



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for October 20th

6 Oct - Anti-fascist David Campbell to be released from prison soon

Our wrongfully incarcerated comrade, David Campbell, is getting out on October 16th [GOT OUT!!!] – and he needs our help!

MORE:

For the past year, David has been unjustly imprisoned for events that unfolded at the protest of a New York City alt-right event on January 20, 2018.

After almost two years of legal maneuvering, David took a non-cooperating plea for a sentence of 18 months in a local facility on Rikers Island to avoid a trial and a much longer sentence in an upstate prison for which white supremacist guards and Nazi gangs are known.

Despite these precautions, he is one of thousands of people incarcerated in NYC jails during the COVID-19 pandemic, left with little to no proper protection equipment or the ability to socially distance, further compromising health and safety in already bleak conditions.

It was his commitment to antifascism and his community that brought him out to the protest that night, and the combined support of his community that helped him through his sentence. He describes the broad contributions of letters, books, visits, and donations as leaving him both awestruck and humbled. We know the strength of our movement is determined by the continued support of our comrades.

Despite the precarity of the world David is coming back to, let's give him the welcome home he deserves. If you haven't already, please consider donating what you can to his fund, as there are still uncovered expenses resulting from the arrest, and any additional financial support will help make his transition easier.

Donate at freedavidcampbell.com/donate

8 Oct - Jalil Muntaqim is free!

We are thrilled to announce that former Black Panther and respected and beloved elder, Jalil Muntaqim (Anthony Bottom), was released on October 7th after serving nearly 50 years in prison.

MORE:

During his decades in prison, Jalil led education and mentorship programs for other people in prison, as well as earning numerous educational degrees and mentoring younger incarcerated men.

Jalil is now home with his family and community and asks for everyone to respect his privacy at this time as he reconnects with his loved ones in freedom, and continues to heal from COVID 19, which he contracted in prison last May. Jalil is deeply humbled and grateful for the broad expressions of support he has received from his family and community throughout the years and looks forward to the next chapter. He will not be making any public statements at this time.

October 8th - Welcome Home, Jalil Muntaqim!

The National Jericho Movement joins with family, comrades, friends, and the international community in the historic celebration of the release on parole of freedom fighter and political prisoner Jalil Muntaqim. Jalil's release comes after being confined for almost 5 decades. Jalil is the co-founder (along with deceased Comrade Sister Safiya Bukhari, d. 2003 and Baba Herman Ferguson, d. 2014) of the National Jericho Movement to Free All Political Prisoners. Founding Jericho in 1998 was just one of Jalil's many significant

achievements. During his time in prison Jalil had also received many degrees and certifications. He mentored other prisoners and resolved numerous prison beefs. He stood by his principles and maintained the highest level of discipline, integrity and self-respect and respect for others. Jalil's activism never ceased and is unquestionable. He has consistently provided movement leadership and guidance under the worse of conditions behind concrete and steel bars.

The best way to honor Jalil now is for us all to continue our human rights activism and movement building, and to continue to fight for the release of the remaining national liberation and civil rights era Political Prisoners (www.thejerichomovement.com). While in prison Jalil called for the establishment of the "In the Spirit of Mandela Coalition." (spiritofmandela.org) The major initiative on the table is the October 2021 International Tribunal. Jalil requests our solidarity, input, energy, and drive!

11 Oct - Kings Bay Plowshares 7 Update

We have writings and other updates, including sentencing information.

MORE:

October 11th - Fr. Steve Kelly's Message to Oct. 11 Festival of Hope

At the time of this greetings' composing, Pharaoh is hospitalized with the plague. I'm not gloating although much could be included about karma. This neo-exodus reap-what-you-sow October surprise event should put us on the alert. Not just to be masked and vigilant about the ubiquitous COVID-19, but also about nuclear weaponry and its custody, possession and proliferation. Felice and Jack provided me with a statement by doctors who are part of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985, and cofounders of ICAN, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. They assert that as the virus health crisis is depleting resources and exhausting medical staff first responders, just one nuclear exchange, say between Pakistan and India, in a time of food and economic insecurity, not only would kill millions in the first moment, but the eventual spread of dust and ash would darken the skies and plunge the world into a nuclear ice age.

If not directly hit, the inevitable ecological economic consequences would be more than catastrophic. We know the difference between a pandemic and nuclear exchange. We have the means to stop the latter. But before we get too carried away with slogans, let's go back to what Phil Berrigan called the Blight House. There is a lesson. The hubris that the inner sanctum would be secure has been exposed as delusion. The inner sanctum has been penetrated by a microbe. The wake up we need is to have the reliance on deterrence equally disillusioned like the so-called security no longer enjoyed by the Oval Office. If there is no absolute security for preventing COVID in a place like the Blight House then likewise, after 75 years and trillions of dollars, we have not provided any nuclear security.

October 16th - Fr. Steve Kelly Sentenced to 33 Months

Fifteen supporters in a carefully Covid masked and distanced courtroom witnessed Father Steve Kelly receive a sentence of 33 months today. After a 20 minute delay to get the telephone conference line working and properly muted 160 people listened in to the proceedings on the audio link.

