



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for August 25th

6 Aug - New Jersey police are pressing felony charges for retweeting an officer's photo

A New Jersey police department is pursuing cyber harassment charges against five people in connection with a protest photo uploaded to Twitter in June.

MORE:

by Adi Robertson (*The Verge*)

Complaints were served against the original tweeter and four other people who retweeted the message, alleging that they caused the officer to fear for the safety of his family.

It's an unprecedented use of anti-harassment laws, coming amid a nationwide law enforcement backlash against anti-police brutality activism. If successful, the charges would add significant new risks to political activity on social media, a key element in the ongoing protest movements.

The Nutley Police Department filed its complaints in late July over a tweet posted during a June 26th protest. The now-deleted message included a photo of a masked on-duty police officer with a request that "If anyone knows who this bitch is throw his info under this tweet." Because of the mask, the officer is not readily identifiable from the photograph, and there do not appear to be any replies revealing his identity.

The original poster and the retweeters are charged with cyber harassment, a fourth-degree felony punishable by up to 18 months in jail. Activist Georgana Szisak, one of the retweeters, revealed the complaint in a GoFundMe campaign last week. The American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey confirmed its existence to *The Verge*, as did Szisak's attorney Alan Peyrouton. *The Verge* has also reviewed a copy of Szisak's summons.

"I've never seen anything like it," says Peyrouton of the case. "I don't see how that rises to the level of a crime." Szisak originally requested \$3,000 to hire an attorney; so far, she's raised around \$8,200. Her summons orders her to appear in court later this month.

The department charged Szisak and others on behalf of Detective Peter Sandomenico, who the complaint identifies as the officer in the tweet. It alleges that the photo and accompanying caption threatened the officer "acting in the performance of his duties, causing Detective Sandomenico to fear that harm will come to himself, family, and property."

At the time Szisak posted her fundraiser, the post had no replies and five retweets. It's unclear how the department discovered its existence. However, some departments use automated social media surveillance tools to track all the tweets sent from a particular location. Had such a tool been used to surveil the Nutley protests, it would likely have surfaced the Sandomenico tweet.

The Nutley Police Department confirmed that it had filed complaints against five people for cyber harassment. "Charges were filed by our department. For an incident relating to one of our officers. However this remains under investigation which prevents me from providing any further details," Detective Lieutenant Anthony Montanari told *The Verge*. The department also confirmed the officer's identity.

Szisak wrote on GoFundMe that she had been blindsided by the summons. "I did not reply, did not say anything against this cop, and had zero clue to who he was," she wrote. "The purpose of this tweet was to find out the officer's information, to hold him accountable."

While the original poster is not named in the summons, Sztysak and her attorney corroborated his identity as Kevin Alfaro, who posted a separate GoFundMe campaign in July. (Alfaro did not respond to messages via Twitter or GoFundMe.) Alfaro's GoFundMe describes a June 26th Nutley For Black Lives protest where young anti-racism demonstrators were confronted by pro-Christopher Columbus counter-protestors. The groups were eventually separated by barricades and police, although News 12 New Jersey reported that no arrests were made.

The campaign description says Alfaro was upset by officers who were "very friendly" with counter-protesters and covered their badges, a practice that some officers across the country have adopted to dodge complaints from protesters. "In an attempt to identify a specific police officer who was befriendng someone harassing me, I uploaded a photo." His tweet includes a picture of the "Thin Blue Line" American flag printed on Sandomenico's mask — a symbol that's used to signify police solidarity but is fraught with racist associations.

The department's legal argument against the five Twitter users is murky. A 2014 New Jersey law bans online harassment when it threatens someone with physical harm or crimes against their property, or when it involves sending "lewd, indecent, or obscene" material — it's more typically applied in cases involving persistent harassment campaigns and cyberstalking. The First Amendment also protects the right to photograph on-duty police officers.

There's particularly little precedent for punishing retweets, even in lower-stakes non-criminal cases. MSNBC host Joy Reid was sued in 2018 for retweeting someone else's allegedly defamatory post. But the plaintiff quickly dropped the retweet accusation, focusing only on statements Reid wrote. A recent suit claims retweets can count as copyright infringement, but it's not yet resolved. The protest retweets could potentially be covered by Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, a shield law that protects web services and their users from liability over other people's posts.

The complaint implies that requesting Sandomenico's "info" was an invitation to harass or doxx the officer. Harassment victims have sued trolls who encouraged followers to abuse them — like Montana real estate agent Tanya Gersh, who won a case against neo-Nazi blogger Andrew Anglin last year. But Gersh was terrorized for months after Anglin published dozens of articles about her and asked his followers to create a "troll storm." The Nutley Police Department did not report any harassment beyond the original tweet, which itself didn't call for any action beyond identifying Sandomenico.

Alexander Shalom, ACLU-NJ's director of Supreme Court advocacy, declared the charges specious. "[The law] is designed to prevent venal harm, not hypersensitivity and hurt feelings," he told *The Verge*. "What this appears to be is a police officer flexing his ability to charge someone notwithstanding the fact that he cannot establish the elements of the crime."

Prosecuting people for clicking the retweet button could turn social media into a minefield. It would discourage users from engaging with content if there's even a small risk of getting a complaint, especially users who aren't sure what constitutes harassment or other legal violations. And charging everyone who retweeted even a single popular post would be almost impossible, turning it into a cudgel that powerful institutions — including the police — could selectively use against critics. "What if it had gotten retweeted 50,000 times? Are you going to go out to those 50,000 retweeters?" asks Peyrouton. "It's inconceivable to me."

