



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for February 25th

8 Feb - 80-year-old peace activist faces prison for breaching Georgia submarine base

Eighty-year-old Liz McAlister doesn't regret her actions nearly two years ago, which landed her in jail.

MORE:

by Julia Bergman (*The Day*)

McAlister was one of seven Catholic peace activists, known as the Kings Bay Plowshares 7, who broke into the Naval Submarine Base in Kings Bay, Ga., on the night of April 4, 2018, to carry out “nonviolent acts of prophetic witness against the government’s possession of nuclear weapons.”

A federal jury in U.S. District Court for Southern Georgia in October found them all — McAlister, Father Stephen Kelly, Mark Colville, Clare Grady, Martha Hennessy, Patrick O’Neill and Carmen Trotta — guilty of conspiracy, destruction of property on a naval installation, depredation of government property and trespassing. The jury took less than two hours to deliberate and a judge’s order in the case prevented the jurors from hearing much of the defense the activists wanted to mount.

The defendants face more than 20 years in prison for being convicted of the three felonies and one misdemeanor but likely will be sentenced to far less time than that. McAlister, for her part, already has spent a year and a half in jail.

Sitting in a sunny room at the St. Francis House in New London one recent morning, where’s she’s been living since early November while she awaits sentencing, McAlister said she and the other defendants share “a profound concern about the destructive power of nuclear weapons.”

It’s not the first time McAlister had been sent to jail; a former nun, she is a longtime peace activist who has been arrested many times over the years for actions like the one carried out in Georgia. Activism plays a prominent role in her family: Her late husband, Philip Berrigan, was a nationally known peace advocate who led draft board raids and aroused opposition to the Vietnam War, and her daughter Frida Berrigan also participated in demonstrations and recently ran for mayor of New London as a Green Party candidate.

The family has protested war, agitated for civil rights and other causes and galvanized others across the country to do likewise.

Breaking into the Georgia base

Kings Bay is home to eight Ohio-class submarines armed with Trident missiles, which make up the sea-based leg of the U.S. nuclear triad. The defendants argued in court proceedings that the government’s continued possession, maintenance and development of these missiles constitutes a war crime, and that the submarines based at Kings Bay “have the destructive power to destroy millions of members of the human race and to inflict catastrophic damage to life for every person on Earth.”

They said they were acting according to their beliefs, including the teaching from the prophet Isaiah to “beat swords into plowshares,” and have referred to their actions in Georgia as “nonviolent symbolic disarmament.”

Referring to Pope Francis’ condemnation of nuclear weapons in 2017, McAlister’s lawyer argued in her defense that “the teaching of the Catholic Church is that the possession of nuclear weapons is immoral, as well as the use of those weapons to threaten or cause death and destruction.”

"Moreover, a Catholic whose conscience is formed by those teachings conducts an exercise of religion when she or he engages in prophetic action to raise the consciousness of society about the immorality of those weapons," he said.

The defendants gained access to the base by cutting a padlock on the main perimeter fence surrounding the facility. Once on base, they split up into three groups, with McAlister and two others cutting through additional fencing and concertina wire to gain access to a highly secured area on base "where the Naval Security Force is prepared to use deadly force against intruders," the government said. Once there, they unfurled banners, one of which said "Nuclear weapons: illegal/immoral," and prayed.

The others spray-painted messages on walls and sidewalks with sayings such as "Abolish nukes now," spilled small bottles of their own blood on the ground in front of a static missile display, and hammered on concrete statues of missiles. The government estimated they caused more than \$30,000 in damage.

McAlister said she and the others spent months praying and planning for the action in Georgia, and that choosing to act there was not an easy decision "because we had no support system in Georgia, and it didn't strike some of us as being the most forward-looking place that might be open to understanding what we did and why."

"And that turned out to be quite true," she said.

McAlister spent a year and a half in county jail in Georgia for her actions. She said she could've found someone to post her bond, but decided to stay in jail so she could earn time served.

She spent her days reading, praying, interacting with the other inmates and playing Spades. She built a Scrabble board out of cardboard and paper, relying on a letter from her daughter-in-law that included the rules of the game, such as the number of A's needed and the value of each letter.

Many of her fellow inmates were curious how McAlister, a plain-looking woman who speaks softly but eloquently, ended up in jail.

"They thought I was a little crazy for the most part," she said.

"There are very few who would think this was worthwhile. But they're there for reasons that are also not exactly worthwhile," she said, adding that most of the women incarcerated with her faced drug charges.

McAlister said it "would be foolish" not to anticipate going back to jail. Asked how she's handling that, she answered: "You pray for the grace to walk it step by step, whatever it involves."