Fr. Steve's sentence falls at top of his proposed guidelines but will nevertheless allow his release from the Glynn County Detention Center where he is presently being detained 30 months after the action. He has accumulated sufficient good time during his incarceration to cover the remaining three months. He still has a probation violation from a prior arrest and it is not yet known what will happen with that and if he would have to be transported to court in Washington State.

Judge Wood held up a 7 inch thick sheath of hundreds of letters she had received in support of Fr. Steve and said she had read and considered all of them. However, she then proceeded to rule against all the arguments he had submitted disputing the probation department's assessment of his record and their recommendations for a substantial sentence. She ruled that the activists had shown disregard for human life by entering a deadly force zone and failed to show acceptance of responsibility. Fr. Steve had earlier

submitted a presentencing statement where he told the court he would not agree to any conditions of probation or restitution. Judge Wood did not address this statement.

Fr. Steve's character witness, Dennis Apel from Santa Maria, CA, who has known him for many years and participated in numerous protests together strongly condemned the US court system for maintaining idolatry to the Pentagon. By using in limine motions to so broadly limit what Plowshares activists can say in court the "whole truth" which the witness' oath demands is impossible to express.

The prosecutor, Greg Gilluly, expressed horror at property destruction by the defendants while remaining deeply oblivious to the threat of total global destruction by Trident's nuclear weapons. He argued that people who attack naval bases and destroy property are not peaceful protestors and must be punished and deterred. He asked for the high end of the guidelines for Fr. Kelly who he said has been arrested 20 times over 20 years.

This sentencing took place almost a year since their conviction on three felony and one misdemeanor charge and nearly two and a half years since the nuclear disarmament action of the Kings Bay Plowshares. On April 4th, 2018, the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. the KBP7 entered the Kings Bay Trident nuclear submarine base in south Georgia to spotlight the extreme illegality and immorality of the omnicidal weapons based there.

Dennis Apel's statement to the court in support of Fr. Steve Kelly

I was asked by Fr. Steve Kelly to be a character witness at his sentencing. While I am more than honored to do so, I want to be clear regarding my intent. I am not trying to affect the sentencing. My fantasy would be to have Fr. Steve's character precipitate a conversion among those present in the courtroom. As anyone who has been involved in this case is aware, if you believe that Steve Kelly is operating from deeply held convictions and a radical faith in the gospels, he is a prophet. If you don't believe him, he is just an opinionated criminal. As someone who knows Steve well, I assure you that the first assessment is the truth and the second is false.

I am no stranger to the typical U.S. courtroom where the "law" is treated as God while justice takes a back seat; where even the most fundamental morals are ignored for the sake of upholding the system designed to maintain idolatry to the Pentagon; where witnesses are sworn in with the admonition "to speak the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help you God" and then essentially gagged in front of a jury of their peers through motions In Limine, denied the ability to speak the truth about why they did what they did, the horrors they are confronting and the spirituality behind their actions. Prosecutors assume the role of protecting the military as if the most powerful military in the history of humankind were not able to protect itself. Prosecutors assume the role of establishing the motives and character of those they designate as criminals and of whom they haven't the slightest clue regarding their true character or motivations. Nor do they care to learn because, in our system, character and motives are irrelevant. The character of the accused is no more relevant to the purpose of the law than is the will of God. Entire careers and livelihoods are based solely on convictions and sentences. In what kind of system could a person with the spirituality, conviction and love of God's children that Fr. Steve Kelly has, be dismissed as a criminal and left to languish for two and a half years in a county jail, while his basic message is expunged in the courtroom; the message that the most horrific and abominable weapons designed by human technology, weapons that have and will visit unfathomable horrors on the children of God and likely exterminate God's creation, are allowed to exist and proliferate while the most basic of reasonable detractors are gagged and put away. As Steve often reminds us, "When the nuclear holocaust comes, it will be completely legal."

Fr. Steve Kelly is a man of deep faith who speaks truth to power and accepts the consequences. That is his character. Any other assessment of his character is false. I know this because I have known Steve for decades. He has spent more than 10 years of his life behind bars, giving up the warm embrace and camaraderie of loved ones as well as the comforts of a truly-accessible easy life, to instead speak the truth that God sees nuclear weapons as an abomination. I defy anyone in this courtroom to make a case for a God who embraces weapons of indiscriminate destruction and human misery. It's not complicated. We who

accept nuclear weapons are wrong, wrong, wrong. Fr. Steve just says that with his life and body. That is his character. He has taken up his cross to follow Jesus, pure and simple. We dismiss that fact at our own peril.

So, the question before this court is, “What to do with Fr. Steve Kelly; what is the proper punishment? What shall we impose so that he and others of his ilk are deterred? How can we maintain the order and protect the military from those like Fr. Steve who may want to shine a light on a crime infinitely more serious than trespass and vandalism, namely the extermination of the human race?” The answer is, it doesn’t matter the punishment. Steve will accept it and continue his prophetic mission. The question ought not to be how to punish Steve but rather what is it going to take for those who have ears to hear but cannot hear, and eyes to see but cannot see, to give up their idolatry to weapons of mass destruction and turn toward the God of love; to once and for all beat their swords into plowshares and study war no more? My advice to those in this courtroom is to take an honest look at the true character of Fr. Steve Kelly and to try emulate it rather than defile it. Or don’t.

