete and steel and razor wire and gun-towers – the land of the living dead – and you were very happy and at the same time very sad.

The last official thing you were required to do, you did. All prisoners, on the day before their actual release date, are required to "go on the merry-go-round," i.e., you must take a check-out form around to each department head for their signature, which meant that you are cleared of all obligations to that department, viz: your commissary account is closed, your telephone access is shut off, the laundry department is satisfied that you don't have any institutional clothing (you can't imagine why they would think a prisoner would want to keep any), the education and library services department is satisfied you don't have any books checked out, and a perfunctory signature from the psychology department, lieutenants' office, hospital and receiving and discharge. You did all of that on April 6. Everything is all set and good to go. We have a lift-off, Houston!

After doing all that, you're sitting outside in the Native Americans' Sweat Lodge area with two of your closest friends, just enjoying each other's company in SILENCE. A loud announcement over the loudspeaker ordering you to "report to your unit team immediately" breaks your peace. You KNOW that something is not RIGHT. Years and years of dealing with representatives of the Beast has honed your sixth sense (maybe even a seventh one) that lets you know the hidden right away.

As you walk into your counselor's office, you know what he's about to say, even before he says it. So you focus upon the one thing that has sustained you and always pulled you through the roughest of times – even pulled you through those times when knife blades were slashing at flesh, when you learned of the passing of your Dear Mamma and the officials wouldn't allow you to attend her funeral even though you had only seven months until your mandatory parole release date. Yeah ... one breath at a time. "You won't be leaving tomorrow."

You already knew that, but you didn't know why. A strange silence fills the room, and since it's quite obvious that some reaction is expected from you, you just continue focusing upon the Breath. "Why?" "Well, all we know is that the National Parole Commission called the institution and ordered that you not be released tomorrow. The warden is very upset and he's been on the phone with them all day trying to get some clarity."

Veronza was introduced to the shakuhachi bamboo flue while in prison and has developed, judging from his recordings, not only a deeply moving pure tone and smooth technique but the power to transform hearts and minds and heal bodies.

Just like that! A simple phone call from a National Parole Commissioner in Chevy Chase, Maryland, and all of the plans for you to be "stepping out in the name of freedom, with love" are cancelled, wiped out, voided until further notice.

How do YOU feel? ... Ash ... Me, too!

Sept. 1, 2005, marks the 522nd Day of Unlawful Detention of Political Prisoner Veronza Bowers Jr. Check out his website for an update and how you can help at www.veronza.org.

What you have just read took place way back in 2004 and 2005. If this had been a movie, we could have simply pressed a button and presto! we're in 2018. But this was not a movie, there were no buttons to press, and unfortunately (for me), 14-plus years later (as of April 7, 2018), I am still being held captive in unlawful detention – 14 years beyond my statutorily determined "Mandatory Parole/Release" date of April 7, 2004. But, fortunately (for me), I am being represented by a team of lawyers – I call them my Freedom Team – who are committed and determined to see me take my long overdue long walk to Freedom. THAT is my battle on the legal front.

As if such a long fight wasn't enough to test my mettle, in April of last year (2017), I was diagnosed as having lymphoma (cancer of the lymph nodes). As it is with everything that has to do with us Political Prisoners, getting immediate medical treatment necessitated my Freedom Team filing in the court, and the court issued an order for my immediate transfer from USP Atlanta, Georgia, to the Federal Medical Center in Butner, North Carolina.

Sooo, again, imagine THIS ... if you dare: You've been in continuous federal custody for 44-plus years, 14 of them beyond the time required by law for you to do on your sentence. Now you've been told you have cancer ... and you know that several of your Comrades have died from cancer while in federal and state prisons: Albert "Nuh" Washington; Teddy "Jah" Heath; Bashir Hameed; Herman Wallace, who joined the

Ancestors three days after being released after having served 43-plus years, 37 of them in solitary confinement; Marilyn Buck – she succumbed to cancer 19 days and nights after her release. And of course you are well aware of the on-going attempts of murder through medical neglect of Mumia Abu-Jamal and the ailments of Imam Jalil Al-Amin. Knowing all of that, and MORE, all you can do is pluck up your courage and prepare to fight for your very life.

Even though the court-ordered trip from USP Atlanta to FMC Butner should have been a routine trip ... it was everything but routine. In the wee hours of the morning on the day of your departure, a guard comes to your cell and tells you to "Get dressed, you're leaving on a medical trip." "Do I have time to pack my personal property?" you ask. "No, we're already running late."

Because you know your keepers so well, you'd already secured three boxes for your property. So on your way out you stop at your Homie's cell and asked him to pack all of your meager belongings and mail everything to one of your Sisters.

When you arrive at R&D (Receiving & Discharge), you learn that the prison bus heading north had already left and that you were going to be driven by van with two guards. Don't trip! Always bear in mind that despite the government's denial, YOU are a Political Prisoner and thus treated differently than other prisoners.

By most standards, the trip was uneventful. But to you, having been behind the tall wall of USP Atlanta, the trip was thoroughly enjoyable: the multi-colored cars zipping along with people going to and coming from somewhere; the green trees alongside the highway and big fields with cattle and horses peacefully munching grasses; the rivers and small lakes and ponds; the red-tailed hawks soaring in ever widening circles and other birds doing what they do – in a word, sooo many things bombarded your senses, all you could do was kick back and take it all in, all the while smiling in the realization that life always continues to fulfill its own Self – even YOURS.

Finally, you arrive at FMC Butner. Over the years you'd heard so much about Butner and Springfield (the other medical facility for federal prisoners, in Missouri). Way back in the '70s, Springfield was infamously known as the federal prison hospital where they performed frontal lobotomies. Amongst federal prisoners it was called "The End of the Trail," "The Death House." If you went there for any serious ailment, more than likely you would die there.