February 17th - Sentencing Recommendations Received, No Date Yet

According to federal procedure a pre-sentencing report has to be prepared by the probation office for each defendant who has been convicted. Following complex guidelines based on a person's arrest history, age, likelihood of re-offending and the nature of the offense among other factors, a range of prison time is proposed. A judge usually sentences within these ranges. No sentencing date has yet been set.

All seven defendants have received pre-sentencing reports with recommendations as follows:

Clare Grady: 21-27 months

Liz McAlister: 15-21 months

Carmen Trotta: 21-27 months

Mark Colville: 21-27 months
Patrick O'Neill: 21-27 months
Martha Hennessy: 18-24 months
Fr. Steve Kelly: 28-48 months (including previous probation violation on west coast)

10 Feb - An Open Letter to CA Governor asking for the release of Chip Fitzgerald

AN OPEN LETTER TO GOVERNOR GAVIN NEWSOM

MORE:

By Michelle Alexander and Danny Glover

We are writing in support of Mr. Romaine Fitzgerald's (B-27527) petition for release. He is now 70 years old and has been incarcerated for over 50 years. He has demonstrated deep remorse for his actions and is no longer the person that he was a half a century ago. In the interest of justice, I entreat you to grant his release.

I am fully aware of the serious nature of Romaine's offenses, committed in 1969 when he was still a teenager. As a result of important medical advances, the world knows far more today about the functioning of the teenage brain than it did fifty years ago. Numerous studies have proven that the teenage brain is not mature, is prone to unreasonable risk-taking and lacks the ability to engage in substantive forethought. These facts are borne out by the disproportionate number of young people who comprise the bulk of the world's jail and prison populations.

It is also important to acknowledge the reality of our nation's history. The 1960s represent one of the most tumultuous eras of our national development. Most observers would agree that the racial progress that resulted from that decade's upheavals represent welcome additions to our vibrant democracy. It is unfortunate, indeed lamentable, that some young people who sought to contribute to positive social change engaged in activities that we all agree were both unwise and harmful. While Romaine can be counted among these well-meaning but misguided youths, nothing is gained by keeping him locked in a cage as an elderly man.

Scores of other prisoners convicted of the same offense as Romaine during the same period (circa 1969) have since been paroled. There is no logical, justifiable, or legal reason to continue to incarcerate Romaine, an elderly stroke victim who often requires the use of a wheelchair. I implore you to do justice in this case by granting Romaine's release.

11 Feb - Anti-ICE Activists in Florida Re-Arrested on Felony Charges Months After Protest

Report on repression of a group of anti-ICE activists who have been re-arrested on new felony charges, following an anti-ICE demonstration in December of 2019 against the GEO Group.

MORE:

The first arrest came suddenly, while activist Alexis Butler was relaxing Friday evening at her Dania Beach home. Butler answered a knock at the door and was met by the Broward County Sheriff Department. Witnesses state that BSO told Butler they were responding to a 911 call from her cell phone number and asked to come inside the house. Butler affirms no such call was made, and thought she might have been "SWATed," a cruel and illegal practice by which someone anonymously calls in a false emergency to another person's residence.

When Butler refused their entry, officers stepped through the threshold and forcefully pulled her outside. Butler's partner says it was then that police stated they were acting on an arrest warrant and refused to show the digital warrant to Butler or her partner when asked. The conditions surrounding Butler's arrest are disturbing, not only to her loved ones, but to the other eight activists, making up the GEO9, who were also arrested the same day.

On the morning of December 3rd, while protesting outside GEO's main headquarters in Boca Raton, Florida, and citing GEO's extensive history of human rights abuse in their facilities, their continued profit from mass incarceration, and their involvement in supplying detention camps for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), eight nonviolent protesters were arrested. A ninth protester was arrested on the sidewalk, outside of police barricades, for using a megaphone.

All nine activists were released on their own recognizance the evening of the third, and given charges of misdemeanor trespassing. Six of the nine protesters were preparing for their scheduled court appearance against GEO on February 11th, when they got the news of Butler's arrest, and the addition of possible felony charges. Now the rest of the GEO9 fear that they too may be facing similar charges to Butler, and have to be ready to be arrested straight from their hearing at Palm Beach County Courthouse.

Community members organized a solidarity rally against GEO Group on Tuesday morning outside the Palm Beach County Courthouse, in West Palm Beach. Solidarity may be an important tool for activists facing the corporate behemoth that is GEO Group. With a net-worth of over 2 Billion dollars, GEO has its tendrils in every aspect of the Palm Beach, and Broward County correctional systems, so the assumption that GEO could directly influence the fate of the GEO9 protesters is more than speculative.

