



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for May 27th

12 May - New Commentaries From Mumia Abu-Jamal

The folks at Prison Radio have done the hard work of writing up transcripts of some of Mumia's latest commentaries and we are happy to share them.

MORE:

Honoring Our Revolutionaries: Mumia on Fanon

Noelle Hanrahan (NH): Four questions for Mumia. In Fanon, how to dialectize the relation between subjectivity and objectivity.

Mumia Abu-Jamal (MAJ): Hmm, well, when I think about Fanon, he speaks of subjectivity from the context of colonial subjects. This is kind of a colonial projection of colonized people, and it is not who they are. It is who the colonizers would like to project as the subject people. So, this is a projection of colonial power on the colonized. You know, objectivity is really the colonized using their own minds and interpretation, not just of how to understand the world, of how to comprehend it, but of how to interact with it and transform it. Fanon uses that quote from Marx, but not in quotes. He uses it to kind of remind us that the objective is not to understand the world, but to transform it. So, every objective that he points to is about how the colonized can be agents of decolonization, and by so doing, act against the colonial state. And even after, I should say, the colonized people are freed from colonialism, they are not freed from colonization or coloniality because our minds were formed, and I should say deformed, by the colonial process. And it is Fanon who tells us that the job of all of us, and I think it's the continuing job of all of us, is to decolonize the institutions and the consciousness in former colonial states.

NH: Two. How can we reflect Fanon's fundamental dual dimension of revolutionary anti-colonialism and decolonial humanism?

MAJ: I think if anybody unites those two concepts, it truly is Fanon because he is, at heart, an internationalist and a revolutionary humanist. And he believes deeply in his consciousness that all people have it within them, the wherewithal, the power, to rebel against colonial institutions and ideas and consciousness, but also to wage revolutionary resistance and battle against those forces. He unites those ideas because he understands, of course, as a psychoanalyst, as a psychiatrist, that how we think influences how we act in the real world. Fanon used to say that colonized intellectuals have to practice what he calls combat literature, and that is writing from a new perspective, a perspective of new nations being born amidst the colonial wreckage that was imported with the colony. This is again like war, but this time war with words, and that without that, culture is but petrification. And a lot of times the colonized intellectuals, the poets, the writers, you know, write endearingly and affectionately about the departed past. What they don't write about is the present. And because they don't write about the present, they perform the act of petrification, right, because you're looking backwards but you're not looking forwards. Write about the present, because the present is the doorway to the future. That, I think, is central to Fanon's thinking.

NH: Three. What do you think are the relevant lessons we can learn from Fanon and other revolutionaries of his time, including Lumumba and Malcolm X, to advance our liberation struggles today?

MAJ: Interesting choices, when you think about Fanon, when you think of Malcolm X, and when you think about Patrice Lumumba. I don't recall Fanon writing about Malcolm. Maybe I've missed that. But I know he did write about Patrice Lumumba, who was a dear friend of his and one of the African leaders that he admired. But even if he admired him, Fanon, you know, being a revolutionary and decolonial thinker, was not afraid to criticize Lumumba. It's true what happened to him was a terrible tragedy, and the

colonialists, you know, really used him and destroyed him because they feared what might come from him opening up what was once called the bread basket of Africa, the Congo. However, I think he loved him and admired him as a brother, but, you know, human beings make mistakes, and human beings make fatal mistakes when they fail to adequately analyze and understand the role of the colonialists, right?

NH: And how would you see that as a relevant lesson? What can we take from those examples?

MAJ: Well, when you study Lumumba's life and, I think, read *The Wretched of the Earth*, where he talks openly about Lumumba, you can learn about the errors of Lumumba, and learn that you cannot make errors with the colonialists because they will capitalize on those errors, and they will eliminate you. It's as simple as that. What Fanon and Malcolm, I think represent, are beings who are endlessly in transition. That is, they are transforming themselves when they get new information about how the world works, about history, about personality, about psychology, about politics, about world issues. You know, Malcolm was that to a T. He never stopped developing. And he never ever stopped studying. People who knew him, who was around him when he was a Minister in the Nation in New York, said you never saw the brother without a book in his hand or in his briefcase. When he sat down on a bus or on an airplane, he did a lot of his reading. He continued to study, and he continued to expand his understanding of the world.