There was so much exposure and public protest, it was said that the frontal lobotomies had stopped. Recall the movie "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" with Jack Nicholson. They gave ol' Jack a frontal lobotomy to destroy his free spirit. Rather than see Jack have to "live" like that, his Friend, a Native American, suffocated him with a pillow.

Then FMC Butner came on line and soon came under fire for its psychotropic drug experimentations, aka frontal lobotomies without the invasive surgical procedure. Prolixson, thorazine and haldol (cocktails) and the effect was the same as a frontal lobotomy.

Now, FMC Butner is widely known and heralded and THE place to go for federal prisoners for treatment of all kinds of cancers and hips, knees and shoulder replacements. Well, you can count your lucky stars that your Freedom Team was able to have you ordered by the court to be taken to Butner, NOT Springfield, as was first considered by the medical staff at USP Atlanta, for treatment of the cancer that was attacking your lymph nodes system.

Through his Rastafarian meditation groups, Veronza brings beauty and hope to the dark dungeons of prison, driving out hostility and violence. One young man who'd been made a paraplegic by a gunshot began to heal through Veronza's music and massage and was up and walking within a year. Prisoners in hospice care are freed from pain in their last days through the sound of his flute.

Back to your arrival at FMC Butner ... again, in keeping with the differential treatment meted out to you Political Prisoners, instead of the usual admittance into the institution procedures, i.e., waiting in an area to be stripped searched, finger printed, mug shot (photo taken) and given a bed roll and assigned to a cell in a particular cell block or unit, you waited less than an hour – with none of the above being done to you – and a SIS (Special Investigative Services) officer and two other guards escorted you to J-Unit.

J-Unit consisted of only six single-man cells on the entire floor. Your cell had a TV with a remote control gadget, a shower, a big bed with a soft mattress and fluffy pillow ... all food delivered to you by a non-talkative guard. You thought to yourself, "Wow! THIS is a nice spot." But, after a few days and nights the same SIS lieutenant and two guards came to pick you up and escort you to a regular unit – the fourth floor.

Everything that takes place in Butner Medical Center takes place on the five floors that make up the center.

Ahhh, the fourth floor – this is where the fight for your very life begins! Everyone on the floor has some kind of cancer or other serious sickness – colon cancer, stomach cancer, pancreatic cancer, cancer in the lungs, kidneys, liver, brain, bladder, throat, testicles, prostate and lymphoma as you had, skin cancer etc. etc. And then there are the stages: 1-5, the higher the number, the greater the likelihood of it being terminal.

Into your second week on the fourth floor, finally, you are told to report to the Oncology Department, on the first floor, where you have a consultation with THE head doctor who treats cancer patients. (I omit his name respecting his privacy.) He is very cordial and quite candid as he explains his method of treatment for B-cell type lymphoma. He also explains that the numbers game regarding stages do not apply to the B-cell type lymphoma that you have – because lymphoma is one of the more treatable types of cancer.

Soooo, you will undergo chemotherapy once every 21 days, followed the next day with a "booster shot" that helps your system replenish its depleted white cell blood count.

You had already been thoroughly briefed on the entire procedure by a very close Friend who was being treated for the same kind of cancer. Even so, you HAD to ask the good doctor two questions: "Doc, will I lose my long Dreadlocks because of the chemotherapy?" "More than likely you will lose all of your hair all over your body," replied the Doc.

"And Doc, will this chemo make me sterile?" "Most likely it will," said the Doc. "Doc, I've been in prison almost half a century. I wasn't there in my Daughter's life from the time she was 5 years old, and I would really like to father at least one more child before I leave this world. So, can't I have some of my sperm frozen now, for use later?"

The Doc replied: "You know how the Federal Bureau of Prisons and the courts work. By the time you win approval – IF you prevail – to freeze your sperm, you will be dead." He continued: "We need to get on with your treatment, Mr. You, as soon as possible." YOU got it: "OK, Doc, let's get on with it! you understandingly agree.

Before you left USP Atlanta, the doctor there had told you that you were in for a rough ride. Your Homie (and best Friend) had told you to be strong. And during a visit when you told a very special Woman in your life that you had cancer, she looked deep into your eyes, hugged you so warmly and said so matter-of-

factly: "YOU will be just fine." And even though you understood the possibility of death, this doctor was the first to utter that word.

Sooo, a week later as you sat in a lazy-boy recliner hooked up by means of a picc-line (buried underneath the skin in your left arm) to two large bags of a clear liquid: one, a bag of saline solution; the other, a bag of chemo. The attending nurse brought you a small cup containing several pills for you to swallow and a very warm blanket to ward off the chill in the room. As she began the drip bags, she explained: "If you feel light-headed, nauseous, a burning anywhere in your body, let me know right away, Mr. You, OK?"

Never in your life, even in your imagination, did you ever think that you would willingly sit in a chair and allow someone to administer a poison into your body. But, there you were, reclining and in a deep state of meditation actually feeling and welcoming the poisonous chemo chemical making its way through your blood veins.

You WELCOMED it in the full knowledge that it had been said to kill cancer cells – yet at the same time it killed perfectly healthy cells and tissue as well. The first bag of chemo took one and a half hours, then a second bag was hooked in, which took one hour, and finally a fourth, which took only 15 minutes. You silently thanked the Spirits of your Ancestors for the inner strength to meditate in the face of such adversity. When you returned to your cell, your Friend was there and asked how it went. You told him the details of your meditative experience.

The next day you reported to Oncology to get the booster shot. Your Friend had warned you that the booster shots knocked everyone who had it on their butts, meaning it knocked them down. Surprisingly, it didn't affect you in that way.