Alexis Butler was finally released from jail after three days on Monday, in what activists are calling an intentional move from law enforcement, Butler has a hold on her transfer to general population, which means she has been excluded from many of the regular rights allotted to detainees, some as simple as a bed. Through phone calls to her lawyer and outside support, Butler has reported what she says is obvious mistreatment, and out and out cruelty regarding herself and her case – but also other incarcerated people at the Broward Main Jail.

"There is no lights out." says Butler, who has not slept since her arrest. "We are given just a mat on the floor to sleep on." Butler, who is a vegetarian, says she was allowed by one guard to keep a packet of peanut butter, given out at meal time, since she could not eat the other meals, but hours later a second guard told her it was considered contraband. When Butler asked to file a grievance, the same guard refused her request and placed her in isolation for the following 14 hours without food or water. On the phone, Butler has said she witnessed guards publicly mocking a female inmate who asked for sanitary pads, forcing her to prove that she had bled through her pants.

The conditions in the Broward Main Jail are a bleak microcosm representing the larger crisis of the American prison system. The circumstances of abuse Butler and other inmates have faced over the last three days may be a civil rights violation, but they are not unique. GEO has been publicly facing allegations of human rights abuse as far back as 2005, yet their annual profits have risen, unhindered by consequence.

In an attempt to maintain their grasp of a twisted narrative that paints this multi-billion dollar company as a victim, GEO continues to press for more severe charges for the nine nonviolent-protesters who opposed them on December 3rd.

Protesters and allied groups are desperately fundraising in a race against time for defense costs, and a host of other fees associated with this on-going legal battle. The GEO9 are hoping that Tuesday's support rally

will lend the safety of visibility to their cause, should they be arrested on the spot, without being allowed to attend their court date.

Update February 11th:

The community went out in solidarity to support our GEO9 comrades at the Geo is Guilty Rally and Court Support for their West Palm Beach court trial this morning.

Six of the GEO9 have been re-arrested on felony charges but all are expected to be bonded out today. One comrade so far has been bonded out. The charges are expensive and we need everyone to continue spreading the word so that we can cover escalating legal fees. Thank you to everyone who has spread the link and donated! 100% of the funds go directly to our comrades to get them out of jail and to support the fight for prison abolition.

13 Feb - Nebraska political prisoners are subject of iconographic art

The Omaha Two inspired activist artists Ben Jones and Emory Douglas to create iconographic images of Nebraska's political prisoners.

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Ben Jones, a Chicago artist, has recently completed a portrait of Edward Poindexter, an inmate of the Nebraska State Penitentiary. Emory Douglas, former Black Panther Minister of Culture, created a poster of Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa (former David Rice) in 2016 for Mondo's memorial service. Mondo, who died in March 2016 serving a life without parole sentence, and Poindexter were leaders of Omaha's Black Panthers in 1970 when they were arrested for a policeman's murder.

The two men were targets of a clandestine, and illegal, operation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation code-named COINTELPRO. The men were framed for the August 17, 1970 murder of Patrolman Larry Minard, killed in an ambush bombing. J. Edgar Hoover, the infamous FBI director personally oversaw the manipulation of the murder investigation and ordered the FBI Laboratory to withhold a report on the identity of an anonymous 911 caller who lured Minard to his death. The pair were convicted in April 1971 after a controversial trial marred by conflicting police testimony, perjured testimony, withheld evidence, and planted evidence.

Jones says his upbringing in the Midwest led to his activism for the two prisoners. "When I was eighteen, I was incarcerated for three weeks in Lincoln, Nebraska. I do not recall the charges beyond the crime of being young and black in America, but I vividly remember how it felt."

"Staring out the window, I knew that two blocks down the road was the Nebraska State Penitentiary....I knew that Mondo we Langa and Ed Poindexter were incarcerated for a crime they did not commit. I thought about how I had driven by them without any conception of what they were going through....They were persecuted by COINTELPRO for trying to help people."

"Thinking about the victims of COINTELPRO, one begins to wonder whether the Panthers underestimated the degree of sadism with which the state would seek to obliterate the Black Power movement."

"The sickening idea that the Panthers were punished for trying to help black people never left me. After I got out, I tried to get we Langa and Poindexter out. I organized fundraisers and benefit shows. I painted an eighty by five foot banner that read "FREE MONDO & ED" and was sprawled out at the state capitol."

“Much of the reach of their story comes by way of we Langa’s writings and art....One of his collages became the frontispiece of his 2008 book *The Black Panther is an African Cat: Poems of Exploration and Testimony*.”

Emery Douglas was cartoonist for the Black Panther newspaper and over the years has become recognized as the leading artist of the Black Power movement. Although Douglas and Mondo never met the pair were comrades in struggle and after Mondo died in prison Douglas made a painting for Mondo’s memorial service. Douglas put red stripes over Mondo’s face to symbolize both prison bars and the American flag.