The same can be said in many ways of Fanon. And even though he formally studied, of course, to be a psychoanalyst and psychiatrist, he also studied revolutionary sciences, the human sciences as they call it. Why? Because he wanted to know how to apply a revolutionary science to a colonial situation. So, he read Marx and he read many other thinkers who gave him ideas and ways of looking at the world, you know. He read and critiqued Jean Paul Sartre and he, again, used what he learned to further analyze the world and understand the world and try to transform the world. Both of those fellows were beings of tremendous self-transformation, and they were becoming, I think, better thinkers, better beings, and better revolutionaries in their own way.

May 13th - Ball of Confusion: The Oncoming Depression

When we think about the economy, most of us are in a ball of confusion. A "Ball of Confusion" isn't just a great song back during the days of R & B, Rhythm and Blues. A ball of confusion means that things are happening all around us that continues to confuse us and, therefore, they destabilize us. Because, when you're confused you can't move. You are psychologically a deer caught in headlights. Let's think about the economy right now. We're entering the 'Age of Tariffs,' which is almost unprecedented in American modern history. We have just heard a spokesman for the IMF, the International Monetary Fund. These are cats who are the masters of capital, capitalist accumulation, or in other words, getting and keeping money, and they said that the downfall in economic activity in the United States is approaching rates equitable to 1932.

When I heard those words, a chill went through my bones, because 1932 is the Era of the Great Depression. You'll hear on every channel, with the possible exception of Fox or Newsmax, an economist say that we are approaching a recession. A recession only means two quarters of downward activity in economics. That means several months, six months or more. But no one dares use the 'D' word, and I ain't talking about democracy. The 'D' word is depression. It is one of the most feared words in the English language, but the IMF just went there. They didn't just come up with a number and say 1932. They were speaking in economic language to economists and historians and analysts, that this economy is approaching a depression, and that should concern everybody in this country.

It is true that the vast majority of economic activity in America is customer generated. That means that when people go out and buy, they are the engines of the American economy. And that's why the American economy is so robust. But if that's true, the obverse is true as well. When there is a lack of that kind of economic activity, then recessions and, yes, depression, is in the future. It is nothing to celebrate, but it is something to think about and consider very seriously.

May 14th - The Road to Madness

I think once people have a second thought, they'll realize the gravity and the scope of their mass stupidity. And I hate to put it that way, but sometimes it is what it is, you know. If you elect a fool, you cannot be surprised when you see foolishness, and that's what it is. This cat is breaking everything in the house, and it's wonderful and terrifying at the same time, because you know, we must recognize that for the most powerful empire, perhaps in world history, to believe that it has been cheated by the rest of the world instead of the reverse, is an example of mass media manipulated delusion. Terrifying, because the pain and suffering that will come from this is probably close to incalculable. It will be in the trillions of dollars. It's as if you took trillions of dollars and burnt it, and just burnt it. That's what's happening, and that's why the business class, the corporate class, are head on fire about it. They're trying to get through to a blockhead who cannot hear them because his ego is so loud. And so, it's terrible because we're seeing history being made every day, and not in a good way.

And this is why it's wonderful. Lenin once said, "There are years and decades when nothing happens, and there are days when decades happen. When things happen." We're in the middle of a kind of social transformation that we cannot see the end of because of stupidity, because of political ego and because really, of a profound kind of recklessness, right? Like, in the last week, six trillion dollars just disappeared. Just disappeared. And I am informed, when I look at the news and I hear about the bond markets, and for the first time in decades the bond markets; speaking of, you know, treasury bills, so called T bills, which may have a ten-year yield, a thirty-year yield or a fifty-year yield. For the first time, the number of bonds sold declined in this period.