While Veronza "Daoud" Bowers Jr. is a world class creative artist and philosopher, he is also a prisoner, who, for his health and safety, needs to keep his body as fit as his mind and spirit.

Twenty-one days and the second treatment. Twenty-one more days and the third treatment. Twenty-one days and the fourth treatment later, something was dreadfully wrong with you. You'd began losing weight at an alarming rate, you had developed a chest-hurting cough – with none of the other symptoms of a cold.

You brought it to the attention of the nurses and doctor. At first the doctor dismissed your complaints about extreme chest and back pain when coughing or taking a deep breath as simply a strained muscle. You knew your body and you knew better than that. You insisted upon having some tests done. It was a good thing you did because the tests revealed that you had a bad case of pneumonia.

NOW, you are face-to-face in a life or death battle against not one, but two Deadly Beings. In order to treat the pneumonia, you will have to be moved from the fourth to the fifth floor. Ever since your arrival you had been gravely warned about the fifth floor.

The general consensus was that if you get sick enough to be moved to the fifth floor, you would probably die. Well, you have always been a fighter and you certainly didn't come here to die.

You are again placed in a single occupancy cell, fully equipped with a big flat screen TV with a remote control gadget, a shower and a hospital bed that could be adjusted to your comfort by the press of a button, and a button you could push if you needed a nurse.

You were hooked up to an IV through which antibiotics dripped into your blood veins. Word that you'd been moved to the dreaded fifth floor spread quickly and quite a few Brothers came by to see you regularly.

Some would take turns cleaning your cell; food of each meal would be delivered to you, as would the commissary items you bought. A nurse would come three or four times a day to take your vitals, your picc-line had to be flushed twice a day, a doctor and nurse would come by to ask how you were and sometimes listen to your heart and breathing with his stethoscope.

Even though you were very weak, losing weight because of no appetite and the food just wouldn't stay in your stomach, you FORCED yourself to get out of bed and push your wheelchair four times around the unit – and when alone, you would do push-ups and go through some Tai Chi Chuan and Wu-Ming Gung Fu forms and lots of deep breathing exercises and Qi Gong.

Then one morning the doctor came to your cell with some papers he wanted you to sign. The doc, as if summarizing the meaning of the papers, said: "Essentially, all it is saying is IF I come in to check on you and find you unresponsive, you don't want me to resuscitate you. Often times the breast plate bones and others are broken. I'm sure you would prefer to meet your maker in Peace."

Up until that moment you had established a very good rapport with the good doctor, and in all fairness to him you must say that he meant well. So, you take a few deep breaths to calm your Spirit and explain: "Doc, with all due respect to you and your position as my doctor, let me make myself very clear.

"When I came here, I came here with a determination to FIGHT for my life. I didn't come here to die. So, in the future I would appreciate it if you would NOT talk to me about death. Talk with me about LIFE." The Doc smiled, shook your hand and said: "OK, Mr. You, as you wish" ... and left. In all of your further interactions with him, he never violated that agreement.

During your stay on the fifth floor, you didn't dare count the number of men who died. You have always been a lover of life and thus not afraid of death. But it was sooo painful for you to FEEL death all around you.

There were two men in particular whose deaths touched you deeply. With both, you had developed close bonds of Brotherhood and Friendship. Before the one Brother got down real sick, y'all used to play some very good quality games of chess.

But the cancer that was eating away at his body became so painful even the morphine shots he was getting on call couldn't quite stop the pain. So before he deteriorated so badly he had to be moved to the hospice area, every day you would go to his cell and blow your Shakuhachi (bamboo flute).

After more than 44 years in prison, 14 years beyond his mandatory release date, Veronza has faith that with his Freedom Team of top lawyers and the love of multitudes of supporters around the world, he will win his freedom soon. Political prisoners are kept in prison when the "law enforcers" they opposed decades ago carry grudges they pass down the generations, vowing those prisoners will die in prison. But the words of little Pharoah Dawson, who wrote, "Veronza, don't die in prison!" are more powerful.

He would always cry ... because of the soothing beauty of the sounds and silences. Sometimes he would hum along with certain notes ... and described one piece as "The Beginning and the End of All There Is." And he would always thank you for making his pain go away ... if only for a little while.

Even though you were still fighting the Two Deadly Beings who were trying to take your life, you still enjoyed being of service to others. And you were receiving sooo many heart-warming and Spirit-lifting cards and letters from people all over the world: viz., from New Zealand, Tonga, England, Sweden, Switzerland, Holland, Kenya, Niger, Senegal, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Canada.

And in the United States, caring people were getting together for letter writing nights to Political Prisoners – thanks to our Jericho Amnesty Movement and the ABC Collectives. You received just such an outpouring of love and concern from sooo many people.

Then came a very short and straight to the point letter from an 8-year-old man-child named Pharaoh Dawson, Son of Sophia Dawson. His letter simply, yet so power-filled, said: "Veronza, DON'T DIE IN PRISON!" All you could say to this is, "I gotcha, Pharaoh!"

All of the above, and so much more, is why you are taking this time to thank all of you, each and every one of you, who sent letters, cards, prayers and thoughts and get-well wishes. It was because of y'all and them and your own WILL TO LIVE that ... A BLACK CAT IS STILL LIVING! All Power to the People!

P.S. If I were to list the names of all my Family and Friends who showered me with so much love, the list would take up too much space in this already too long account. You know who you are and you know I love you dearly!

Still I MUST give a very special thanks to my Precious Daughter, Veronica, who "doctored" me with her own special medicine.