Ed Poindexter remains confined at the Nebraska State Penitentiary, approaching his fiftieth year of imprisonment. Both Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts and Douglas County Attorney Don Kleine refuse requests to reopen the investigation into Minard’s murder despite documented evidence that J. Edgar Hoover tampered with the investigation and trial. Meanwhile, from his tiny cell in Lincoln at the maximum-security prison, Ed Poindexter continues to proclaim his innocence.

15 Feb - Support the NoDAPL political prisoners!

Five Indigenous water protectors were targeted for federal charges and prison as a result of their resistance to an illegal pipeline.

MORE:

The NoDAPL political prisoners gave up their freedom to protect the water, land and people. Today, they need our support.

DONATE TO THE PRISONERS

Everything in prison costs money - every phone call, envelope, piece of paper, toiletries and most necessities must be purchased through the prison commissary. Once released, halfway houses take 25% of prisoners' paychecks. The recently released political prisoners face challenges putting their lives back together each step of the way, while under continued federal supervision. Won't you help our brothers and sister? waterprotectorlegal.org/donate

17 Feb - NSA Whistleblower Reality Winner Asks Trump To Commute Her Sentence

NSA whistleblower Reality Winner submitted a petition for a commutation of her prison sentence.

MORE:

by Kevin Gosztola (*Shadowproof*)

“The continued imprisonment of Reality Leigh Winner serves no social or preventative purpose,” the petition declares. “Her continued incarceration is costly, unnecessary to protect the public, burdensome to her health and well-being, and not commensurate with the severity of her offense.”

Billie Winner-Davis, her mother, said, “I am so very happy about the filing today. For me, this means we are finally able to officially ask for Reality’s immediate release from prison.”

She emphasized, “Keeping Reality in prison serves no purpose. She is not a threat or a danger and has already served so much time behind bars. She has accepted responsibility and has paid a very high price. It’s time to bring her home.”

Winner pled guilty to one count of violating the Espionage Act when she disclosed an NSA report to *The Intercept*. She believed the analyst report contained evidence of Russian hackers targeting United States voter registration systems during the 2016 election.

On August 23, 2018, Winner was sentenced to five years and three months in federal prison. She has served more than half of her prison sentence—nearly 33 months—at Federal Medical Center Carswell in Fort Worth, Texas.

A federal court denied her bail prior to her guilty plea, and she was in jail for one year and nearly three months before her sentencing.

Bobby Christine, the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia, boasted that Winner’s sentence was the “longest received by a defendant for an unauthorized disclosure of national defense information to the media. It appropriately satisfies the need for both punishment and deterrence in light of the nature and seriousness of the offense.”

In arguing for leniency in federal court, Winner’s defense highlighted the cases of Bryan Nishimura, a former Navy reservist who transported classified material from a base in Afghanistan to his home; David Petraeus, a former CIA director who improperly handled and disclosed classified information to his biographer with whom he was having an affair; Sandy Berger, a former Clinton national security adviser who removed classified information from the National Archives without authorization; and Shamai Leibowitz, a former FBI linguist who was prosecuted for showing classified information to a journalist on what he described as illegal and constitutional acts.

The document was marked “top secret,” but primarily, the report described a spear phishing attack, which is an extremely common tactic employed by scammers. Multiple accounts at VR Systems, a Florida-based elections technology software and systems vendor, received an email that was amateur in nature and could hardly be said to contain sensitive information.

“In contrast to others charged and convicted under the Espionage Act, however, she did not work with a foreign agent or entity to conspire against her country,” the petition contends. “Her disclosure did not jeopardize the security or safety of human lives or strategic information. She sought no compensation or attributes and only acted to inform the public.”

FBI agents raided Winner’s home in June 2017, and when they interrogated her (without Mirandizing her), she told agents, “I felt really hopeless, and seeing that information that has been contested back and forth, back and forth in the public domain for so long, trying to figure out, like, with everything else that keeps getting released and keeps getting leaked—Why isn’t this getting, why isn’t this out there? Why can’t this be public?”

Winner has a “greater management variable” designation which prevents her from stepping down to a camp, according to the petition.

FBI whistleblower Terry Albury, who was also prosecuted by President Donald Trump’s Justice Department, is serving a sentence in federal prison for two counts of violating the Espionage Act. He was given a “management variable” designation.

“The [Bureau of Prisons] typically applies this MGTV [management variable] to offenders with lengthy prior arrest records but few convictions, nonviolent offenders who have a history of poor adjustment under probation or community supervision, offenders with a history of organized crime, offenders with significant

foreign ties and/or financial resources, and offenders who have had disciplinary problems during prior incarceration. Inmates who receive this MGTV are placed one security level higher than their score would otherwise require,” Albury wrote in a letter in 2019.