That's remarkable because when the economy is in chaos, which it is, the last place people invest in are the T bills, because this is considered a safe security backed by the government. But when that number started to decline, people were looking at the government and saying, "I can't trust these people. I am not investing in T bills." So that suggests that they were long-term investors or even international investors who shifted their currency somewhere else or just declined to buy.

That was the danger sign that made Trump go with this ninety-day pause. He heard from some people at the top of the financial heap, that moved him, but I think it's too little too late. In many ways the damage is done, because it's of a piece, it's not like one thing, it's of a piece of what's happening politically, economically, in terms of immigrants, the executive orders bordering on madness, the DEI, all this stuff. It's mindless bull**** but it's mean, and it has its impact. People are looking at the United States in ways they have never looked at it in our lifetimes. Perhaps Vietnam was close, but this is another kind of internal madness that is burning at the heart of the empire.

May 14th - Trump Master of Chaos

Trump is a master of chaos, and that's because he knows how to touch that nerve in the American psyche that makes people crazy. So, it's fear, it's resentment, it's all of these kinds of things, cause, you know, this truly is homophobia at a psychological level. And people are voting on that, and they haven't really studied the people they're voting for. They're Foxified. They're terrified. Let us be clear. They have a right to look at the Democratic Party with distaste.

Did the Democratic Party betray the working class? Nakedly. Because of NAFTA, because NAFTA was a class betrayal. You know, the party used to be the party of the working class. This was them doing a sweetheart deal, well, I'm not gonna say them. This was a Clinton, and Clintonite, sweetheart deal for Wall Street. And I remember him selling it. You know, I'm sitting up on death row, and he would get up and say, "Well, this will not be like, you know, your father or your mother, you know, work for thirty years for a certain company. You'll change jobs. But guess what? We'll retrain you so that you can have other jobs in other parts of the economy. This will make the United States the financial capital of the world."

He was speaking for Wall Street. That's all he was speaking for. And again, you know, Clinton is a master politician. I've seen him do things that were stunning. But he was a master politician. He sold it. You know, the whole idea of NAFTA began with the Bushes and Republicans. He took it, at a moment of peril,

as a political shield and armor, right, to pass the wishes of the investor class. And it cost perhaps, a million 750 thousand jobs, mostly in middle America, but industrial jobs that left and will not come back.

The illusion that these tariffs will attract companies to the United States is just that, an illusion. It will not happen, in my view, and that's because business loves certainty. They love calmness. They cannot work in the midst of chaos, and this is — even though chaos is a perfect tool for politicians who want to destabilize society, and create, you know, mass fear about nothing, like, you know, trans athletes. Little things like that have deep psychological impact on people who do not trust the government anyway after NAFTA, you know.

So, did the Democratic Party betray the working class? Nakedly. Did they serve their Wall Street investor class? Openly. And therein lies the rub. I mean, a lot of the Steve Bannon commentary rests on NAFTA, and that's at the core of his attack of the democratic state, the liberal state; that they do not care about you. And there's a ring of truth there. There's a ring of truth there. They don't care about you, you know. Governments are engines of force. They're not moral agents. They don't care how they achieve their ends. They just achieve their ends. And they serve the interests of the wealthy. I mean, Duh...

15 May - Stop Cop City RICO trials set to begin this summer, judge says

May 14 status hearing set plans to streamline the complex 61-person racketeering case under a new judge. Defense attorneys face tight deadlines ahead of trials anticipated to begin this summer.

MORE:

by Matt Scott (*Atlanta Community Press Collective*)

After nearly two years of delay, trials will begin in the coming months for the 61 individuals charged under Georgia's Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) law as part of the state's crackdown on the Stop Cop City Movement. During the May 14 status hearing, Fulton County Superior Court Judge Kevin M. Farmer said he expects all motions to be filed over the next two weeks and trials to begin as soon as June.