And I thank the good Brother Dr. Willie Ratcliff and his Dear Wife Mary for publishing this in our Bay View ... the very BEST Black owned and edited newspaper in this country, bar none! Won't you please help to save OUR Bay View? Any amount, big or small, will be greatly appreciated. Contact Mrs. Mary Ratcliff at 415.671.0789. COME ON NOW!

P.P.S. You've had two four months checkups via CAT SCANS. The cancer not only went into remission, but there are no traces of it anywhere in your body. Now, you are waiting for a hip replacement surgery.

5 Jul - Six things I learned writing a book about the Black Panthers

Michael Richardson has spent years researching and writing his book about the Nebraska Two.

MORE:

by Michael Richardson (*Op Ed News*)

On August 17, 1970, an Omaha policeman, Larry Minard, was killed by a bomb in a vacant house while responding to a call about a woman screaming. The ambush attack on police was blamed on the local Black Panthers and two leaders, Edward Poindexter and Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa (then David Rice) were convicted and sentenced to life in prison. I lived in Omaha and attended the 1971 trial. All my adult life I wondered if the two men were really guilty. Ten years ago I decided to find out and began research that consumed my life for the next decade.

The first thing I learned was the ugly history of racism in Omaha. The largely all-white prairie city was populated by an influx of black residents from southern states recruited by the Union Pacific railroad and Omaha's large slaughterhouse industry as strikebreakers. Living in segregated neighborhoods, the new arrivals were despised and discriminated against at every opportunity.

In 1891, a frenzied lynch mob of thousands stormed the downtown jail and beat George Smith to death before hanging his battered bloody body from a lamp post. Smith had been accused of assaulting a white girl. The awful scene was repeated in 1919 when an even larger crowd burned the Douglas County Courthouse and lynched Will Brown, accused of assaulting a white woman. A local newspaper called the riot an orgy of blood and fire. The Army had to be called out to quiet the crazed city.

Little changed in Omaha in the half-century between the Courthouse lynching and Minard murder trial. Omaha remained a much segregated city with "terrible prejudice" as Governor Frank Morrison described the racial climate.

The second thing I learned was that J. Edgar Hoover, the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, believed Marcus Garvey of back-to-Africa fame was guilty of ordering the murder of a rival, the Rev. J. W. H. Eason. Hoover had hired four black agents to penetrate Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association. The UNIA suffered a rift when Eason parted ways with Garvey and went about establishing his own organization. Information obtained by Hoover's agents strongly suggested that Garvey ordered the assassination of Eason in 1923 after a church service in New Orleans. Hoover was unable to persuade Louisiana authorities to prosecute Garvey and had to content himself with convicting Garvey of federal mail fraud charges.

Hoover's inability to see Garvey prosecuted for murder led to a lifelong animus against black activists and a determination to not play by the rules, setting the stage for decades of dirty tricks culminating in the clandestine COINTELPRO operation. A burglary at the Media, Pennsylvania FBI office in 1971 led to the formal termination of COINTELPRO but not before thousands of American citizens had been targeted for counterintelligence measures.

The third thing I learned was how Hoover was able to corrupt nearly all of the FBI agents into cooperating in the illegal and clandestine COINTELPRO misdeeds. This question troubled me quite a while and it wasn't until I read the personnel records of the top FBI officials under the Freedom of Information Act that I learned the answer. When the top FBI brass was hired they call came with glowing recommendations from employers, teachers, neighbors and others, yet Hoover was somehow able to corrupt them to commit crimes.

Hoover led the FBI for forty-eight years with dictatorial control. Hoover demanded personal loyalty to himself over duty to country. That was half of the formula. The other half was unfair discipline. Hoover was always punishing someone, often over minor infractions or even nothing at all. The unfair discipline turned the agents into liars to avoid unwarranted punishment. Once they became liars the slippery slope to corruption of duty became a drop-off as agents and supervisors rushed to please the boss not matter what the cost.

The fourth thing I learned was that Poindexter and Mondo, now known as the Omaha Two, were innocent. The controversial trial I attended as a young man was tainted from the beginning with perjured testimony, planted evidence, and withheld evidence. Over the years some of the dirty secrets of the flawed prosecution have emerged, piece by piece. However, no amount of effort or appeals was able to gain the two men a new trial. Four federal judges ordered a new trial for Mondo but it never happened. The Supreme Court refused to hear the case on its merits and said Mondo had to deal with the Nebraska state courts. Justice William Brennan called the ruling "profoundly disturbing."

The fifth thing I learned was that the general public does not care what happened to the Black Panthers. Whenever I tried to tell the story in conversation, eyes would glaze over and yawning would begin. Guilt was assumed without any regard to the actual evidence. A news whiteout covered the case to the point almost nobody today knows about the matter. COINTELPRO was terminated ten days after the Omaha Two trial ended.

The search for a publisher, willing to tell the story, was also informative to me. Each rejection came with its own excuse, however the bottom line was the book-sellers knew it was a story that would not bring a

tidy profit because few people cared what happened to the Black Panthers. Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa died in March 2016 serving his life sentence, paying on a debt he did not owe. Edward Poindexter is still held in a tiny cell at the maximum security Nebraska State Penitentiary in his forty-seventh year of imprisonment for a crime he did not commit.

The sixth lesson was more personal. I learned that Ed and Mondo were remarkable people. The long years of undeserved punishment did not poison them with bitterness or render them insensitive to the suffering of others. Brain numbing and boring confinement did not curb their interest in learning and personal growth. Both men served as mentors to younger prisoners, encouraging them to avoid lifestyles that would lead to crime. The many hours alone with their thoughts gave them wisdom beyond words. Poindexter developed self-esteem classes for prisoners and Mondo remained engaged in life writing poetry, plays, and essays.