October 17th - Patrick O’Neill Sentenced to 14 months

In a decision likely unexpected by both the defendants and prosecutors, a federal judge today passed down a significantly lower prison sentence to one of the Kings Bay Plowshares 7.

Judge Lisa Godbey Wood sentenced Patrick O’Neill of Garner, NC, to 14 months in prison for his role in the nonviolent protest on April 4, 2018 at the Kings Bay Naval Base in St. Mary’s, GA.

“I’m grateful that we were able to pull the heartstrings of the judge and help her be as merciful as she can be under the circumstances,” Patrick said afterwards.

Wood began the proceedings by telling Patrick she’d “received quite a lengthy, quite tall stack of records, of letters on your behalf.” (The KBP7 and their support team thank everyone who has written Judge Wood on their behalf!)

Federal prosecutors argued Patrick, 64, should serve the full extent of the recommended prison sentence, up to 26 months, because of his “past criminal history” of nonviolent protest and “noncooperation” during them as well as his “criminal associations” with nonviolent protesters. They argued that Patrick was not remorseful, risked his life and the lives of the people on the base including security personnel, and helped cause more the \$33,000 in damages. The prosecutors’ so-called “risk of death” argument is unprecedented in 40 years of Plowshares federal prosecutions.

Representing himself before the judge, and once referring to “the fool for a lawyer that I am,” Patrick objected to dozens of the prosecutors’ arguments. Over the course of the first hour the judge overruled all of Patrick’s objections to the prosecutors’ rationales for lengthening his prison sentence.

Countering the argument that lives were at risk by their action, Patrick said the seven activists were at the site for three hours and seen by guards who repeatedly passed by but kept going. When a guard finally approached Patrick and some of the others the Navy sergeant cracked a joke.

“Now you know you’re all in a bit of trouble don’t you?” he said.

“I don’t think he was feeling at risk of death at that time,” O’Neill told the judge.

Video from the body camera Patrick wore on his head the entire night provided the primary evidence against the defendants. “I went far beyond any acceptance of responsibility of any defendant. I signed a conspiratorial document with my codefendants,” he said.

“You brought to bear the possibility, the specter, of deadly use,” the judge replied. “Thank goodness that nobody was shot.”

Neither the judge nor prosecutor made mention that this protest took place at the locus of the most destructive weaponry in the known universe.

When Wood asked the prosecutor if there are any “victims” of the Plowshares’ “crime” available to speak, the prosecutor said there were none.

Two of Patrick’s children testified on his behalf as character witnesses, as did his uncle who helped raise him after his father died when he was five years old.

On a video link from his home in Connecticut, Patrick’s uncle Dennis O’Donnell, 80, described his pride of his long time as a soldier in the US Army and 35 years as a Yonkers, NY police officer. O’Donnell, a Trump supporter, then spoke of his long admiration of his nephew and his wife Mary Rider’s kindness and generosity.

“I don’t want to find fault with Patrick because I love him and the other parts of our family love him as well. He’s a committed pacifist and that’s not a dirty word. I’m not against the military in any way. I’m a proud soldier and so are my children. I’m proud of Patrick. I’m proud of Mary. And I’m proud of their children.”

Patrick’s daughter, Bernadette Naro, 32 and a campus minister at a Catholic school in Atlanta, then read a statement describing growing up in the Fr. Charlie Mulholland Catholic Worker House founded by her parents.

“Women and children who were in crisis came to live alongside us,” she said. “My parents chose to live in this way because of their commitment to living out their Christian faith, their commitment to sharing all that they have with the poor, and to taking personal responsibility for the problems they saw in our world. They centered their life around a few questions: Who is Jesus? What was he all about? And, especially what does he require of us? He taught me to dig into these questions as I grew up and considered what to do with my life.

“When we were younger, and my sister and I would argue, my dad’s approach was to sit me down, stand my sister in front of me and say to me emphatically, ‘See your sister in front of you? See her? She is the body of Christ.’ His life is guided by the question of what it means to be a Christian. Not in words, but as a lived reality.”

When Wood asked her if there should be consequences to her dad’s actions Bernadette replied, “I guess there already have been consequences.”

Timmy Patrick, 21, and a student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, said his father exemplifies “love incarnate, just positive intention towards everyone... (as opposed to) money and power and status.”

“He provides love and care not just for our family but for other people in our community, town, church community, and many of them receive substantial assistance in housing, food, and clothing, and human necessity from my father and mother.

“Dad’s service to community is extended through this action,” Timmy Patrick said. “The Plowshares movement is a very internally consistent group with very strong held religious beliefs who are inspired by the teachings of activists and theologians throughout history.”

His father and his codefendants see nuclear holocaust as “a matter of when. They express legitimate dissent against the hegemony of militarism and violence that exists throughout our nation.”

Although his family members are the most important people in the world to him and they all share the same perspective, they do not agree on all things, he told the court.

Judge Wood asked Timmy if it is possible to go too far in protesting nuclear weapons. He replied no, not compared to the trillions spent on war.