It has been nearly two years since a grand jury indicted 61 individuals, collectively known as the 'ATL 61', on RICO charges in August 2023 over protests over 'Cop City,' a police training center in Atlanta. Defendants' lives have been disrupted by the lengthy delay. If found guilty, defendants could face up to 20 years in prison.

"This case will not die," said Marlon Kautz, one of the defendants and spokesperson for the Atlanta Solidarity Fund. "There's a political reason for that. As long as 61 people are facing decades in prison for RICO charges simply for being associated with a political movement, protest everywhere is chilled and intimidated."

Kautz, Savannah Patterson, and Adele MacLean, collectively known as the Sol Fund 3, were arrested during a police raid in May 2023 and charged with money laundering. Prosecutors dropped the money laundering charges in September 2024, but the RICO charges remained.

During the May 14 status hearing, Judge Farmer laid out a game plan for navigating the complexities of holding trials for what he called "a 61-person elephant." Farmer said he will try five defendants at a time, with the Georgia Attorney General's Office determining which defendants will comprise each trial.

The Sol Fund 3, along with Sonali Gupta and Brooke Courtemanche, will be the first group to be tried over the summer.

Ayla King, who originally requested a speedy trial in 2023, will follow the first group. Attorney Surinder Chadha Jimenez, who represents King, said he expects the speedy trial to begin in August.

New judge on case must work through a backlog of motions

The original judge assigned to the case was Fulton County Superior Court Judge Kimberly Esmond Adams, but Adams was recently transferred to a different court. On the eve of Farmer's first RICO hearing Wednesday, Adams issued a ruling denying demurrers—colloquially known as motions to dismiss—made on behalf of the five defendants scheduled to go to trial first. Attorney Don Samuels, who represents Kautz, said they received the denial Wednesday, “five minutes before walking into the courtroom.”

In the nearly two-year period that Adams was presiding over the case, defense attorneys filed over 250 motions, most of which had been adopted by multiple defendants. Xavier de Janon, defense attorney for Jamie Marsicano, said that the motions had largely gone unaddressed by Adams, creating a backlog.

During the May 14 status hearing, Judge Farmer ordered that previously filed joint motions, which had been adopted by multiple defendants, must be refiled by each individual defendant. Each motion must now be “particularized” to the facts of each individual case. Refiling previously adopted motions is no easy task, the defense attorneys say.

Farmer said these motions and any other motions must be filed by May 30.

State submits more discovery as trial nears

Deputy Attorney General John Fowler, lead prosecutor on the case, told the Court on Wednesday he brought 61 thumb drives with additional discovery, a surprise to defense attorneys. “We heard about a thumb drive today, for the first time ever,” de Janon said at a press conference following the hearing. “The state revealed that there’s more evidence in this case, 57 gigabytes of evidence.”

This discovery is in addition to the ten terabytes of discovery previously turned over to the defense, which attorneys said was uncategorized and included over 30 days’ worth of video footage and 27 days’ worth of audio recordings.

Assistant Attorney General Hallie Scott Dixon said the delayed discovery was due to the DeKalb County Police Department’s failure to turn over evidence regarding undercover agents.

Farmer chided the prosecution for its delay in turning over evidence. “If it’s the custody and control of the DeKalb Police Department, then it’s deemed to be in your custody and control. If they didn’t turn it over to you, you’re going to take the brunt of that.”

The late discovery production raised other concerns among defense attorneys.

“We not only have terabytes and terabytes of evidence already disclosed late,” de Janon said, “but now we have more evidence to review with a May 30 deadline.”

Defense attorneys also took issue with the timing of the new discovery, which came nearly a year after the May 17, 2024 deadline for discovery production that Adams set during a hearing last year. However, Adams did not put the order into writing, leaving Farmer to decide whether to allow the new discovery.

Farmer agreed with the concerns of defense attorneys, telling prosecutors, “[If/when] Stuff starts popping up two years old, people are going to call shenanigans on that.”