The clemency petition asserts the federal court failed to consider her record of volunteerism and service in the military when she was sentenced. She was a cryptologic language analyst in the 94th Intelligence Squadron in the U.S. Air Force.

Instead of viewing her service in the Air Force as meritorious, an appeals court interpreted it in the most negative way possible to justify keeping her in jail before she pled guilty.

“Evidence in the record indicates that Ms. Winner—who is fluent in Farsi, Dari, and Pashto—has long wanted to live and work in the Middle East,” the appeals court stated. “She wanted the Air Force to deploy her to Afghanistan. She researched traveling, working, and living in places like Kurdistan, Iraq, Afghanistan, Jordan, and the Palestinian territories. She researched flights to Kurdistan and Erbil. She researched buying a home in Jordan. And she researched how to obtain a work visa in Afghanistan.”

The mosaic the appeals court created made it seem like she was intent to go join the Taliban in Afghanistan, even though she had been involved in helping the military kill “high value targets” who were considered terrorists.

“Reality Winner is diagnosed with depression, anxiety, and bulimia,” the petition notes. “Her placement at FMC Carswell was recommended so that she could receive treatment, however, the only treatment available to Reality Winner at this placement is medication.”

“The Bureau of Prisons does not offer therapy to deal with the underlying causes of her mental illness or assist in providing coping mechanism that will help her overcome, adjust, and function. Reality is enduring substantial suffering and in need of therapy to treat her illness,” the petition adds.

Winner has no infractions on her record. She is a fitness trainer at FMC Carswell, and she has pursued education while incarcerated.

On the day of Winner’s sentence, Trump tweeted that her sentence was “unfair” and criticized then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions for issuing a disproportionate sentence. He referred to Hillary Clinton and how she was not prosecuted for mishandling classified information on her private email server.

After Trump made a statement related to her case, Winner commented, “Even our commander-in-chief, President Trump, has kind of come out and said, ‘Wait a minute, this is really unfair. There’s this double standard here.’”

Winner continued, “For that, I can’t thank him enough, because for 16 months, those words, ‘so unfair,’ were actually not allowed by either myself, or my team or my family to really say out in the public. So I just can’t thank him enough for finally saying what everybody has been thinking for 16 months.”

Alison Grinter, a criminal defense attorney in Texas, helped Winner and her family file the request for clemency, and Winner-Davis thanked Grinter for her assistance. She now hopes that President Donald Trump will consider their request.

18 Feb - International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee Bulletin

The support committee apologizes for the long delay in getting out their monthly news letter, but they had a crisis with their computer.

MORE:

As you will read we started this newsletter to reach you by February 6th, the start of Leonard's 44th year of false imprisonment.

As of February 12th a new lockdown started due to a major fight in the yard at Coleman1. Leonard being in the Elder Unit has limited access to the phone and computer but all visits to the prison have been canceled for the foreseeable future. We will keep you updated as we get more information.

Here are Leonard 's thoughts on recent issues he wanted us to share with you as his way of speaking directly to you.

"As February 6th is approaching, I am thinking of the years spent inside, Since my capture and I want to thank for all the wonderful love & support you have shown me over the years and let you know that this support kept my Spirit healthy; and when it looks bleak I remember all the wonderful letters, cards & books not to mention the commissary money you have all sent me over the years. I want to let you know that after a 2 year struggle we finally have a new Sweat Lodge, here at USP Coleman! And thank you again for your letters to the prison in support of the right for myself and other Native brothers to practice our religion.

I hope you are still writing to President Trump requesting clemency and or his help in getting me a transfer to FCI Oxford WI. Oxford is only about a 5-hr. drive for my family that lives in Fargo North Dakota and 8 hours from my home Turtle Mountain, North Dakota. It would be wonderful to see my older sisters & brothers again who can't make the long expensive trip to Florida. Time for lights out so thank you again for your wonderful support and if you have any questions please call the office 218-790-7667."

We want to thank the Chicago Indian Center for hosting the Visions of Home Art Show! It was successful and we hope to have another as soon as we have a place. If you are interested in sponsoring an art show in your area please contact the National Office in Tampa for information. Also, we want to let you know that Leonard's art will be featured in the May edition of New Observations Magazine.

If you have any questions regarding Leonard's trial, Bob & Dino's trial or the documents of extradition from Canada you can use the new tool on our website [Trial-transcripts] and we want to thank Jim in Albuquerque for his wonderful help in putting this together.

The Board and I want to thank the Nowel family from Cleveland for a wonderful visit to the office while they were in Tampa.

Please continue your letters to President Trump at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington, DC 20500 and calls to the White house 202.456.1111 in support of Clemency for Leonard.