Regardless of the outcome, the felony charges have serious consequences for the accused. In the days since receiving the complaint, Sztysak has been forced to manage the expense of hiring an attorney and the frustration of navigating a legal system upended by the coronavirus pandemic. Even if the charges don't result in a sentence, the filing could intimidate protesters who want to legally record police, or make others afraid to engage with them.

“I cannot explain the fear I have and the worry I have for me vs. a police department,” Szisznak writes. “I feel afraid that I may have compromised my whole future based on something that I had believed was exercising my First Amendment right.”

9 Aug - Secret Pandemic: Why All Elderly Black Political Prisoners Deserve Immediate Compassionate Release

The lifetime risk of bone marrow cancer in the U.S. is .8%, less than one in 100. So why should two of the highest profile Black U.S.-held political prisoners/prisoners of war, both with histories of having been incarcerated at the same hell hole, Florence Colorado Super Max Prison, come down with bone marrow cancer at the same time?

MORE:

by James C. McIntosh (*Black Star News*)

In the case of Jamil Abdullah Al Amin (a.k.a. H. Rap Brown), age 76, news articles have reported that he is suffering from multiple myeloma. In the case of Mutulu Shakur, aged 70, news articles have reported that he is suffering from bone marrow cancer. Word games are being played here; they are the same thing. Something doesn't smell right. When you take into the account the growing list of Black Political Prisoners/P.O.W. s around the country that have contracted diseases or died under medically suspicious circumstances, the stench stinks.

Delbert Africa, age 74, died in 2020 of bone cancer. Phil Africa age 63, died in 2015, according to The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections and the Luzerne P.A. County coroner, of "natural causes." However, he died after first going to the prison infirmary on Jan. 4 and then Wilkes-Barre General Hospital where he was held in total isolation, incommunicado for five days during a time of no pandemic. He was returned to the prison and placed in hospice care.

Hospice care generally means that a person is expected to die within six months. How did anyone know that a 63-year-old man was going to die of “natural causes” within six months. The phrase “natural causes” means nothing. Nobody dies of natural causes. Some illness, disease or injury generally kills everybody but certainly everybody under the age of 100.

Jalil Muntaquim, age 68, has had a stroke with consequent brain damage. He also has chronic bronchitis and has scarring on his lungs from T.B.

Mumia Abu Jamal, age 66, has hepatitis C that was allowed progress to cirrhosis because of refusal to treat him with effective drugs. His supporters actually had to go to court to force the prison system to treat him. The 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in 2019 as did a lower court prior to that, that Abu Jamal can sue the prison system over their delay in giving him curative medications.

The few political prisoners or U.S.-held P.O.W.s mentioned in this article who have either severe and in many cases suspicious illnesses or have died of same is not comprehensive by any means. The list mentioned here is long enough, however, to assert that something is wrong with prison medical care in general and with the care of Political prisoners and P.O.W's in particular. It is long enough to support the argument that all elderly and sick prisoners especially, political prisoners and P.O.W.s should be freed during this pandemic on compassionate release; Dr. Mutulu Shakur, Imam Jamil Abdullah Al Amin and Jamil Muntaquim specifically who are all both elderly and sick and have spent over 100 years between the three of them in prison should receive immediate compassionate release from prison.

Lastly there is enough evidence for the Medical Associations such as the American Medical Association, The American Nurses Association and especially the Black Medical associations such as the Black Nurses Association, The National Medical association, The Student National Medical association to demand an objective investigation of prison health in general, Florence Super Max in particular and the health of U.S. held political prisoners and P.O.W.s. The Trade Unions such as 1199 and their healthcare subsidiaries such

as S.E.I.U., C.I.R., Doctors Council representing the medical professions and ancillary services should also be making the same demands.

If you read this article and are a member or a leader of any of these unions and medical organizations please request your leadership to address these humanitarian issues. If you are a Democrat ask Biden and his soon to be announced running mate to address this issue if they want your vote.

10 Aug - Civil rights groups call to reopen case of Imam Jamil Al-Amin

*Several civil rights organizations say there is enough new evidence to grant a former civil rights leader turned Muslim a new murder trial. **ALERT:** This is a corporate media article, so read it with a critical eye.*

MORE:

by Aungelique Proctor (Fox 5 Atlanta)

Jamil Al-Amin, formerly known as H. RAP Brown, was convicted of murdering Fulton County Deputy Ricky Kitchens back in 2002.

Kitchens and Deputy Aldranon English were trying to execute an arrest warrant on the former civil rights leader at his home in the West End.

The March 2000 confrontation led to a car-to-car shooting. Kitchens died from his injuries.

The Georgia chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, the Imam Jamil Action Network, and the Islamic Circle of North America, and other community advocates held a news conference challenging Fulton County District Attorney Paul Howard and his challenger, veteran attorney Fani Willis, to reopen the case under the newly formed Conviction Integrity Unit.

The organizations say the man who confessed, Otis Jackson, is in prison today in Florida. He confessed to killing the Fulton county deputy during an unrelated trial, so it is on videotape now.

Al-Almin's son, who is an attorney, explained what is different this time since the Supreme Court declined to hear the case.

"A lot of the evidence we wanted to present, we are not allowed to present," Kairi Al-Amin said. "For instance, this confession. We knew about Otis Jackson before the initial trial. However, the prosecution told our defense attorneys that one, there was an ankle monitor that proved he could not have been there and two, that he was a little off mentally, so people wouldn't believe what he said. Since then, we have hired a private investigator to check the ankle monitor and the ankle monitor was faulty. Secondly, he confessed on the stand in another trial, and before he did that he had to have a psychological exam and they deemed him not only competent but intelligent."

Earlier this year, Ambassador Andrew Young ask Howard to have the Conviction Integrity Unit look at Al-Amin's case.

Willis responded to FOX 5's inquiry.