Some evidence may end up excluded from trials, Farmer warned, adding that he planned to set “hard deadlines” on discovery.

Defendants and court attendees subjected to heightened security

With 61 defendants, their attorneys, supporters and media, the hearing was well attended and moved to a larger courtroom.

Farmer ordered heightened security around the hearing.

The media, with the exception of pool cameras, watched the proceedings from an overflow room, reminiscent of an incident in November 2023, when Adams kicked out the media entirely to an overflow room.

Deputies instructed attendees in both the main courtroom and the overflow room to place their cell phones in pouches, which they then locked. Defense attorneys said their clients' identification cards were taken in addition to their cell phones.

Amanda Clark-Palmer, who represents Timothy Bilodeau, said knowledge of the heightened security getting out to the public could prejudice a jury. She questioned the reasoning behind the additional security and requested the Court give notice to allow attorneys to argue against using those measures in the future.

16 May - Marius Mason's 2025 Statement

With the June 11th day of solidarity with Marius Mason and long-term anarchist political prisoners just around the corner, we have Marius' statement.

MORE:

I want to begin with thanking everyone who wrote a support letter or went to a support event this past year—thank you so much! I know that your solidarity connects incarcerated resisters with so much strength and love. I wish I could have replied to every letter I received – and I will be adding several new contacts to my correspondence list and writing back as much as I can.....This year has been a tough one for me. My twelve-years-long gender-affirming surgery quest was abruptly torpedoed by an administration whose sole mission has been hate and division. On the verge of surgery, successfully integrated into a predominantly-male identified prison population (for years) – I was unceremoniously kidnapped and thrown into the SHU due to an Executive Order making my gender illegal and erasing my rights as a citizen. Since then, I have been transferred to a predominantly female-identified prison population at the Federal Satellite Low in Danbury, Connecticut. It's been an adjustment socially, but my community here has been very welcoming and affirming. I work as a peer support for an integrated program treating trauma and addiction. That feels meaningful, as so many people lose control over their lives, and often even their very lives, because of untreated addiction problems. I really feel that the international epidemic has at its heart the sense of despair and alienation that so many feel right now.

It's been an intense year for all communities of resistance – whether we were focusing on the war on Gaza or the war on immigrants. We have been hard-pressed to provide support to those among us who have been damaged by the increasing attacks on women, immigrants, as well as transgender and queer people. The past six months have been a military march backward in human evolution as even the most basic social agreements on the rights of individuals in a society have been violated time and again. Rights guaranteed at the signing of the Magna Carta – rights that were at the heart of the conflict between England and the former colonies, are being systematically disemboweled. It has been said that if we do not learn from history, then we are doomed to repeat it. We have seen the onset of fascism before, and should recognize it now. So...these times are a challenge to any who desire real freedom, who passionately espouse justice and who honor and respect human dignity – and who persist in the belief that we are responsible for each other and to each other and our shared home, this Earth. The strength to face this challenge will come from solidarity...this is always our secret weapon against the venal brutalities of fascism.

19 May - Dispatch from the Courtroom – What Happened in Atlanta

NYC Stop Cop City Defendant Priscilla Grim has written about what happened at their latest court appearance.

MORE:

As the domestic terrorism accusations grow across the United States, from Tesla dealerships to beach artists, I am forced to narrow focus on my fight against outrageous charges in a world sinking further into the mayhem and madness of fascism.

The latest RICO hearing in Fulton County Court last week made one thing crystal clear: the state is scrambling to save face. But the accused, like myself among the Stop Cop City / ATL 61 and our supporters across the United States, are watching—and we will not be silenced.

Judge Farmer wants to push ahead with trials starting in June, severing all the cases from each other and dividing the co-defendants into groups of five. Dozens of people are being railroaded with politically motivated RICO charges for daring to use free speech to protect a forest and the surrounding community against the bloodthirst of carceral capitalism. Last week, the courtroom was packed with lawyers calling out the state's incompetence and chaos making.