Ed and Mondo kept their humanity under inhumane conditions and they kept their integrity. Suggestions of parole if they would admit guilt did not turn them from standing by their declarations of innocence. I am grateful they have been a part of my life.

7 Jul - Federal prosecutors abruptly dismiss all 39 remaining Inauguration Day rioting cases

Federal prosecutors dismissed rioting charges against all remaining defendants arrested after destructive Inauguration Day protests in the nation's capital, bringing to a close a controversial case that led to allegations of government overreach.

MORE:

by Keith L. Alexander (*Washington Post*)

Prosecutors began filing paperwork Friday afternoon to formally drop the cases against 39 people who had been awaiting trial.

The vandalism of downtown businesses on the day President Trump was sworn in stretched more than 16 blocks as part of a disturbance called DisruptJ20. Members of a large group of protesters set small fires and used bricks and crowbars to smash storefronts. Prosecutors had said six police officers were injured.

In all, 234 people were arrested and charged with rioting. Of them, 21 defendants pleaded guilty before trial. But prosecutors had been unable to secure convictions at trial against others in the group.

Defense attorneys have long contended that prosecutors went too far in pursuing cases against more than 200 people. They argued that their clients were not rioting, but were swept up in the arrests while peacefully protesting.

Lacy MacAuley, one of the organizers of the DisruptJ20 Inauguration Day protests, said she celebrated the decision to end the prosecutions. She said the defendants have “suffered” more than a year of angst associated with the arrests, forcing many of them to put their lives on hold as they waited for outcomes in the criminal cases.

“How do you plan for your job and family and personal life when you are facing decades in prison?” MacAuley said.

After the first six defendants to go to trial were acquitted late last year, prosecutors dropped charges against more than 150 others, saying they were unable to prove those people planned or participated in protests with the aim of causing damage. Charges against several additional defendants were dropped after D.C.

Superior Court Judge Robert E. Morin found that the U.S. Attorney's Office failed to turn over some video evidence to the defense.

At a second trial involving another handful of defendants, jurors either acquitted them or were unable to reach a unanimous verdict.

Jurors in the two cases that went to trial said afterward that the government couldn't prove which of the people in the chaotic crowd were the vandals. Over time, prosecutors dismissed more of the cases, and others had been set for trial.

Jessie K. Liu, U.S. attorney for the District, declined to comment on the decision. In a statement from her office, prosecutors noted that 21 of the people arrested have admitted guilt but said "in light of the results in the cases brought to trial" they had made the decision to halt the cases.

"The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia believes that the evidence shows that a riot occurred on January 20, 2017, during which more than \$100,000 in damage was caused to numerous public and private properties," the statement read. "The destruction that occurred during these criminal acts was in sharp contrast to the peaceful demonstrations and gatherings that took place over the Inauguration weekend in the District of Columbia, and created a danger for all who were nearby."

Of the 21 who pleaded guilty, only one defendant served jail time. Last July, Dane Powell, of Tampa, was sentenced to four months in prison.

In a Saturday statement, D.C. Police Chief Peter Newsham said "in the American criminal justice system, sometimes the bad guys win. That's what happened in this case."

Newsham said police would "adjust our tactics accordingly to insure that anyone who comes to Washington DC with the intent of destroying property and/or injuring people is held accountable for their actions." He did not immediately elaborate.

Prosecutors had contended that the rioters blended in with protesters by using "black-bloc" tactics, wearing dark clothes and hiding their faces with masks and goggles so it would be harder for authorities to identify them while they participated in violence.

"They overreached in terms of their legal theory," said Mark Goldstone, a D.C. defense attorney who represented two defendants, both of whose cases were dismissed. "That a person is responsible criminally for any destruction and violence incurred by someone in the same vicinity because of the clothes they wore — and because of that, a person is facing 70 years in jail because of someone else's actions — that is absolutely preposterous."

"It was a waste of time and a waste of taxpayers' resources," Goldstone said. "They spent way more in prosecution than the financial damages that were caused."

To prove their cases, detectives and prosecutors relied on videos from police officers' body cameras, cellphones and security cameras in hopes of linking the defendants to the riots.

But jurors later said the images were not clear enough to know for sure.

During the cases, prosecutors also were criticized over the handling of key evidence, undercover video supplied to them by Project Veritas, a conservative activist group that uses secret recordings to target the mainstream news media and left-leaning groups.

Prosecutors said Veritas representatives secretly attended and recorded a planning meeting leading up to the riots.

Two judges, including Morin, determined the lead prosecutor on the cases, Jennifer Kerkhoff, failed to either supply all of the Veritas video to defense attorneys before trial or edited the videos and failed to disclose all of the edits to attorneys. Kerkhoff has filed a motion with Morin asking the judge to reconsider his findings against her.

Glenn Kirschner, a former assistant U.S. attorney in the District, disagreed that prosecutors overreached but acknowledged that his former colleagues may have decided “too late” that they had “insurmountable challenges” in proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

Kirschner said top officials in the office would have signed off on the initial decision to indict.

“This case was vetted up and down,” Kirschner said. “We can’t be too timid to bring cases. It just means we see the evidence differently than the jury sees it.”

July 14th - In the J20 Trials, the Feds Said They Went After “Bad Protesters.” That Just Means Another Crackdown on Dissent.

by Natasha Lennard (*The Intercept*)

The last remaining defendants in the J20 trials, who faced a raft of charges related to a mass arrest on Inauguration Day, can breathe a sigh of relief. Last week, federal prosecutors decided to drop all remaining felony charges against the protesters, who faced decades in prison for rioting and conspiring to do the same. To defenders of First Amendment rights, the government’s failure to win convictions was a victory: The prosecutors’ novel theory of collective liability — that mere presence at a demonstration in which property damage occurred constituted a planned criminal offense — fell apart.