"The District Attorney's job is to make sure justice is done, not just convict people," she said. "That's why, as District Attorney, I will always consider information that calls into question past convictions. If people have information that may indicate that this conviction was unjust, I will certainly provide them the opportunity to come forward and I will give the information full consideration. If I agree that the information calls into question to legitimacy of the conviction, I will reopen the case."

Howard did not respond to our inquiries.

10 Aug - "Black August" Honors Captives of Armed Struggle

Black Agenda Radio with Margaret Kimberley and Glen Ford talks with Jihad Abdulmumit, chairperson of the Jericho Movement about the history and current relevance of Black August.

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"Black August started in San Quentin to highlight the armed struggle," said Abdulmumit, chairperson of the Jericho Movement, which advocates for political prisoners. "These struggle in the past are reflective of the conditions that protesters in the streets are still fighting," said Abdulmumit, a former Black Panther who spent 23 years as a political prisoner. Listen in full at blackagenda.com/black-august-honors-captives-armed-struggle

11 Aug - Doug Wright Update

We recently received a letter from Cleveland 4 political prisoner Doug Wright and are including an update from him below.

MORE:

On August 29, 2019 I was jumped by three white supremacists. The reason they jumped me was because I'm anti-racist. The ABC Tattoo on my forearm and the way I carry myself was obvious that I was not like them. I got placed on Con-Air January 16, 2020 to Oklahoma City. They told me I was going to USP Florence. Exactly a week later on the 23rd they put me on a plane again. We landed back in Adelanto. They sent me back for an incident report I had gotten a week before I left. It was for "jacking" the food slot. Which is placing your arm in the food slot so they can't close it. They gave me a tray that was messed up, I told the officers, but they told me "tough shit." After taking care of the shot, I was going to be on the March 13th plane but that's the day the BOP suspended all movement, system-wide.

June 25th I was moved to one of the two "Hold-Over" units. In this unit we can't purchase anything from commissary, can't use phones or computers, and we would get prepared meals, on styrofoam trays. The portions are smaller than a child eats. Since we cannot purchase anything, we complained about the portions and the staff tells us, "It's the same as the rest of the compound gets," but the rest of the compound can purchase food.

They give us five stamps, five envelopes, and five sheets of paper every MONTH. They give us six bars of soap (2"x1"x1/8"), one toothbrush, and one toothpaste every week.

We were originally supposed to be here 14 days but on day 14 the counselor told us it was cancelled because of a COVID-19 outbreak here in Victorville. I had to ask the nurse how many and she said over fifty. I just had my third COVID-19 test. They keep cancelling the bus to Florence because of "more new cases," but there's been none in this unit which is what should matter. My fellow inmates and I are curious what other inmates in other institutions are going through. Feel free to write me.

11 Aug - A terrible decision

We're going to start including updates on Lore, recently arrested in Philadelphia. If you choose to write to Lore, please be mindful of the fact that she is pre-trial.

MORE:

Friends, I am so incredibly sorry to inform you that the Federal District Court has denied Lore's emergency appeal for release on house arrest pending trial. We were horrified to receive the news late today, that the court would accept and repeat verbatim all of the US Attorney's overreaches, unsubstantiated claims, basic factual errors, and bafflingly obvious falsehoods, to detain her indefinitely.

Lore has languished in detention for more than eight weeks already, including 18 days in solitary confinement, while we all worked and prayed so hard for her release. The Federal Bureau of Prisons offers no hope whatsoever of allowing any of us in her immediate family to see Lore. As you would expect, her

abiding concern throughout this ordeal has nonetheless been for you and your welfare. We are absolutely astounded by our US Attorney's capacity for cruelty against the community of care that feels so much safer with Lore than without her.

We're inconsolable tonight, but we refuse to stop fighting for the champion who has always fought so hard for each of us. The road ahead is very long, but we are stronger and more determined than ever to walk it with your help. Your character references, support fund donations, and letters of encouragement and love to Lore; all of the public and private support to Lore, her family, and her community, continue to lift and empower us.

Please continue to lend her your strength. We will post further updates about opportunities to share your love and support in Lore's much more joyous and creative spirit here, on Instagram, and Twitter as we go. Please continue, as our Quaker friends put it so eloquently, to hold Lore in the light.

14 Aug - NYPD Used Facial Recognition Technology In Siege Of Black Lives Matter Activist's Apartment

The NYPD deployed facial recognition technology in its hunt for a prominent Black Lives Matter activist, whose home was besieged by dozens of officers and police dogs last week, a spokesperson confirmed to Gothamist.

MORE:

by George Joseph and Jake Offenhartz (*Gothamist*)

Derrick Ingram, the 28-year-old co-founder of Warriors in the Garden, was targeted by officers in riot gear during an hours-long NYPD raid on August 7th, after allegedly shouting into a police officer's ear during a June protest against police brutality. More than 50 officers surrounded his Hell's Kitchen apartment, shutting down his street and urging him to voluntarily surrender, as NYPD helicopters hovered overhead.

In a video shared online by *FreedomNewsTV*, an officer can be seen outside Ingram's apartment holding an "Informational Lead Report" from the NYPD's Facial Identification Section. The report also shows a photo of Ingram.

In response to *Gothamist's* questions, a spokesperson for the NYPD confirmed that facial recognition software was used during the course of the investigation.

"The NYPD uses facial recognition as a limited investigative tool, comparing a still image from a surveillance video to a pool of lawfully possessed arrest photos," the spokesperson said, adding that "no one has ever been arrested solely on the basis of a computer match."

The NYPD's photo of Ingram appears to be taken from his Instagram page. It's unclear how a social media post would constitute either a surveillance video image or an arrest photo, and a spokesperson for the department did not respond to follow up inquiries.