Collective Defense Under Attack

Judge Farmer wants every defendant to file their own motions—no sign-ons, no collective filings. He says it's for "efficiency" but then admits it's just how his brain works. This is an attempt to splinter a movement. Divide, delay, disorient. But guess what? Solidarity isn't that easy to shred.

Discovery Disaster

The state dumped 57 gigabytes of new "discovery" on defense counsel. Corrupted files, no timestamps, disorganized—this is standard now. Attorneys raised real concerns about having time to review this mess before filing motions by May 30. Judge Farmer said to hold those extension requests for later. Translation: sink or swim.

Fowler's Meltdown

Prosecutor John Fowler had a courtroom tantrum over defense attorney Matt Bass supposedly calling him "26 times in five minutes." (Hysterical!) Judge Farmer had to tell him to stop yelling about being gaslit during a procedural hearing. The court laughed. Fowler sulked. Judge Farmer stated, "Your phone will be ringing off the hook, Mr. Fowler. You'd better pick up." The room erupted into laughter.

Illegal Surveillance Reminder

Don Samuels (Marlon Kautz's lawyer and a L.E.G.E.N.D.) reminded the court that the state illegally viewed and distributed privileged emails among the defendants and even to other agencies. A "taint team" was ordered to fix it—but surprise, they haven't. And now they are supposed to prep for a June trial?

Trial Groupings & Power Plays

Judge Farmer tried to give the prosecution grouping power, but one defense lawyer pushed back, arguing Farmer had the authority. It's not resolved yet, but this moment could determine how trials unfold and whether the state gets to shape the narrative.

Speedy Trial Shuffle

Ayla King's attorney made a confusing argument about their speedy trial motion—it might push their trial date past others. This is more evidence that the court's schedule is unraveling.

Gardner Fights for Collective Motions

Another defendant's lawyer, John Gardner, smartly opposed the idea of "individualized motions only." He moved Farmer to concede: yes, some motions that affect all defendants should be heard before anyone's tried. This is about the right to a collective defense—especially crucial in a politically targeted case like this.

No Written Orders Yet

Farmer talked about setting final deadlines and issuing written orders—but none were confirmed. With more discovery likely coming (yes, more), June trials seem like a fantasy.

Final Thoughts

This whole thing stinks of repression, confusion, and delay. The state is overwhelmed. The judge is frustrated. The defense is forced to do acrobatics just to get basic information and file motions on time. This isn't justice—it's a political circus. Stay ready. Stay loud. The world is watching Atlanta. Thank you for sticking with me.

PS: Help demand these bogus charges are dropped!

📞 Call, fax, or email Georgia Attorney General Chris Carr

Dial 404.656.8733 and tell him: we won't let our people be punished for protecting forest life.

Email: AGCarr@law.ga.gov

Fax: 404.657.8733

Script for your communications:

"Hello, I am calling to demand that Attorney General Chris Carr drop all charges against the 61 stop cop city RICO defendants. Civil rights and legal experts have widely condemned the charges as baseless and an attack on constitutional rights. I want to remind the Attorney General's Office how expensive trials like this are for Georgia's taxpayers (and voters) who elected Chris Carr and do not want to see their tax dollars wasted on prosecuting constitutionally protected activity. Dropping all charges will benefit all parties involved. Many people across the state and the country care about and support the 61 defendants and stand against the criminalization of social movements. The country is watching, and we urge you to drop all charges immediately. Thank you."

21 May - New York Suspends Solitary Ban to Woo Back Striking Prison Guards

Under a deal reached at the end of February 2025 with striking state Department of Corrections and Community Services (DOCCS) guards, New York Gov. Kathy Hochul agreed to a 90-day suspension of a law limiting use of solitary confinement in state prisons.

MORE:

via *Prison Legal News*

The governor also agreed to reverse disciplinary measures taken against strikers, provided that 85% returned to work by March 10, 2025. That condition wasn't met, and the governor fired 2,000 guards still on strike. For the rest who returned to work, she promised to honor the deal anyway.