19 Feb - The Law Says Chelsea Manning Must Be Freed From Prison

To observe Chelsea Manning's actions over the last months is to know that she will not be coerced.

MORE:

by Natasha Lennard (*The Intercept*)

She could have avoided her current incarceration at Alexandria Detention Center in Virginia, where she has been held for nearly a year. She could have freed herself at any point. She could have avoided accruing fines of \$230,000 and

counting. She could still avoid further days in jail and further crippling debts to the government. All she would have to do — all she ever had to do — is testify in front of the federal grand jury currently investigating WikiLeaks.

What has long been clear — no amount of jail time will coerce Manning into speaking — is now, surely, undeniable. The sole purpose of Manning's detention has been to coerce her to testify, and it has failed.

On Wednesday, Manning's legal team filed what's known as a Grumbles motion in court, asserting that Manning has proven herself incoercible and so must, according to legal statute, be released from her incarceration.

"Should Judge Trenga agree that Chelsea will never agree to testify, he will be compelled by the law to order her release."

It is a grim peculiarity of American law that a person who refuses to cooperate with a grand jury subpoena may be held in contempt of court and fined or imprisoned with the express purpose of coercing testimony, but when the coercive condition is absent, such incarceration becomes illegal. Wednesday's motion directs Judge Anthony Trenga, who is presiding over the grand jury and Manning's imprisonment, to accordingly recognize the illegality in this case.

"The key issue before Judge Trenga is whether continued incarceration could persuade Chelsea to testify," said Manning's attorney, Moira Meltzer-Cohen, on filing the Grumbles motion. "Judges have complained of the 'perversity' of this law: that a witness may win their freedom by persisting in their contempt of court. However, should Judge Trenga agree that Chelsea will never agree to testify, he will be compelled by the law to order her release."

If the motion is successful, Manning will be freed for the very reason she has been caged: her silence. The judge can decide to recognize that Manning won't speak as a consequence of more time in jail — or because she will continue to face unprecedented \$1,000-per-day fines. Any other conclusion, after her months of steadfast and principled grand jury resistance, would fly in the face of all reason. The whistleblower's actions and words make it plain.

"I have been separated from my loved ones, deprived of sunlight, and could not even attend my mother's funeral," Manning said in a statement Wednesday. "It is easier to endure these hardships now than to cooperate to win back some comfort, and live the rest of my life knowing that I acted out of self-interest and not principle."

Federal grand juries have long been used to investigate and intimidate activist communities — from the late 19th century labor movements, to the Puerto Rican Independence Movement and black liberationists of the last century, to the more recent persecutions of environmentalists, anarchists, and Indigenous rights fighters. Manning has consistently shown her refusal to cooperate with any such process, and again asserted in her latest statement that grand juries are "used by federal prosecutors to harass and disrupt political opponents and activists through secrecy, coercion, and jailing without trial."

The Grumbles motion filed on Wednesday contains a letter from the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture Nils Melzer, written late last year accusing the United States of submitting Manning to treatment that is tantamount to torture. As I wrote after the letter was first released, Melzer not only criticized the torturous practice of coercive imprisonment and harsh fines, but noted that Manning's "categorical and persistent refusal to give testimony demonstrates the lack of their coercive effect."

The motion also includes a personality assessment carried out by Dr. Sara Boyd, a clinical and forensic psychologist from the University of Virginia, which suggests that Manning is constitutionally incapable of acting against her conscience. "Manning exhibits long standing personality features that relate to her scrupulousness, her persistence and dedication, and her willingness to endure social disapproval as well as formal punishments," Boyd wrote.

Manning's consistent behavior in the face of immense hardship and financial ruin should be wholly sufficient evidence that she will not be coerced; the personality assessment and the letter from the U.N. rapporteur no more than state the obvious. Were the judge to decide to continue imprisoning Manning, which he has the discretion to do, he would do so in the face of overwhelming evidence.

Meltzer-Cohen, Manning's attorney, has in the past successfully seen a grand jury resister released as a consequence of her filing a Grumbles motion. In 2014, her former client, a New York-based anarchist, was released after spending 241 days in a federal prison for refusing to testify. Meltzer-Cohen filed a motion arguing that since the young man had made amply evident that he would never cooperate, the coercive premise of his imprisonment was proven invalid.

That motion was aided by letters from friends and acquaintances, as well as a Change.org petition — arguably less august testimony than that which accompanies Manning's motion. But the judge in that case ruled, begrudgingly, that the evidence compelled him to release the prisoner. "The refusal to testify is somehow transmogrified from a lock to a key," the judge wrote in his decision. At the time, Meltzer-Cohen told me that the case illustrated the power of grand jury resistance; that people "have been capable of standing strong in the face of serious consequences" and that resisters "can survive and even prevail."