"We're being specifically targeted with this technology because of what we're protesting and because we're trying to deconstruct a system that they're a part of," Ingram told *Gothamist* after he was shown the images. "It's a waste of taxpayer money and dollars that could be reallocated to people struggling throughout this city."

The department's Facial Identification Section uses facial recognition software to identify possible suspects in thousands of cases each year. The software draws on a massive internal database of mugshots to generate possible matches, which are then analyzed by investigators for reliability, according to the department.

Civil liberties advocates have previously criticized the program for using images of juveniles, and its lack of external oversight.

After a *BuzzFeed* investigation revealed that the NYPD was a frequent user of Clearview, a controversial facial recognition firm which collects photos of Americans without their consent, the police department released their first set of public guidelines on its use of the technology. The internal regulations are non-binding, and there is currently no city law governing the department's use of the surveillance technology.

The NYPD has previously stated that the technology is used to gather leads on suspects for crimes, such as robberies and shootings, not to identify people in crowds or at rallies. (The NYPD contends that Ingram's yelling into a bullhorn caused an officer temporary hearing damage and constitutes an assault.)

Dorothy Weldon, an attorney for Ingram, called on the Manhattan District Attorney to disclose relevant discovery information, including alleged identification tactics used in the arrest. "We look forward to uncovering what role, if any, this problematic technology played in officers' decision to, without a warrant, mount a five-hour intimidation campaign against Mr. Ingram that interfered with his constitutional rights," she said

The Mayor's Office and the NYPD did not respond to questions about what role facial recognition technology may have played in the lead-up to the confrontation.

According to Ingram's criminal complaint, Officer Desirae LaFurno, an officer with the Internal Affairs Bureau, confirmed that Ingram was the one who yelled in her ear with the megaphone. Police have not provided footage of the alleged incident, despite repeated requests.

"It's so alarming when we see the tools that are sold to the public as away to fight terrorism and violent crime being used to silence dissent," said Albert Fox Cahn, executive director of the Surveillance Technology Oversight Project. "We would never have seen this level of police response for using a bullhorn if the message hadn't been one opposed to the NYPD," he added.

Joseph Giacalone, a retired NYPD detective sergeant and adjunct professor at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, argued Ingram's alleged violation provided grounds for the department to investigate using the technology. "If you don't wanna get hunted down by the police, don't be yelling in cops' ears with bullhorns," he said. "When protesters cross the line and they're doing stuff like this, then it's no longer peaceable, and all bets are off at that point."

Last month, following widespread protests against police, Mayor Bill de Blasio signed the Police Oversight of Surveillance Technology, which would force the department to disclose more information about its surveillance capabilities. He previously opposed the legislation, arguing that privacy protections were "baked in" to the department's practice.

Asked this week if he was concerned about police targeting activists, the mayor said that recent controversial arrests were isolated incidents, made without the approval of the department's highest-ranking members.

"This police department is never going to interfere with people's rights to protest," he said. "It is a fundamental right and in fact, New York City over the years has done a damn good job in protecting that right."

15 Aug - Drop the Charges Against Minnesota Uprising Defendants!

Two months ago Minneapolis rose up against police crimes in the aftermath of the police murder of George Floyd. Now the system seeking to reassert itself and bring down political repression to silence the uprising. Sign the petition at chnng.it/Qm9j7RYMRQ

MORE:

Drop the charges against Minnesota Uprising defendants.

We, the undersigned, join Minnesota Uprising Arrestee Support (MUAS) in demanding the above individuals, as well as prosecutors everywhere, drop ALL charges, ranging from curfew violations to felonies, related to the uprising following the tragic murder of George Floyd.

In the aftermath of the callous murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis Police, millions of people across the world took to the street. They did this not just for George Floyd, but for what his death stirred in everyone who had faced or seen systemic racism, police brutality, or abuse by the status quo; those who knew we could do better. The people were diverse, as were their actions and their visions for the future. Diverse, but united in a belief that the system of policing as it stands is not only failing to meet the needs of the people it purports to serve, but is actively harming them.

On the streets, in the parks, and in the neighborhoods of Minnesota we are creating new ways of relating to each other based on mutual respect, care, and collective responsibility. People are taking care of their own communities, asking for help from each other, and meeting the needs of safety, community health, and strength by building community solutions to the problems we face. These commitments are driven by a conviction that the policing and prison systems we have held in place until now do not serve us or make us safer, but exacerbate harm, especially on Black, Indigenous, and working people of color. When we say "abolish the police," we are talking about taking back the resources that have been extracted from our communities and funneled toward their militarization and containment. We are also talking about replacing them with resources that prevent violence — housing, healthcare, public education, nutritious food, transportation, etc. Prosecutors, like the police, stand in the way of our efforts to make communities healthier, happier, and stronger. They limit what is truly possible by offering such a limited vision of justice as to be impotent, or worse, to exacerbate continued cycles of systemic violence through the legal system. Procedural justice is not substantive social justice. Community members should not be prosecuted for working to protect each other and to build a better world.

In a historic time where we are facing unprecedented economic crisis, evictions and homelessness, disease and vulnerability, the answer to the challenges our community faces is not further repression. The people of Minnesota are now working to create a better world, one where we take care of each other, where no neighbor is without a home, where no one goes hungry, and where none of us are murdered by the police. There is so much more we can do but are limited when we must also fight these arcane systems trying so hard to keep everything the same.

Choosing to continue to prosecute these cases is choosing to uplift the injustice of the status quo in spite of the needs of the communities most affected. We demand that all of the charges be dropped and invite you to take this action now in a spirit of change. The renowned author Octavia Butler reminds us that, "The only lasting truth is change." You can help shape change or you can continue to stand in the way and be left behind.