The cases were an outrage and an embarrassment from the moment D.C. police swept up over 200 people on the corner of L and 12th streets in Washington — a protest in which I took part, but was not arrested. Prosecutors scrambled and made underhanded moves, including withholding evidence and using far-right propaganda as purported evidence of a conspiracy.

Despite the complete absence of any convictions at trial, the government did notch some victories against the defendants. The prolonged and failed prosecution — an ordeal for those who lived through it — drained resources for activism from day one of Donald Trump’s presidency.

Yet the J20 narrative is more complex than a simple victory for protected speech over government repression. It was a troubling example of how the government will use the idea of the “bad protester” to shut down dissent. Aaron Cantú, a journalist and J20 defendant who was among the last to have his charges dropped, tweeted, “The state shamelessly weaponized the ‘good protester/bad protester’ narrative in this case. It’s time to put it to rest.”

This effort will not end with its failure to convict the J20 arrestees: Just this June, Republicans on Capitol Hill introduced the Unmasking Antifa Act of 2018 in the House Judiciary Committee. The bill is unabashed about its target. It calls for fines and a prison sentence of up to 15 years for anyone who “injures, oppresses, threatens, or intimidates any person” while wearing a mask or disguise — a bill that telegraphs the

government's future attempts to prosecute the masked protesters they failed to criminalize on Inauguration Day.

There can be no mistake that the Unmasking Antifa Act seeks to further criminalize anti-fascist protests against far-right extremists and neo-Nazis — it's right there in the name. "It seems to be a way to prepare for the next J20-style repression to actually work," Mark Bray, author of "The Anti-Fascist Handbook," noted in a report from the Black Rose Anarchist Federation.

That anti-fascist demonstrators frequently wear masks for fear of harassment and retaliation from white supremacists unveils an irony in the bill's focus on "antifa": Many pre-existing state laws that make wearing masks illegal in certain contexts were aimed at Ku Klux Klan members. While anti-masking laws are not uncommon and have often been used in the past to arrest leftist and anarchist protesters, the weight of sentencing proposed in the new bill raises the stakes considerably and exemplifies efforts under the Trump administration to protect the speech of fascists and condemn that of anti-fascists. Legislative proposals of this sort illustrate that the government's delineation of the "bad protester" during the J20 trials is far from put to rest and is firmly focused on the left.

The prosecution in the J20 cases attempted to paint every arrestee as a "bad protester," in most cases drawing only on the fact that a defendant wore a mask, dressed in black, and remained in the march from its start to its end in police nets. For the majority of the defendants who engaged in no property damage at all, it might have been tempting to assert that they were in fact the law-abiding "good protesters," while actively condemning and drawing attention to the actions of a few window-breakers.

Yet the J20 trials provided an anecdote, a lesson in collective resistance, and a refusal to allow government and law enforcement narratives about "good protesters" and "bad protesters" to prevail. While many will disagree with the ethics or value of property damage as a protest tactic, the defendants' united front meant the government could not weaponize co-defendants to bolster their weak case.

"I'm glad no one went to prison from this case. The case was bullshit from day one. Two-hundred-plus people resisted these charges and got out," Dylan Petrohilos, a Washington-based activist and former J20 defendant, told me. "Our solidarity inside and outside the courtroom saved us and protected each other." All but 21 defendants refused to take plea deals, and no one cooperated with the state against another protester.

The legal risks to protesters have been brought to new heights by the significant rise in anti-protest laws around the country since Trump's inauguration. In February, the National Lawyers Guild noted that 58 bills had been proposed in 31 state legislatures. If passed, they would "crack down on dissent, chill the right to protest, and increase penalties for demonstrators and the organizations that support them," the guild said.

The prosecution of protest, as in the J20 cases, takes a practical and ideological toll on a movement: It forces arrestees and their allies to shift focus from the reasons and righteousness of their demonstration — in the case of J20, an explicitly anti-fascist show of resistance against the inauguration of a white supremacist administration — to a focus on proving the legality and constitutionality of their actions. As such, even failed prosecutions serve the administration by diverting the energies of a movement and fixing them within the terrain of criminal justice.

We can be sure that the government will not take its failure in the J20 prosecutions quietly and dial back anti-resistance repression. In its statement announcing the dismissal of the remaining charges, the U.S. attorney's office continued to defend its infirm prosecution. "The destruction that occurred during these criminal acts was in sharp contrast to the peaceful demonstrations and gatherings that took place over the

Inauguration weekend in the District of Columbia,” the statement said,” and created a danger for all who were nearby.”

The rhetoric of dangerous protesters as a contrast to “peaceful demonstrations” will continue to undergird government’s anti-resistance, anti-fascist efforts. But at least we have the guiding example of the J20 defendants to follow when it comes to responding with solidarity and resilience. “The state failed at silencing dissent,” said Petrohilos, “and today our movement is stronger than it was on J20.”

7 Jul - Open Letter by Concerned Academics Regarding Jamil Al-Amin

The below is an open letter to the Georgia Bureau of Prisons.

MORE:

Please go to kundnani.org/jamilalamin to add your name to the list

We are academics who have spent our careers researching the history of the civil rights movement, issues of racial discrimination in the United States, civil rights law, and the representation of minorities in the public sphere. We strongly believe that deepening knowledge of our nation’s past is essential to informing progress in American politics and race relations today.

The acquisition of historical knowledge is strengthened considerably by having living participants in those histories recount their experiences. We are therefore dismayed to learn of the current restrictions placed upon one such prominent participant, Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin (formerly known as H. Rap Brown).