It is a perverse juridical logic that finds potential justice in brutally coercing a witness to testify before a secretive hearing, ripe for governmental abuse. But even the nefarious law, if followed to the letter, demands that Manning be immediately freed.

19 Feb - Puget Sound Prisoner Support Statement on Recent FBI Activity

Report on recent FBI activity in the Pacific Northwest. Originally posted to Puget Sound Anarchists.

MORE:

Puget Sound Prisoner Support (PSPS) is an anti-repression collective based in Seattle. For 5+ years we have provided jail and legal support for people who have been arrested at protests and demonstrations. We walk people through the legal procedure of arrest, court proceedings, bail if necessary, getting in touch with a lawyer also if necessary, and in general help people understand a confusing legal system. We do not provide legal support for people who get arrested for civil disobedience; rather, we provide an "emergency service" for when participants of a protest or demonstration get arrested. We offer a safety net for people to land in when the unexpected happens and things go wrong. We've supported friends and strangers alike, bailed people out, showed up at court proceedings throughout trials, and helped with fundraising to cover legal costs. Our major caveat is that we do not offer support to anyone who would endanger our communities by way of cooperating with the police, the courts or any other governing agency. No snitching, plain and simple.

The nature of our work has changed over the last 5 years as the anarchist and radical milieus have shifted in the Seattle area. We worked primarily by word of mouth up until very recently. Frankly, we used to know enough of the crews and they knew us that we didn't need to 'advertise.' Recently, we found that the newer formations of more formal organizations and the accompanying growing radical left meant that we needed to more broadly put ourselves out there as a resource. Hence the new @pugetsupport twitter and increased public engagement. A lot of the more formal crews and groups in the area have their own jail support structures, and we deeply applaud this. Our work has almost always focused on helping unconnected, newer or unaffiliated people stay out of legal trouble by not being alone through the process. Cops, District Attorneys and the feds love to focus on people that they think might be more peripherally involved and therefore less invested, experienced and more susceptible to pressure. We are primarily here for those folks.

The FBI in particular has a long and active history of targeting anarchists in the Pacific Northwest. We are hoping to create some workshops and open events about the history of the use of the Grand Jury to target anarchists soon. We recently realized that people who are newer to the area or the scene may not be aware of this history of repression, or our collective response to it. Our aim is to reinvigorate some of the security culture that was built in that time, and to learn from the wins and losses of that older movement. With that, we would like to address what we see as a deep necessity to be open and transparent about investigations that are happening in our area, including visits from the FBI or other federal agencies. In the meantime,

there is a zine and resource list prepared by Resonance Audio Distro on Grand Juries at pugetsoundanarchists.org/surviving-a-grand-jury-audio-zine

Every instance of state surveillance should be viewed as a threat not just to ourselves but our networks that stretch beyond what we may think of as those who are affected. Sometimes even the smallest detail opens up bigger and broader nets for the state to cast in an attempt to try to get information. In openly tracking what is happening around door knocks and other surveillance activities, we can both foster support for those targeted and directly impacted, and allow for lessons to be passed on about how to respond if an agent is at your door, work, etc. It is from a culture of open sharing and dialogue that safer communication can come from those targeted as well, allowing them to say what happened, instead of rumors and misinformation circulating. A lack of transparency allows for possible mistrust, and also helps the state sow that same mistrust even deeper and weaken us. It is also important to track what alphabet agency is knocking (FBI, SPD, DHS, JTTF, CBP, etc.) for the purposes of at least examining where and with what the state seems to be attempting to exert power. If we see patterns or know who to watch out for, the community/milieu/whatever at large is safer than if people on the fringes are picked off one by one to try and move in on more and more individuals.

With all that in mind, here is a statement from Ezra, a member of the local community, recounting from his perspective a conversation he had with FBI and CBP agents, which we will be responding to:
Greetings comrades.

On January 2nd, 2020 I was visited by an FBI agent and a CBP agent. They arrived at my home the day after I bought a plane ticket to Sulaymaniyah, Iraq to join the YPG as an International Volunteer. In what was frankly a moment of fear I allowed them to speak with me about the intentions of my visit. I allowed them to come inside and they spoke with me about my trip for approximately half an hour, and left. Immediately afterwards, I told my comrades what happened and what was discussed. I'll be the first to admit I should have turned them away, but I wanted to make it clear to them that I wasn't joining ISIS or anything like that. I understand that this may damage the trust that our community has in me, and I will respect whatever consensus is reached. I hope the community will prioritize a culture of security and trust, and that the success of antifascist, anti-capitalist struggle is maintained. You can reach out to me for any questions in regards to this before I leave.