"We know that the systems that shape our lives are also shaped by us; culture is both learned and created. To create radical change, we must simultaneously transform ourselves and the way we treat each other. We humbly work to move away from a world built on scarcity, "security" by force, and punishment. Instead we choose to embrace a vision of abundance, security through resilience, and transformation." (MUAS vision statement)

In the interest of justice, get out of the way and let our communities heal.

Drop the charges!

16 Aug - On the Death of Stuart Christie

The Anarchist Black Cross Federation wishes to send our love and support to Stuart Christie's family. Stuart was loved and revered by us. His loss has been a tremendous blow to our community. He was significant in the rebirth of the Anarchist Black Cross movement and we can honestly say this organization would not exist if it were not for him. He was an icon and inspiration for the global anarchist movement for nearly sixty years. There have been few that have been able to match his contribution. For him, we mourn.

MORE:

Stuart Christie 1946-2020 Anarchist activist, writer and publisher

Stuart Christie, founder of the Anarchist Black Cross and Cienfuegos Press and co-author of *The floodgates of anarchy* has died peacefully after a battle with lung cancer.

Born in Glasgow and brought up in Blantyre, Christie credited his grandmother for shaping his political outlook, giving him a clear moral map and ethical code. His determination to follow his conscience led him to anarchism: "Without freedom there would be no equality and without equality no freedom, and without struggle there would be neither." It also led him from the campaign against nuclear weapons to joining the struggle against the Spanish fascist dictator Francisco Franco (1892-1975).

He moved to London and got in touch with the clandestine Spanish anarchist organisation *Defensa Interior* (Interior Defence). He was arrested in Madrid in 1964 carrying explosives to be used in an assassination attempt on Franco. To cover the fact that there was an informer inside the group, the police proclaimed they had agents operating in Britain – and (falsely) that Christie had drawn attention to himself by wearing a kilt.

The threat of the garotte and his twenty year sentence drew international attention to the resistance to the Franco regime. In prison Christie formed lasting friendships with anarchist militants of his and earlier generations. He returned from Spain in 1967, older and wiser, but equally determined to continue the struggle and use his notoriety to aid the comrades he left behind.

In London he met Brenda Earl who would become his political and emotional life partner. He also met Albert Meltzer, and the two would refound the Anarchist Black Cross to promote solidarity with anarchist prisoners in Spain, and the resistance more broadly. Their book, *The floodgates of anarchy* promoted a revolutionary anarchism at odds with the attitudes of some who had come into anarchism from the sixties peace movement. At the Carrara anarchist conference of 1968 Christie got in touch with a new generation of anarchist militants who shared his ideas and approach to action.

Christie's political commitment and international connections made him a target for the British Special Branch. He was acquitted of conspiracy to cause explosions in the "Stoke Newington Eight" trial of 1972, claiming the jury could understand why someone would want to blow up Franco, and why that would make him a target for "conservative-minded policemen".

Free but apparently unemployable, Christie launched Cienfuegos Press which would produce a large number of anarchist books and the encyclopedic Cienfuegos Press Anarchist Review. Briefly Orkney became a centre of anarchist publishing before lack of cashflow ended the project. Christie would continue publishing, and investigating new ways of doing so including ebooks and the internet. His christiebooks.com site contains numerous films on anarchism and biographies of anarchists. He used facebook to create an archive of anarchist history not available anywhere else as he recounted memories and events from his own and other people's lives.

Christie wrote *The investigative researcher's handbook* (1983), sharing skills that he put to use in an exposé of fascist Italian terrorist Stefano delle Chiaie (1984). In 1996 he published the first version of his historical study *We the anarchists : a study of the Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI), 1927-1937*.

Short-run printing enabled him to produce three illustrated volumes of his life story (My granny made me an anarchist, General Franco made me a 'terrorist' and Edward Heath made me angry 2002-2004) which were condensed into a single volume as Granny made me an anarchist : General Franco, the angry brigade and me (2004). His final books were the three volumes of ¡Pistoleros! The Chronicles of Farquhar McHarg, his tales of a Glaswegian anarchist who joins the Spanish anarchist defence groups in the years 1918-1924.

Committed to anarchism and publishing, Christie appeared at many bookfairs and film festivals, but scorned any suggestion he had come to 'lead' anyone anywhere.

Christie's partner Brenda died in June 2019. He slipped away peacefully, listening to "Pennies From Heaven" (Brenda's favourite song) in the company of his daughter Branwen.

17 Aug - LEONARD: Political Prisoner

There is a new podcast titled LEONARD: Political Prisoner, about American Indian Movement prisoner Leonard Peltier.

MORE:

In 1977, Native American activist Leonard Peltier was sentenced to consecutive life terms for killing two FBI agents. Then in 2000, a Freedom of Information Act disclosure proved the Feds had framed him. But Leonard's still in prison. This is the story of what happened on the Pine Ridge Reservation half a century ago—and the man who's still behind bars for a crime he didn't commit. Listen at leonard.buzzsprout.com

18 Aug - More Statements For Running Down the Walls 2020

As collectives prepare for RDTW, in person or virtual, statements of support continue to come in.

MORE:

Statement by Bill Dunne about Running Down the Walls

Salutations ABCF Running Down the Walls Comrades!

We gather under trying times. But we gather! We gather without proximity, sacrificing hugs and shared physical space to protect our community so we can emerge from the Covid-19 era stronger. But we gather! And we gather not only in resistance to repression but in sad memory of comrades fallen along the road to revolution – Comrade Sekou Kambui, for one, whose entry into this vale of all things we mark today. But we gather!