Seeming to some in the courtroom to be deflated following the testimony of the character witnesses, US Attorney Greg Gilluly referred to Patrick as “a man who has done so much good in this world and has a family to care for.”

He then read a litany of Patrick’s offenses repeating the phrase “Unlike Martin Luther King... Unlike Martin Luther King...” arguing the sentencing guidelines are appropriate.

Patrick then read a long statement to the judge. (available at kingsbayplowshares7.org)

“My hope is to never be vindicated. I hope the world can survive the nuclear arms race, and for global warming to turn out to be no big deal. I want our children and grandchildren to have a future with as much love, hope, and prosperity as most of you and I have enjoyed in our upbringings under First World circumstances.

“I want my efforts on April 4, 2018 to essentially be viewed as misguided, foolish and in vain. In essence, I want to be judged wrong — not just by the findings of this court — but by the world,” he said. “For me to be a failure and a fool would be so much better than the calamity I fear for future generations if the Kings Bay Plowshares’ message turns out to be the horror we fear will come.

“This court, by its refusal to consider the lawlessness of weapons of mass destruction, is essentially declaring the end of the world to be acceptable. If the trident D-5 missiles are ever launched and millions of people die, including many of you who reside here at the center of Ground Zero, one fact will remain clear: No laws were broken.

“Rather than criminals, we are messengers, just like the abolitionists were in the face of legalized slavery, or pacifists who went to prison rather than kill. And we took a chance, risked our freedom, and were mischaracterized by this court as threats to the safety of the community.”

The “decision to invent, build, deploy and possibly use nuclear weapons will not stand the test of time as good moral choices,” just as slavery and other historical wrongs have now been judged by history to have been horrible mistakes, he said.

Patrick reminded the court that only three more nations are now needed for global ratification of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Ratification is expected soon.

In response to the defendants’ prior petition under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, an earlier judge concluded their act was “prophetic, sacramental, symbolic denuclearization.” Judge Wood, Patrick said, concluded instead that the compelling interest the court has in is to protecting the sanctity of Naval Station Kings Bay. That makes the unusual nature and risk of the action necessary above, he said, lobbying and writing letters.

“No one in this room today can deny that the theatrical tactics of the Kings Bay Plowshares has gotten your attention and the attention of thousands of people all over the world in a way no letter or phone call to Congress could.”

“I want you to see incarceration from the perspective of the convicted,” he said. “For me, walking into this courtroom is agonizing, emotionally horrifying and makes me feel physically sick. A person coming here for sentencing is likely experiencing one of the worst days of his or her life.”

“Trident is the opposite of love. It is a machine of mass destruction that robs our neighbors of love and hope.

“While I have not heard much support for us expressed by this court, my hope is that I have been part of an effort to plant a seed that will sprout and grow in your souls, and eventually bear the fruit of true peace in your hearts. And that all humanity will come together to reject war and trident and embrace the teachings of Jesus to Love One Another.”

Before passing her sentence Wood told Patrick, “You have a lot to put on the good side. And that must be counted for during sentencing.... But I have to take into consideration.... we are all bound by the laws of this country... There are consequences.”

Patrick must report to prison within 90 days. With time served and good behavior he might be eligible for release about 10 months later. He will then have supervised release for three years. Like the others, he is required to pay towards restitution to the Navy in the amount of \$33,504 and \$310 in special assessments. The judge ordered probation officers to have access to financial information, permission needed for getting credit, half of Patrick’s wages garnished.

The day before sentencing Patrick, Wood sentenced his codefendant, Jesuit Father Steve Kelly, to 33 months. Kelly has spent every day since the action in a southern Georgia jail and may be released soon, pending another judge’s decision about his probation violation from a protest at Kitsap-Bangor Naval Base in Washington state, the only other Trident submarine base in the US.

“Your criminal history is not as storied as Fr. Kelly’s,” she told Patrick. Codefendant Elizabeth McAlister was sentenced to time served in June. The remaining codefendants, Mark Colville, Martha Hennessy, Clare Grady, and Carmen Trotta, go before Wood for sentencing on November 12 and 13. Patrick intends to appeal.

It is perhaps a sideways victory. Patrick has received at least six months less time than expected. Still, he must serve a 14-month sentence in federal prison during a pandemic that has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives in the United States alone. Twenty seven people, including a guard, have died of COVID at the Butner Federal Correction Institution, which Wood recommended for his sentence, Patrick said. He said 824 people there have contracted the disease.

But, standing before the judge with his hands behind his back he gave a thumbs up to his family and supporters in the courtroom when Wood read his sentence.

“I think she saw how I live my life and she decided she wasn’t going to give me the maximum,” he said afterwards. “I’m not going away for as long as I thought I was going to be.

“I think this is a good omen for my codefendants.”