*Love and solidarity,
Ezra B.*

This visit was brought to our attention via a third party and not from Ezra. When we did reach out to Ezra, he was very amenable to the idea of having a sit down conversation about the visit and possible responses to it. There were several issues we found inside of our conversation that lead to the desire for a public statement. Namely, a 30 minute conversation with the FBI is a serious situation that everyone needs to know about in order to make their own decision about. Secondly, we felt that Ezra while acting in good faith, should have spoken to more than just his “comrades” about the situation. A lack of public engagement leaves large holes for possible misinformation and distrust, and leaves the rest of us in the dark about possible repression. One telling fact from his encounter is that a CBP agent was with the FBI, something we have not encountered here in the Seattle area and is good information for those doing anti-repression work or individuals currently attempting to dodge authorities.

This statement is not an attempt to chastise Ezra, but to bring to light that a person inside our community was visited by federal agents and decided for their own reasons to have a sit-down conversation with them and then neglected to inform the broader community around him. We are reproducing his statement here in an effort to dispel rumors, and give the broader community of anarchists a chance to make up their own minds about their future involvement with Ezra. We don't know what was said inside this conversation,

and we never will. We do know that non-cooperation with the state has been a long-standing mantra of the anarchist community, and that in this instance, regardless of intention, that idea was broken.

If you are visited by the FBI, JTTF, CBP or any other organ of the state repression apparatus, please let the broader community know. You do not need to out yourself or identify yourself in any way. We are all safer when a brief statement of day, approximate time, and the agencies involved are made public. Here is a link to an article from 2017 when FBI agents were knocking on peoples' doors in Olympia, WA. PSPS is always here as a resource to help facilitate this, and anonymous posts can be easily made to pugetsoundanarchists.org.

Secondly, if you are visited, please do not speak with the officers in any capacity. Close the door, walk away, say nothing and get yourself out of that situation. Contact a lawyer, us, or both and let people know what has happened. The state has a monopoly on fear, and that fear is a huge part of these interactions. Anyone who says they are not afraid when an agent knocks is lying, we all are. But we can move through that fear together, we can shoulder it among all of us and make the weight less for each of us. To do this though, we must inform each other and extend those small tendrils of trust. We are all in this together.

21 Feb - Post-Birthday Update

Please read the latest from hometown hero David Campbell.

MORE:

Thanks for all the birthday wishes! I've been flooded with cards and letters wishing me a happy birthday for the past week, and it's been really awesome to get so much support.

You know what else is awesome? Punk shows. Especially when they're for your post-release fund. I'm so humbled and overwhelmed with joy and gratitude. Events like this are super-important, not only to support people in my position, but to bring our community closer together, strengthen our movement. I hear it was a really great time and included dancing rabbis, among other things. Many thanks to the organizers, everyone who attended, and all the bands that played. I can't wait to check out your music when I get out!

If I can just ask one thing, it's that you please not make a hero of me. Please continue to give me the love and support you've been so great about giving this far — I can definitely use it — but let it be from a place of mutual aid, from a place that recalls that I'm just a dude who got caught. "Hero" doesn't sound like a fun position to be in, and in all seriousness, if you put me in it, you'll be sorely disappointed. Just seems like a good time to say that.

Hitting the 1/3 mark a few days after my birthday and looking forward to it. Staying busy reading, writing and translating.

26 Feb - AnFem Monthly Meeting

WHAT: Meeting

WHEN: 7:00pm, Wednesday, February 26th

WHERE: Bluestockings—172 Allen Street, New York 10002

COST: FREE

MORE:

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

For more information on MACC, visit macc.nyc.

29 Feb - Memorial for Seth Hayes

WHAT: Memorial

WHEN: 2:00pm, Saturday, February 29th

WHERE: Countee Cullen Branch (New York Public Library)—104 West 136th Street, Harlem

COST: FREE

MORE:

Join us to commemorate this former Black Panther Party and Black Liberation Army veteran, long-term political prisoner and freedom fighter.

Sponsored by:

Northeast Political Prisoner Coalition, National Alumni Association of the Black Panther Party, New York City Anarchist Black Cross, Page One Collective.

1 Mar - Memorial for Seth Hayes

WHAT: Memorial

WHEN: 1:00pm, Sunday, March 1st

WHERE: The People's Forum—320 West 37th Street, NYC

COST: FREE

MORE:

Keynote Speaker: Jihad Abdulmumit, National Jericho Chair, BPP/BLA

Daniel McGowan, Certain Days Calendar Collective

Culture with SpiritChild and Ngoma!

We will also remember other fallen warriors and celebrate recent victories!

Sponsor: National Jericho Movement

Co-Sponsors: ProLibertad Freedom Campaign, Call to Action on Puerto Rico, Holyrood Church Ministry of Solidarity with the Peoples, NYC Free Peltier