We gather to fan the embers of revolution that still burn in all our hearts. We gather to celebrate the life of Sekou Kambui and each of the comrades born in other days who've laid down their teaching for us to carry into the future we engineer. We gather to build that seismic wave that will rattle the foundation of every prison with our footfalls from myriad disparate points. We gather because the future we will create by gathering together tells us we must.

So, let us sally forth from whatever kind of lockdown afflicts our bodies, plug into that radical record that gathers us all, lace up our shoes or grease our wheels, and Run Down the Walls! I'll be with you, stepping up (& down!) on my plastic chair, a reasonable approximation of running in the Covid-19 lockdown here at Victorville FCI-I.

Statement by David Gilbert on Running Down the Walls

In the Spirit of George Floyd

My warm embrace goes out to the bright spirit and good politics of running down the wall... in these most dire and yet promising of times. I know you are building support for a new generation of political prisoners.

A key reason for political prisoner support is to show the continuity of the struggles for social justice. That understanding is acutely important today. The alternative to police who act with disdain and violence toward the people is community control, which is based on developing strong, caring, cohesive communities. Groups like the Black Panther Party and the Young Lords were working on that until they came under withering attack by the police and FBI. Some are still in prison today... today when we now have a new, better opportunity to move toward self-determination and a priority on meeting human needs in the oppressed communities.

21 Aug - Grand Jury Resistor Jailed for Fighting Federal Repression Against BLM

Report on grand jury resistor recently jailed for refusing to work with a grand jury. For more updates see Freedom Fighters Legal Support.

MORE:

At 3:00pm, today, Wednesday, August 19th, Jesse Shackelford, 28, was taken into federal custody at the Dane County Jail and joined a long history of grand jury resisters. He claimed his Fifth Amendment right to silence in order to protect himself and his community and in a strong stand against both this grand jury in particular and the grand jury process as an oppressive, movement-busting tactic.

For refusing to testify in front of a grand jury targeting the Black liberation struggle and uprisings in Madison, Jesse was charged with civil contempt and put in a cage: he is currently being held in solitary confinement. This was his second call to the federal grand jury convened by US Attorney Scott Blader this summer. It is FFLS' understanding that Jesse is the first grand jury resister nationally to be incarcerated in contempt as a result of the 2020 Black liberation uprisings.

Supporters gathered at 12:15pm today on Henry St. by foot and by car to uplift Jesse as he entered the courthouse. A strong band remained until after 4:00pm when word was released that Jesse had been taken into custody at the Dane County Jail with a charge labeled "federal contempt offense- hold for US Marshalls." He has been held in civil contempt of court for continuing to refuse to speak after being granted use immunity. He could be held in federal custody for the duration of the grand jury, up to another 16 months.

We need to show Jesse and our community that we stand up and show out for everyone who resists this tool of state repression!

Write to Jesse. Send Jesse letters, cards, and postcards at the following address. Make sure you follow the mail guidelines listed on the Dane County Sheriff's Office Mail page. It's essential for Jesse to have reminders of the impact he has made on us on the outside.

Words from the resister.

Jesse is a prison abolitionist, longtime Madison resident, and a law student at the City University of New York planning to build a career in movement support. His statement of resistance is as follows:

The feds and Madison police are facilitating a coercive, manipulative operation to quash this movement for black liberation. they are playing a game, as they always have. A brutal, disgusting game, where they steal away those raising their voices in dissent, torturing them, labeling them as felons, doing everything they can to quiet them.

If you support BLM, truly, you know this. You are here because you know this, because you know from the bottom of your heart, and with full mental clarity, that this system and the way it operates is not only the opposite of justice, but evil. The true, real-world embodiment of evil. A system that fills torture chambers with vastly disproportionate amounts of BIPOC, but will take anyone who raises their voice loud enough in opposition.

I'm a white ally and not one to try to be the center of attention, and I'm so grateful to have the opportunity to convey this message even though realistically I'm pretty nervous. To everyone I have met through the movement in the last several weeks, and the friends I've made: I am thankful for every moment I have being in your presence, learning and listening with you. Don't ever let them make you believe this fight is unjust, it is the furthest thing from!

I came out here simply because I feel ethically bound to resist this racist fascist system. I came because I am a full abolitionist!

If you receive visits from federal agents or subpoenas to a grand jury,, please call the Freedom Fighters Grand Jury Support Line at (608) 535-9907 for free legal support. If you are outside Wisconsin, please call the National Lawyers Guild Anti-Repression Hotline at (212) 679-2811 to speak with an attorney at no cost. Remember that anything you say can and will be used against you and others, so it is advisable not to talk about anything you did, witnessed, or heard about with anyone but your attorney. Memorize the line: "I will not speak without my attorney present."

Freedom Fighters Legal Support (FFLS) is a group supporting activists and community members impacted by grand jury proceedings in Madison, Wisconsin. For previous statements on Persons of Interest, Jury Resistance, the Grand Jury, and ATF Visits, see facebook.com/FFLSMadison.

21 Aug - 'Severe inhumanity': California prisons overwhelmed by Covid outbreaks and approaching fires

California's raging wildfires have created a crisis at multiple state prisons, where there are reports of heavy smoke and ash making it hard to breathe, unanswered pleas for evacuation, and concerns that the fire response could lead to further Covid-19 spread.

MORE:

by Sam Levin (*The Guardian*)

A massive fire in the Vacaville area, north of San Francisco, has rapidly spread within miles of two state prisons this week, including one that imprisons terminally ill people in hospice care and the elderly and medically vulnerable.

Despite mass evacuation orders in surrounding areas authorities have resisted calls to evacuate the two adjacent prisons – California Medical Facility (CMF) and Solano state prison. In Los Angeles, a separate fire has grown near the Lancaster state prison, which has also suffered a significant Covid outbreak.