October 17th - Bernadette Naro’s Statement at Sentencing of her Father

I want to begin my testimony today with some of my earliest memories of my dad. When I was four years old, my parents moved from our small house where the three of us lived, into a much larger house to start a Catholic Worker Community. The extra rooms in our new house became spaces for people who had nowhere else to turn. Women and children who were in crisis, came to live alongside us. As a kid growing up in a Catholic Worker was essentially normal — it was really the only experience I knew. But now as an adult, as I raise my own child, and make my own life choices, I am consistently more in awe of what sharing their home and their lives intimately with strangers required of my parents. My parents chose to live in this way because of their commitment to living out their Christian faith— their commitment to sharing all that they have with the poor, and to taking personal responsibility for the problems they saw in our world.

They centered their life around a few questions—Who is Jesus? What was he all about? And, especially what does he require of us? He taught me to dig into these questions as I grew up and considered what to do with my life.

My dad also explored this question as a Sunday school teacher at our church. I remember him asking his students— if Jesus were to come back tomorrow, where do you think we'd find him? My dad's answer was that we would find Jesus with the poor. With the homeless. Perhaps at the park, waiting in the soup line that my parents organized every Saturday. Or maybe, he was one of the folks my parents invited to join us for dinner on Thanksgiving and Christmas. Right before the big holiday dinners, as my mom put the finishing touches on the food, my dad and I would hop in the minivan and drive downtown to see who was left alone on the streets. Then, my dad would invite them to dinner with us. As you might imagine, we had some interesting characters join us for the Holidays as our guests of honor.

I share these stories because they exemplify my dad's character and what is at the root of it.

Speaking of a character, as a teacher, a large part of my goal is to show my students what it means to be a person of good character. At the Catholic school where I work, we interpret this goal through the lens of our faith. We state that our overarching mission is to form the whole person in the image of Christ. Without question, this is a lofty goal.

I'd like to say to the Court today that my dad had the same aim as he raised 8 children. One example of how he sought to form us in Christ's image was his conversations with us about how we should treat each other. I have 5 sisters and 2 brothers. When we were younger, and my sister and I would argue, my dad's approach was to sit me down, stand my sister in front of me and say to me emphatically, "see your sister in front of you? See her? She is the body of Christ..." He would go on to tell me that bearing those things in mind the only way to treat her was with the utmost love and compassion. I share this anecdote today because I think it illustrates how my dad views the world and how my dad lives his life. His life is guided by the question of what it means to be a Christian. Not in words, but as a lived reality.

Today I have a 2 year old, who I know my dad has spoken about before. It has been a beautiful gift to watch my dad now in the role of Grandfather. When I watch him with her, I am reminded of my own childhood. In their interactions, I'm reminded of the ways my dad taught me to behold God's creation with awe and delight, and of the role we have to fiercely defend anything that threatens to destroy God's creation.

11 Oct - Jaan Laaman's RDTW/KDTW Report Back

Written on the evening of September 6th, Jaan Laaman writes about his participation in the annual Running Down the Walls.

MORE:

Let me send a strong raised fist salute of Freedom and Justice, to everyone, especially all of you, who in some way participated in or supported RDTW 2020.

Yes, this pandemic RDTW 2020 was different than our runs over the past 20 years, but I am hopeful we did have some good events and solidarity and support today. Here in the US pen McCreary, like prisons across the country, we have been on a lockdown since March. Sundays we are totally locked down all day. Here in my cell, my New England homeboy from Maine, Jon Gardiner, and I just finished a solid hour of throwing some serious kicks, punches, ridgehands, and more! Yea, and the same in many other cells, like Iowa boy Andrew Neilson, and Dion the artist from DC were doing some similar workouts. Zak, my Armenian artist comrade was throwing kicks in his cell in another block, as were other conscious minded convicts, here on this Kentucky mountaintop prison.

Running Down the Walls, Kicking Down the Walls, positive solidarity in physical activity, to bring light and support to what's going on in these prisons, got expressed today! So I wanted to send this quick report back and salute to all of you, inside and out. In this time of large scale protest and resistance, we need to remember the political prisoners and all prisoners in captivity now. With all this public resistance in the streets today, activists are being busted and unfortunately, it is likely some may soon join us behind these ugly prison walls - - so let's remember - - Freedom is A Constant Struggle!

BLM,
Jaan Laaman

11 Oct - David Gilbert, other elder inmates deserve clemency

The following was is an OpEd piece written by someone in their 12th year on parole after having spent 30-plus consecutive years in various correctional facilities in New York State.

MORE:

by Jerome Wright (*Buffalo News*)

Since my release on parole, I strive each and every day to reach out to angry, bewildered and vulnerable young people through the work I do with the Mentoring and Nurturing Program I created while incarcerated and currently run for at-risk youth and justice-involved individuals in Western New York.

The person who more than anyone is responsible for helping me – and literally hundreds of other young people – become productive and contributing members of society is still in prison today. David Gilbert, 75 years old, is in Shawangunk Correctional Facility, Ulster County, in his 39th year of a life sentence. In the interests of justice, mercy and the good of society, he – and others – deserve to be released.

I was incarcerated with a sentence of 18½ years to life for my involvement in crimes that transpired while I was 18 years old in March 1979. I was sent to Great Meadow Correctional Facility, where as an aimless and angry young Black man I met Dave, a white man who was also serving a life sentence for his involvement in a tragic crime connected with the Black Liberation movement. It was in this violent and highly segregated environment that Dave reached out to me to encourage me to attend college, stay out of trouble and find something other than my delinquent self to promote.