The partial suspension of the law, 2021's "Humane Alternatives to Long-Term Solitary Confinement" (HALT) Act, allows guards once again to use isolation with prisoners who are pregnant, disabled, over the age of 55 or under the age of 21, and there will be no limits on the number of consecutive days any prisoner spends in isolation.

The deal to end the strike was reached with the guards' union, the state Corrections Officers and Police Benevolent Association (COPBA), which was barred under state law from sponsoring the strike. The agreement was sufficient to end the strike entirely at state lockups in Green Haven, Fishkill, Shawangunk, Hudson, Taconic and Sing Sing, according to DOCCS Director Daniel Martuscello.

But guards at other prisons remained on the strike line, demanding freedom to isolate "violent" prisoners, which is prohibited by part of the HALT Act that remains in force. State Sen. Mark Walczyk (R-Watertown) called that limitation "offensive." Hochul, however, decided that she'd given strikers enough carrots and started pulling out sticks: Their health insurance was canceled on March 5, 2025, by which point 10 had been fired and over 350 cited for civil contempt by the office of state Attorney General Letitia James (D).

As *PLN* reported, the strike began not with passage of the HALT Act three years ago but shortly after 16 staffers were suspended in January 2025—10 of whom were indicted the following month—over the fatal beating of prisoner Robert L. Brooks, 43, at Marcy Correctional Facility. Across the street, another 15

guards were put on leave at Mid-State Correctional Facility after another prisoner, Messiah Nantwi, 22, was fatally beaten on March 1, 2025, as reported elsewhere in this issue.

The coincidence in the strike's timing and the discipline of errant guards called into question what the work stoppage was really about. James got a state judge in Erie County to order the wildcat strikers back to work on February 18, 2025, while Hochul began calling up the first of some 7,000 National Guard troops eventually deployed to provide security at state prisons. But their presence was still insufficient to lift lockdowns preventing many prisoners from receiving programming and medical care—even meals in some lockups.

State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services Commissioner Jackie Bray said that the state would not only fire the wildcat strikers but also fine them, citing a provision of the Taylor Law triggered after 10 consecutive days of unauthorized work stoppage. But under the deal Hochul signed with COPBA, all those fines will be canceled for those who returned to work. Any provisional terminations or contempt citations issued to them were also slated for reversal. In addition, any canceled health insurance was to be restored.

James's staff was in Erie County Superior Court for a hearing on invoking the Taylor Law on March 11, 2025, along with several hundred striking guards and their families. That same day, Hochul signed an executive order barring those who didn't return to work and were fired from being rehired by the state. It also recommended removing them from the Central Registry of Police and Peace Officers, which would hamstring attempts to find law enforcement employment in another state. Of course, these were signed executive orders, not enacted laws, so they could be reversed just as easily.

In addition to Nantwi, at least eight other prisoners died during the strike. Not all were immediately identified, but two who were named died hours apart at Sing Sing Correctional Facility on February 26, 2025. Anthony Douglas, 66, had served 40 years of a 100-year murder sentence before he was found fatally hanged in his cell at 4:25 p.m., DOCCS said. Fellow prisoner Franklyn Dominguez, 35, was found unresponsive at 8:48 p.m., and attempts to revive him with NARCAN and CPR failed. At Auburn Correctional Facility on February 24, 2025, prisoner Jonathan Grant, 61, was also found unresponsive. Grant, who reportedly had a history of strokes, was nearly 14 years into a 34-to-40-year sentence for first-degree rape and burglary.

The 22-day strike was the largest DOCCS work stoppage in 40 years. But striking guards may have the state over a barrel; there is a critical guard shortage, despite robust recruitment efforts, and the walkout left thousands of National Guard troops still deployed in state lockups.