During the 1960s, Al-Amin was a national leader of the civil rights movement and was chair of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, one of the era’s key organizations. As a civil rights leader, he met with President Johnson, spoke across the country, and appeared regularly in television interviews. He is currently an inmate at the federal prison at Tuscon, Arizona. He has been held in federal custody, on behalf of the Georgia Department of Corrections, since 2007.

Throughout the last decade, all requests for interviews by scholars and journalists have been denied by the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Their decision is, in part, based on the Georgia Department of Corrections’ view that Al-Amin is ineligible for interviews “due to the potential security risks.” Letters to and from Al-Amin are usually held by the government for months before they are released. In these ways, Al-Amin is prevented from any form of practical communication with scholars who wish to document this history.

We understand that Al-Amin has been convicted of an extremely serious charge. However, we do not believe there is any reasonable basis upon which to deny him direct access to scholars and journalists. His story ought to be documented for posterity. In-person interviews with him in prison are essential for this purpose because he is seventy-four years old and is serving a life sentence without parole.

We thus declare our opposition to the restrictions placed upon Al-Amin and call on the Georgia Department of Corrections and Federal Bureau of Prisons to allow scholarly and media interviews and communication with Al-Amin. We will make the reasons for our consternation known to our own elected representatives and the public at large.

7 Jul - Statement on Immigration by Political Prisoner Jalil Muntaqim

Please read the following short statement by the always-thoughtful Jalil Muntaqim.

MORE:

ICE and Homeland Security are targeting immigrants at work, on their jobs, in court buildings, schools and Immigration Offices, and on the border, which reminds me of Kristallnacht, broken glass and Germany's rounding up of Jews, sending them to concentration camps. It also reminds me of when the U.S. was rounding up the Japanese in internment camps.

The only difference now is that they're sending people to countries where many have never lived, like DACA kids and others, whose return to their countries could mean imminent death. Therefore, our struggle must be one of building international solidarity based on human rights and opposing Trumpism, which equals white supremacy.

9 Jul - The Revolutionary Abolitionist Movement announces the First Annual Nat Turner Day!

To commemorate the first day of a nationwide prison strike, the Revolutionary Abolitionist Movement (RAM) announces the first Nat Turner Day this August 21st, 2018.

MORE:

It is no coincidence this is the first day of this year's Nationwide Prison Strike and we couldn't be more honored to participate in this historic moment.

On this day in 1831 the Nat Turner Rebellion began. Nat Turner and his band of 70 comrades traveled from plantation to plantation to slay their oppressors and free those they encountered along the way. This act of rebellion is an important precursor for our struggle today. The initiative of these brave people to risk their own well-being to free those held in captivity around them, speaks both to the militancy necessary for community defense and the selflessness of revolutionary struggle.

Nat Turner Day is a holiday for revolutionaries, those who fight against the current forms of slavery and commit themselves to a liberated society. We celebrate those who came before us, and those who today devote their lives to abolishing this horrendous system of modern slavery.

Join us for solidarity with the prison strikers and festivities celebrating Nat Turner, and all revolutionaries past and present, while we bring much needed attention to the struggle of our day!

The context of the prison strike:

People incarcerated in the United States, suffering some of the worst abuses in the world, are calling for a nationwide prison strike on August 21st. We at the Revolutionary Abolitionist Movement stand with these brave individuals and support their demands for better conditions and revolutionary action as they risk their lives and health, not only for themselves but for the millions incarcerated nationwide.

The impetus for this call arose from the shameful and egregious loss of life recently at Lee Correctional Institution in South Carolina. The problem, prison organizers argue, stems from greed and "...a lack of respect for human life that is embedded in our nation's penal ideology." From racist policing practices, harassment of families, and routine methods of torture, we have a system that is one of the most barbaric in the world. While reforms can alleviate some of the suffering, we all are aware that total abolition of this system is necessary.

Since the civil war, the US government has been committed to ensuring the system of slavery continued. Black people remain policed, surveilled, controlled, and held captive. The struggle for black liberation reached unparalleled heights with the Black Panthers, and the state's response was to make the largest prison population in the world, criminalize the black populace, and destroy the social programs. Slavery in

the US was never primarily about free labor, but about controlling, owning and ultimately denying black humanity. The plantations of the past turned into today's prisons, like Louisiana State Penitentiary, formerly the Angola plantation. The same modes of control on the plantation exist in the prison. The prison system, like the slave system of the past, is not a social phenomenon to debate, but to totally destroy.

The risks people inside are taking to regain their humanity and dignity stand as a model for all abolitionists and revolutionaries. Our actions outside must amplify their voices and match their commitment. We call on all abolitionists and revolutionaries in this country, and those abroad, to stand with the prison strikers' resistance. This is the struggle of our day. From inside the walls to the streets outside, we will abolish slavery, the prisons, and all the institutions that make such a barbaric world possible.

13 Jul - Water Protector Update

Red Fawn Fallis was sentenced on July 11, 2018 to a 57 month federal prison term pursuant to a non-cooperating plea agreement, becoming the second Water Protector arrested in relation to the DAPL pipeline resistance at Standing Rock to be sentenced to a substantial prison term and the second of the five federal cases that the Water Protector Legal Collective is handling to conclude.

MORE:

via Water Protector Legal Collective

As per the terms of the non-cooperating plea agreement accepted by the court on January 22, 2018, the charge of Discharge of a Firearm in Relation to a Felony Crime of Violence was dismissed. Had Fallis gone to trial and been convicted of this charge, she'd have faced a minimum of 10 years and risked up to life in prison.