Due to Dave's insistence, I enrolled in Skidmore College after several stints in solitary confinement for assorted and sometimes violent encounters.

Having been moved around a lot during our sentences, both of us saw each other at times over the rest of my incarceration, but no time was more telling than when we both suffered the loss of a mutual friend to HIV/AIDS. It was in those early years when the epidemic had just taken hold.

It was at Dave's urging that I took the HIV/AIDS Peer Training class, which he had developed. It changed my life and that of so many family and friends.

Over the years, Dave has continued to inspire, mentor and in many ways "father" the thousands of fatherless young and older men who find themselves in his company.

David Gilbert is not the only person in New York State's prisons who is serving long years beyond any possible benefit to society, but he is one example of the unnecessary cruelty and vengeance that too often marks that system. Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo can and should bring justice, reasonableness and compassion into the system by granting clemency to David and other elders so they can return to their communities and families that need them.

13 Oct - 'Straight to Gunshots': How a U.S. Task Force Killed an Antifa Activist

A few days after a shooting left a far-right Trump supporter dead on the streets of Portland, Oregon, Michael Reinhoehl, an antifa activist who had been named in the news media as a focus of the investigation, feared that vigilantes were after him, not to mention the police.

MORE:

by Evan Hill, Mike Baker, Derek Knowles and Stella Cooper (*New York Times*)

Michael Reinhoehl was on the run. Even some of his close friends did not know where he was.

But the authorities knew.

On Sept. 3, about 120 miles north of Portland, Mr. Reinhoehl was getting into his Volkswagen station wagon when a pair of unmarked sport utility vehicles roared through the quiet streets, screeching to a halt just in front of his bumper. Members of a U.S. Marshals task force jumped out and unleashed a hail of bullets that shattered windows, whizzed past bystanders and left Mr. Reinhoehl dead in the street.

Attorney General William P. Barr trumpeted the operation as a "significant accomplishment" that removed a "violent agitator." The officers had opened fire, he said, when Mr. Reinhoehl "attempted to escape arrest" and "produced a firearm" during the encounter. But a reconstruction of what happened that night, based on the accounts of people who witnessed the confrontation and the preliminary findings of investigators, produces a much different picture — one that raises questions about whether law enforcement officers made any serious attempt to arrest Mr. Reinhoehl before killing him.

In interviews with 22 people who were near the scene, all but one said they did not hear officers identify themselves or give any commands before opening fire. In their official statements, not yet made public, the officers offered differing accounts of whether they saw Mr. Reinhoehl with a weapon. One told investigators he thought he saw Mr. Reinhoehl raise a gun inside the vehicle before the firing began, but two others said they did not.

Mr. Reinhoehl did have a .380-caliber handgun on him when he was killed, according to the county sheriff's team that is running a criminal homicide investigation into Mr. Reinhoehl's death. But the weapon was found in his pocket.

An AR-style rifle was found apparently untouched in a bag in his car.

Five eyewitnesses said in interviews that the gunfire began the instant the vehicles arrived. None of them saw Mr. Reinhoehl holding a weapon. A single shell casing of the same caliber as the handgun he was carrying was found inside his car.

Garrett Louis, who watched the shooting begin while trying to get his 8-year-old son out of the line of fire, said the officers arrived with such speed and violence that he initially assumed they were drug dealers gunning down a foe — until he saw their law enforcement vests.

"I respect cops to the utmost, but things were definitely in no way, shape or form done properly," Mr. Louis said.

The U.S. Marshals Service declined to comment for this article, citing the pending investigation. The agency previously said that it had attempted to "peacefully arrest" Mr. Reinhoehl and that he had threatened the lives of law enforcement officers.

President Trump, who has described the racial justice protests that have roiled the nation as the work of lawless criminals, praised the operation.

"This guy was a violent criminal, and the U.S. Marshals killed him," the president told Fox News. "And I will tell you something, that's the way it has to be. There has to be retribution when you have crime like this."

'That shot felt like the beginning of a war'

Mr. Reinoehl had joined protesters in Portland in the aftermath of George Floyd's killing by the Minneapolis police in May, writing online that they were waging a necessary war with the potential to "fix everything." He devoted himself to the Black Lives Matter movement and once touted himself as "100% ANTIFA all the way."

Mr. Reinoehl, a 48-year-old contractor and professional snowboarder, had run into trouble with the law in June, when he was cited for driving under the influence of a controlled substance and having an unlicensed firearm in the car. Later, during the protests, the police arrested him and cited him for carrying a loaded firearm in a public place, but prosecutors dropped the charges.

When the protests against the police got underway in Portland, he carved a niche for himself providing security, watching for agitators. After a caravan of supporters of Mr. Trump arrived in Portland on Aug. 29 and began clashing with the protesters, a security camera showed Mr. Reinoehl keeping an eye on one of them — Aaron J. Danielson, a supporter of the far-right group Patriot Prayer who was walking with a can of bear repellent and an expandable baton.