"They are breathing in fire and smoke, and they have nowhere to run," said Sophia Murillo, 39, whose brother is incarcerated at CMF in Vacaville. "Everyone has evacuated but they were left there in prison. Are they going to wait until the last minute to get them out?"

To increase social distancing and limit the spread of Covid, CMF had moved 80 people to sleep in outdoor tents instead of indoor cells, but with the fire approaching and air pollution rising, the prison moved them back indoors. Murillo said she now fears a major Covid outbreak inside the prison, and noted that mass evacuations could also spread the virus if people are packed in buses together.

"I'm furious at the incompetence and severe inhumanity of this," said Kate Chatfield, policy director with the Justice Collaborative, a group that fights mass incarceration. "Covid is allowed to rage through the prison system and kill people, and then they have tent hospitals set up ... and now with wildfires, they take down the tents and put these people back in the Covid-infected building?"

Aaron Francis, a spokesman for the California department of corrections and rehabilitation (CDCR), told the *Guardian* late Thursday that officials were monitoring the Vacaville fires but that the two prisons were

"not in immediate danger" and had no current orders to evacuate. The prisons were initially located within the direct evacuation zone on Wednesday, but were later removed. The Solano county sheriff's office, which issues evacuation orders, did not respond to an inquiry.

California depends on incarcerated laborers to fight wildfires and Covid lockdowns inside prisons forced a dozen of the firefighting crews to shut down earlier this summer, adding to the chaos. More than 1,300 incarcerated firefighters were currently responding to the blazes, Francis said.

'Disaster on top of a disaster'

In June, CDCR did trainings and prescribed burns around the Vacaville prisons to prepare for fire season, Francis said, adding that officials had provided N95 masks to prisoners and staff.

Families and advocates, however, said they had little confidence in CDCR to handle the fires, especially in the wake of major Covid missteps. During the pandemic, the virus spread across the system as CDCR moved prisoners between facilities, and more than 9,700 people were infected, with 55 total killed so far. Meanwhile, incarcerated people have been cut off from their families since March and have described living in inhumane and unsafe conditions, suffering through indefinite quarantines and lockdowns.

The wildfires have only worsened this public health and human rights catastrophe, family members said, noting that their loved ones were experiencing exacerbated anxiety and health problems behind bars.

"It's disaster on top of disaster on top of disaster," said Kirsten Roehler, whose 78-year-old father, Fred Roehler, is imprisoned in Lancaster, where more than 140 people have contracted Covid during the pandemic. Her father, who suffers from lung disease, asthma and heart problems, is at high risk of death if he contracts Covid, and is now trying to shield himself from further respiratory problems from the nearby Lake fire, which ignited a week ago and was only 48% contained on Thursday: "He tried to shut off the air flow to his cell so he wasn't inhaling the smoke."

In one recent letter, Fred said he saw "huge ugly black smoke rising" outside his window and that he blocked his vent and put on a mask to try to protect himself.

Kirsten, who is in the Santa Cruz area where another major fire is threatening the region and causing horrific pollution, said it was unclear to her if CDCR even had a proper evacuation plan in place. "The state is responsible for these people. They have to take care of them, that is their job."

Francis, the CDCR spokesman, said the Lancaster prison was "encouraging inmates to refrain from excessive or strenuous outdoor physical activity", adding they were "given the opportunity to return to their housing unit at any time if they feel they are being negatively impacted by the air quality". Medically vulnerable people are "required to stay indoors" and "high-risk inmates" are being monitored, he said.

Gavin Newsom, California's governor, has released thousands of people early to alleviate overcrowding in prisons (which has also contributed to the prisoner firefighter shortages.) But public health experts have argued that the only way to prevent Covid outbreaks is to cut the population by at least half, releasing 50,000 or more people. Advocates have also called for the state to release elderly and medically vulnerable people en masse, and the fires, they said, have dramatically increased the urgency.

Baleegh Brown, a 31-year-old who is immunocompromised and incarcerated at Lancaster, learned in July that he would be released due to Covid, but more than a month later, he is still waiting, according to his sister Najmah Brown: "His life is at risk and now we have these fires ... We are having nightmares and anxiety. It's very frightening when you feel powerless." (CDCR declined to comment on his case.)

The state has had months to prepare for these overlapping crises and should have released more people sooner, said Adnan Khan, executive director of Re:Store Justice, who was previously incarcerated in the

Solano prison. "It shouldn't come down to Covid or the fires for us to start releasing people," he said. "These Band-Aids aren't going to work. What disaster are we waiting for? Mass incarceration is the disaster."

23 Aug - Text from Thomas Meyer-Falk for Week of Solidarity

August 23-30 is the International Week of Solidarity with Anarchist Prisoners and German anarchist political prisoner Thomas Meyer-Falk has written the following to mark the occasion.

MORE:

Prisons are places of darkness, of gloom, real life cannot flourish there. Because what is “real life”? It is one in freedom, integrated in friendly relationships, experiencing oneself as an individual. Because we live ourselves and are not lived.

It is not without reason that prison criticism is therefore always also a fundamental critique of society and the system, because within the prison walls the same mechanisms prevail as outside the gates, only in a much more severe form.

ABC's Solidarity week for anarchist prisoners takes place in a time marked by the Corona pandemic. The pandemic in particular once again clearly reveals the injustices.

Members of marginalized social groups have a disproportionately higher risk of infection, illness and death (which also applies outside pandemic times, but is only currently particularly evident). And those who are in prison are even more vulnerable, because the general conditions, as the Prisoners' Union (GG/BO) also tirelessly points out, are often pretty lousy.