Today Fallis was sentenced on two charges: Civil Disorder and Possession of a Firearm and Ammunition by a Convicted Felon. Prosecutors had committed to recommending a sentence of no more than seven years in prison; they recommended the full 84 months. Though there is no minimum sentence, presiding Judge Daniel L. Hovland had the authority to go as high as 10 years. He sentenced Red Fawn to 18 months on the Civil Disorder charge and to a concurrent term of 57 months on the Possession charge, with three years of federal supervision to follow, and a \$200 assessment (\$100 for each charge). He did not assess a fine.

Red Fawn has been incarcerated since October 27, 2016, first in The Heart of America Correctional & Treatment Center in Rugby, ND, then in a halfway house in Fargo, ND, and finally in Burleigh/Morton County Detention Center in Bismarck. She will not be credited with the time served in the halfway house because there was a violation, but she will receive credit for the time she spent incarcerated.

The judge recommended that she be remanded to FCI Phoenix or FCI Tucson where she would not be isolated from other Native American women. While there is no parole in the federal system, with good behavior, and if her last six months are served in a halfway house, she could be released from federal prison as early as late summer 2020.

"The sentence imposed today reflects the judge's recognition of her case as unique and complicated by a lot of factors. He listened to the testimony in court, read the transcripts of prior hearings and the legal memoranda filed by the parties," said Red Fawn's attorney Bruce Ellison.

"The sentence landed in between what we recommended and what the government urged. In a sensitive matter like this the judge has pretty much unlimited discretion and seemed to try and figure out what in his mind made sense," he said. "It could certainly have been much worse. But the FBI will never be held accountable for abusing this woman by sending a person in to gain access to the camp, feigning a romantic

interest, manipulating her family into thinking it was real at the same time telling the people that they should feel afraid of corporate security. But they were the ones bringing in the guns.”

Red Fawn Fallis is Oglala Lakota and was raised in between Denver, Colorado and Pine Ridge, South Dakota. During the Standing Rock encampments she was well-known and respected for her work with youth and as a medic as well as for her deep commitment to her people and to protecting the water. During the hearing today two expert witnesses provided testimony on the physiology of what is known in firearms training as “unintended discharge of a firearm” and on the psychology and impact of childhood trauma and intergenerational, historical trauma; two family members spoke passionately about how valued and missed Red Fawn is by her family and community, her personal growth in the 20 months since her arrest, and the educational and employment opportunities that her community is committed to help provide upon her release.

Red Fawn’s uncle Glenn T. Morris, who is a professor of Political Science at the University of Colorado at Denver, said:

“Justice was not done today. If justice had been done the real criminals—DAPL, Tiger Swan, the FBI and Morton County Sheriff’s Department—would be the ones going to jail for invading our prayer camp and hurting our niece, sister and Auntie Red Fawn. We, her family, friends and supporters, are the ones who will bring justice to Red Fawn by supporting her and being with her every day, week and month of her incarceration, no matter where it is. We are the ones who will be restoring her, and she will restore us when we welcome her back to our family and community in Denver on the day of her release.”

Water Protector Legal Collective stands by Red Fawn and we call on Water Protectors and community members to continue to support her through this difficult time. Please follow her Support Committee website for information on how to write to her and be in solidarity with her as she serves her prison time.

July 14th - Water Protector ‘Little Feather’ Makes it to Prison

via It’s Going Down

Little Feather (Michael Giron) has made it to prison after being sentenced to 3 years. He will likely be at USP Hazelton for the next 21 months.

You can donate to Little Feather’s commissary at freelittlefeather.com/donate

Michael Giron, “Little Feather,” is a Water Protector from the Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation, raised in Santa Barbara, California.

Little Feather, was charged with Civil Disorder and Use of Fire to Commit a Federal Felony Offense, arising from events of October 27, 2016. On February 8th, 2018, he changed his plea in accordance with a non cooperating plea agreement with the prosecution. Under this plea agreement, the Use of Fire charge – which carries a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years and the possibility of up to 15 years in prison – will be dropped entirely, and Little Feather will take responsibility for aiding a civil disorder.

The plea agreement was accepted by Judge Daniel Hovland, who is presiding over the case. Prosecutors and the defense jointly recommend a sentence of 36 months on the Civil Disorder charge, although the judge does have the authority to go as high as five years. This is a non-cooperating agreement relating only to Little Feather’s own actions and does not require any testimony or information about anyone else. Little Feather and his legal team were facing monumental challenges including the prospect of trial with a hostile jury pool, limited discovery, and the risk of a long prison sentence. His sentencing was on May 30, 2018 at 1pm and was sentenced to 36 months in prison. Little Feather is the first NoDAPL political prisoner.

Little Feather came to Standing Rock with his family. While there, he was of service to the elders and the community. Daily he would check on the elders, retrieve water, chop and deliver wood, cook, clean, give rides, rescue those in need, and so much more. Little Feather created special relationships with those around him. He has a giving heart and spirit to those that know him. His Indigenous spirit will be forever changed by his experiences in Standing Rock.

19 Jul - Metropolitan Anarchist Coordinating Council General Assembly

WHAT: General Assembly

WHEN: 6:30pm, Thursday, July 19th

WHERE: Verso Books—20 Jay Street, 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, and 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

21 Jul - Political Prisoner Letter Writing at Holyrood Church

WHAT: Letter-writing

WHEN: 5:00-7:00pm, Saturday, July 21st

WHERE: Holyrood Episcopal Church—715 West 179th Street, Manhattan

COST: FREE!

MORE:

Join Campaign to Bring Mumia Home, Critical Resistance NYC, NYC Jericho, and the Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee for an afternoon of support for political prisoners. Bring some light cheer and encouraging words to these courageous men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our planet and survival in a country which has never respected our right to be free and self determining.