Seconds later, a separate livestream video captured Mr. Danielson being shot, and The Oregonian newspaper reported later that Mr. Reinoehl was under investigation in the case. In an interview while he was in hiding that Vice News broadcast on Sept. 3, Mr. Reinoehl said he had fired in self-defense. "That shot felt like the beginning of a war," he said.

A quiet night and a sudden raid

On the day the interview aired, officers with the U.S. Marshals' Pacific Northwest Violent Offender Task Force met for an intelligence briefing.

The team, which included a mix of federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, already knew that Mr. Reinoehl was staying in a brick complex of apartments in Lacey, Wash. The task force had information from an informant, passed on by the Portland police, about Mr. Reinoehl's location and possession of firearms, said Lt. Ray Brady of the Thurston County Sheriff's Office, who leads the team investigating Mr. Reinoehl's death.

Though the Portland police had yet to issue a warrant for Mr. Reinoehl's arrest, the task force prepared to move in.

That evening, outside the apartment complex where the police say Mr. Reinoehl had been staying, the neighborhood was quiet.

Mr. Louis, a carpenter and former U.S. Army medic, watched his son ride his bike with his younger brother and a neighborhood friend. Around the corner, Chad Smith and two friends, Chase Cutler and Jon Chastain, were wrapping up an afternoon spent working on cars.

Mr. Reinoehl left the apartment and walked toward his Volkswagen, parked along the street roughly 100 feet away. Two officers positively identified Mr. Reinoehl, who proceeded to get into the car, said Lieutenant Brady, who shared some of the initial findings of the investigation with *The New York Times*. They decided to make an immediate arrest, the officers told investigators, in part to avoid a high-speed chase.

Mr. Smith said he and his friends turned their heads to the sound of a vehicle accelerating rapidly, headed southbound toward the street where Mr. Reinoehl was walking. A second law enforcement S.U.V., which had been parked across from Mr. Smith's house, moved in with such speed that the friends thought they were witnessing a road rage incident or a gang shooting.

Mr. Smith and Mr. Cutler ran after the unmarked S.U.V.s, watching as they turned onto Mr. Reinoehl's street, one cutting the corner and speeding over the grass.

Nate Dinguss, who according to Lieutenant Brady lived in the apartment where Mr. Reinoehl was staying, said Mr. Reinoehl was chewing a gummy worm as he approached his station wagon, with a phone in one hand and a bag in the other.

Mr. Dinguss said in an interview that officers began jumping out of the vehicles before they had come to a complete stop, and that one of them opened fire immediately, before any commands had been given. Another man who was walking his dog nearby said that a burst of about 10 gunshots began almost immediately after the S.U.V.s came to a halt, and that he did not recall hearing any commands. Mr. Louis, who was on the other side of the scene, some 140 feet from Mr. Reinoehl, also said the police opened fire immediately, without giving any warnings — as did Mr. Smith and Mr. Cutler.

"There was no, 'Get out of the car!' There was no, 'Stop!' There was no nothing. They just got out of the car and started shooting," Mr. Louis said.

Mr. Smith described it similarly: "There was no yelling. There was no screaming. There was no altercation. It was just straight to gunshots."

Of the 22 people interviewed by *The Times* who said they were near the shooting when it occurred, only one man reported hearing any shouting before the gunshots began.

That man, Quentin Gruner, whose apartment is about 75 feet away, said he was letting his dog out when he heard shouting that he thought was neighbors having a fight, followed by a popping noise.

The four officers who were riding in the S.U.V.s said in their statements to Thurston County sheriff's investigators that they shouted "Stop! Police!" before opening fire, Lieutenant Brady said.

But the officers gave conflicting stories about what led them to begin firing. One reported that he saw Mr. Reinoehl, inside the vehicle, raise "what they perceived to be a gun," Lieutenant Brady said. Two other officers said they only saw Mr. Reinoehl make "furtive movements" toward the center console, he said.

Lieutenant Brady said the first shots appear to have struck Mr. Reinoehl inside the vehicle, and videos of the aftermath show bullet marks in the driver's side of the windshield. Though apparently wounded, Mr. Reinoehl began moving away from the officers on foot.

Officers continued to fire, and as Mr. Reinoehl stepped into the street from behind a nearby truck, a final burst took him down, Lieutenant Brady said. He most likely died immediately, said the Thurston County coroner, Gary Warnock.

Officers also offered conflicting accounts of those final shots. One said that Mr. Reinoehl, while in the street, pointed a gun. Other officers said that he appeared to be trying to "retrieve" one from his pants pocket.

As they searched Mr. Reinoehl's body, officers found the gun, Lieutenant Brady said. It was still in his pocket.

The aftermath

In all, four officers fired about 30 rounds from two rifles and two handguns, Lieutenant Brady said.

A visit to the scene by a reporter, as well as videos and photos from the aftermath, showed that at least eight of the officers' bullets struck civilian property.

Angel Romero, who lives directly adjacent to the shooting, said at least five bullets hit a brick wall and a wooden fence at his home. One traveled through an exterior wall and passed above his dog kennels and through his dining room — narrowly missing his brother before lodging in a kitchen wall. Mr. Romero's neighbor found a smashed bullet in his backyard grass.