Action weeks are much more than mere rituals, because ABC always has an effect on society as a whole – and abolishing prisons is a mega-thick board that we are drilling, because it means overcoming contemporary society.

Heart-beating and solidarity greetings from Freiburg.

August 23rd - Elephant in the room podcast: International Week of Solidarity with Anarchist Prisoners

A new decade has started on this planet. With the rise of right-wing movements and the slow decline of social democracy, we are looking into coming years of intense struggle with the state and capitalism. There are already many anarchists sitting in prisons for taking on this fight—forgotten or ignored by liberals and human rights NGOs for “violent” actions.

Quite often anarchists do get solidarity from parts of the society from which they are come. After all who can support one better than their own fellow humans trapped in the same misery of exploitation. However, we believe that responsibility for those facing repression in different parts of the world should not be only on the shoulders of local communities, but of international anarchist movements. Through our collective actions we can not only more widely diffuse the resources that are available, but also keep the fires burning in the chests of those imprisoned through autonomous revolutionary love and direct actions!

We always talk a lot about Solidarity – but what does this mean in the context of prison and why is it so important for people. Which forms of solidarity can we actually give to people in prison? We talked with Nicole from England and Mikolai from Belarus about their experiences in prison, how they received solidarity and what it meant for them.

Download the episode at archive.org/details/20200819-elephantinth-103908

August 24th - Letter by Imprisoned Comrade Francisco Solar for the International Week of Solidarity with Anarchist Prisoners

How can we achieve moments of freedom, even if they are only brief and sporadic? What are those moments where we feel that what limits us loses weight and sense?

The answers can be multiple depending on the interests of each individual, how they understand and situate themselves in this world. Perhaps some people already feel free and these questions are unnecessary because they are alien to the tentacles of power.

Those of us who do not have these kinds of dreams know that the very existence of the State places us in a situation of oppression, a situation that is necessary to fight and attack if freedom is the horizon. It cannot be otherwise.

And it is in that option of attacking that we find true moments of freedom. Since we decided to confront this world and situate ourselves as its enemies, we began to look at our surroundings differently, we began to visualize objectives and their vulnerabilities, we began to see the best way to strike at power, we began to position ourselves on the offensive.

In short, we begin to somehow take back our lives! In the generation of complicities, in the conspiracy and in action we are removing the links in our chains, we are experiencing, even if they are only fleeting, small moments of freedom.

The decision to destroy everything that has been imposed on us is made in the first person, that is to say, it is an individual decision freely assumed with all the risks that it implies. It is born from a personal motivation that does not intend to speak for others or to constitute itself as the vanguard of something, but represents an expression of the struggle, like so many others, that do not seek intermediaries.

Solidarity between anarchists must necessarily go in this same direction to avoid and break with positions that tend to lean to victimization. Solidarity is essential in that it be carried out in the first person, as a free and individual act against power and not only to denounce the situation of this or that comrade.

Anarchic solidarity is a revolutionary solidarity which understands that an important form of solidarity is to continue to strike. Understanding that every action against power is a gesture of solidarity with the comrades in prison. That it sees the struggle in the imprisoned anarchist comrades and does not reduce them only to the category of prisoners, which is where power has placed them. It is to remind the enemy that no matter how much they imprison us, we will continue to attack them, without pausing, and that we have assumed our imprisonment since we took up the struggle.

May this world and its prisons explode!

31 Aug - A Black August Roundtable on the 13th Amendment and Prison Slavery

WHAT: Discussion

WHEN: 6:30 pm, Monday, August 31st

WHERE: Online

COST: FREE

MORE:

Although the 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution formally abolished chattel slavery, it includes a legal loophole known as the "Punishment Clause" that permits the use of forced labor in this nation's jails and prisons. Under the regime of post-13th Amendment prison slavery, corporations, federal and state governments, rather than private citizens, have become slaveholders. Mass incarceration and the disproportionate imprisonment of African- and Latinx-Americans have disenfranchised black and brown

communities and denied them the opportunity to fully participate in society, as well as the right to housing, healthcare, food security, education and work that pays a living wage.

The Amend the 13th Movement and its coalition partners invite you to join us for a "Black August Roundtable on the 13th Amendment and Prison Slavery" in connection with the screening of The Farm: Angola U.S.A., a 1998 documentary on the Mississippi State Penitentiary, also known as the Parchman Farm. The screening (link provided to those that RSVP in advance) and discussion will launch a program of events that will culminate on November 13, 2020, with a national convening, "Amend the 13th: A National Black People's Assembly."

RSVP at connect.gca.columbia.edu/civicism/event/register?reset=1&id=12

Moderators

Mika'il DeVeaux, Ph.D., Nefer Nitty, Esq.

Panelists

William Carter, Jr., Soffiyah Elijah, Esq., Alexis Hoag, Esq., Roderick Watts, Ph.D., and Ashanti Witherspoon

6 Sept - Running Down the Walls

WHAT: Warchest fundraiser

WHEN: Now through September 6th

WHERE: paypal.me/nycabc

COST: Empty that wallet!

MORE:

SUPPORT RUNNING DOWN THE WALLS!

While recognizing the importance of the local event to various communities, it is ultimately the way by which we help build the warchest and directly support out political prisoners and prisoners of war (PP/POWs). Therefore we are calling on folks to help us reach a goal of \$3,000, despite no physical run. Unless otherwise noted by the donor, all donations to paypal.me/nycabc through September 6th will go directly to the warchest.

Just as we support those facing repression in the fallout of recent uprisings, we must also support the PP/POWs who have been imprisoned for years, even decades. Please help us spread the word and direct your friends, loved ones, and comrades to paypal.me/nycabc