"They literally found ricochet bullets where my kid was," Mr. Louis said.

Lieutenant Brady said it would be several months before lab results determined whether the shell casing found in the Volkswagen matched the handgun found in Mr. Reinoehl's pocket, and it may never be known whether it was fired that day. There is no evidence that Mr. Reinoehl touched the rifle found in the bag in his car, the chief investigator said.

None of the officers said they saw Mr. Reinoehl fire his handgun, and investigators have found no other evidence that suggests he did. Investigators found no .380 bullets or casings outside the vehicle.

In the aftermath, some news accounts quoted witnesses describing Mr. Reinoehl firing shots. One of them, Mr. Smith, said he was misquoted. Another woman also described Mr. Reinoehl firing shots, but in another account said that she was not present when the shooting began. Mr. Cutler said he heard a pistol that he thought might have been Mr. Reinoehl's firing first, but Lieutenant Brady said the officers fired pistols as well as rifles.

Six minutes after the shooting started, Jashon Spencer, a resident of the apartment complex, began filming a live video from the scene. In it, roughly eight and a half minutes after Mr. Reinoehl was likely killed, an officer could be seen beginning chest compressions on Mr. Reinoehl's motionless body. They were undertaken almost perfunctorily, from a standing position, and soon ended.

16 Oct - Green Scare webinar was recorded

Recently, Lauren Regan, Executive Director & Senior Staff Attorney, and CLDC advisory board member and former political prisoner Daniel McGowan, discussed the "Green Scare"—the largest federal prosecution of environmental and animal rights activists in the history of the U.S.

MORE:

Daniel was one of the Green Scare non-cooperating defendants and Lauren was one of the Green Scare criminal defense lawyers. They explained and discussed the historic importance of these cases to resistance movements and current implications regarding State repression and frontline actions.

If you were not able to check out the Green Scare webinar, feel free to send an email to communications@cldc.org and request a link to the 'Green Scare' webinar.

23 Oct - Gitmo North: How Muslim Prisoners Are Denied Basic Rights In US Prisons

WHAT: Webinar

WHEN: 2:30 PM, Friday, October 23rd

WHERE: Zoom

COST: FREE

MORE:

This Friday, we'll be examining the recent unfortunate dismissal of the Aref v. Barr lawsuit against the Bureau of Prisons brought by the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) on behalf of several federal

prisoners who had been incarcerated in two Muslim-majority special units, called Communications Management Units (CMUs) dubbed "Guantanamo North."

Joining us will be two former political prisoners and CMU residents, Yassin Aref, the original plaintiff after whom *Aref v. Holder* was named, and Daniel McGowan, a political prisoner who was sent to a CMU for his political writings and as a "balancer" so that the CMUs could not be said to be completely Muslim. Both men were held in the two CMUs in Terre Haute, Indiana and Marion, Illinois and will speak about their experiences. Rachel Meeropol, CCR Senior Staff Attorney and lead counsel on the lawsuit, will speak about the legal challenge to the CMUs and future implications for the criminal justice system in the U.S. Co-sponsored by the Center for Constitutional Rights.

Register on Zoom at bit.ly/CCFCMUwebinar or tune in on Facebook facebook.com/civilfreedoms/live

23 Oct - Critical First Aid In The Streets

WHAT: Training

WHEN: 7:00 PM, Friday, October 23rd

WHERE: Online

COST: FREE

MORE:

Join NYC Action Medical and Mayday Space for two free online bridge trainings about providing life-saving interventions in protest situations. We will be offering live captioning, and participants will receive a follow-up email with resources. This training does not require any previous medical knowledge. (Note: If you are a medical professional, consider attending NYCAM's online bridge training to learn how to run a street on Sunday, October 25: tinyurl.com/bridgeaid)

25 Oct - Talking about Race and Power in MACC

WHAT: Meeting

WHEN: 7:00 PM, Sunday October 25th

WHERE: Online

COST: FREE

MORE:

We're convening a meeting to improve MACC as a multi-racial anti-racist organization. We are centering non-white organizers in this process, but we are inviting both white and non-white folks to come to the meeting, as white supremacy can't be undone without all of us working together and it's essential for white folks to step up (by attending), while also stepping back (by listening more than they speak).

Meanwhile, we're inviting non-white organizers to consider the questions: What type of space would be meaningful and supportive for you to organize in? How do we understand anarchism in the context of liberation for our respective communities? Where do you think MACC has fallen short in centering these experiences and perspectives in our organizing work?

We recognize that it takes a lot of labor for non-white folks to share these thoughts in interracial spaces, and that some MACC organizers may not be able to attend. If you are a MACC organizer (current or former), we invite you to please share anonymous feedback with us about your experiences via the attached form by Friday 10/23 so that we can read through it in time to share it anonymously at the meeting on Sunday 10/25. We are grateful for any honest comments, especially from non-white organizers who have worked with MACC in the past, as we root out white supremacy (and related problems like color-blindness, white silence, white fragility, etc.) in MACC and in general.

This meeting is open to MACC members, and you can find the meeting invitation details on Loomio: loomio.org/d/EgmAB07C/abolishing-whiteness-10-25-7-pm