22 May - Trump's War on Trans People: A Legal Survival Guide

The breakneck speed at which the Trump administration has targeted trans people shows no signs of slowing down, even as his earliest anti-trans executive orders face tremendous legal battles and setbacks as courts issue rulings blocking them across the nation.

MORE:

by Adam M. Rhodes (*The Appeal*)

The Trump administration has issued orders and supported legislation seeking to cut access to gender affirming care (or outright ban it in some cases), roll back the rights of incarcerated trans people, and block trans people from updating ID documents to reflect who they are.

Emboldened by an administration that increasingly seeks to remove trans people from public life, conservative legislators across the country are escalating attacks on trans people with renewed fervor, in some cases using the criminal legal system as an anti-trans cudgel.

A bill proposed by Texas Republican state representative Tom Oliverson in early March would make “gender identity fraud” a state jail felony, threatening jail time for those who identify as trans on government and employment-related documents.

The bill, which died in committee, follows a bill proposed by his colleague that would ban gender affirming care for adults in the state, mirroring a ban on care for trans youth that passed in 2023.

As it stands now, six states (Florida, Alabama, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Idaho, and North Dakota) have criminal penalties for providing gender affirming care.

But legal advocates across the board say that even amid the escalating challenges trans people and their loved one’s face, as insurmountable as they may feel, there are still avenues for safety, for solidarity, and for survival.

Resources for trans people

Trump’s order barring gender neutral ID markers and requiring passports to reflect sex assigned at birth, in particular, has sent many trans folks scrambling to understand how, and even if, they are allowed to travel, especially if they have ID documents that may not sync up with the administration’s new policy.

Experts say that passports that already have gender-neutral markers will be valid until they expire, but trans people who had previously applied to update their passports report having their documents held by the government or returned with the gender markers unchanged. The ACLU has also warned that trans people run the risk of losing access to their passports and supporting documents.

Legitimate fears about what happens to trans people who are arrested or otherwise detained go hand-in-hand with concerns about ID documents. The historic mistreatment of trans people by police only fuels these worries. A guide by Advocates for Trans Equality spells out the dangers trans people face when arrested.

“Transgender people are particularly at risk for being profiled and mistreated by police and in jail,” the guide states. “This could range from verbal abuse, isolation and denial of medication to humiliating strip searches and physical abuse. These risks can be reduced through preparation and solidarity tactics, but never eliminated. The risks are especially acute for transgender people of color, transgender people who are immigrants, low-income transgender people, and transgender people with disabilities.”

Experts recommend that people who are particularly concerned should research policies in their own communities and contact local LGBTQ+ advocates to prepare any necessary documentation, such as letters from healthcare providers regarding their transition and name change-related documents, if applicable.

And when it comes to actual incarceration, the landscape is particularly dangerous.

Jailed or imprisoned trans people face some of the most significant abuse in the criminal legal system. Research shows that trans people behind bars are subject to increased levels of verbal, physical, and sexual abuse by prison staff and fellow prisoners alike.

Many trans people have resorted to seeking out protective isolation to avoid much of this abuse, despite the documented consequences of that isolation. State policies differ widely with respect to trans people. But Trump’s January executive order that bars trans people from being housed according to their gender identity makes the federal government’s position clear.

As with many of Trump’s draconian orders targeting trans people, federal judges recently blocked orders on ID documents and prison policies from going into effect, but the eventual outcome still remains to be seen.

Resources for parents

Alongside the difficulty of watching their trans children suffer under the current climate, parents of trans youth also have to fear the legal consequences of supporting their children.

Few instances encapsulate this fear more than Texas's investigation of parents and doctors who provide gender-affirming care for trans youth. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott ordered the state's child welfare agency to launch these investigations in 2022. After a lengthy legal fight that saw the state's highest court approve state child abuse inquiries into the families of trans kids, a Texas appeals court last year blocked the state's child welfare agency from pursuing investigations.

And since states first began targeting trans youth years ago, families have had to make the difficult choice to leave hostile states—if they can leave at all. TransLash has a detailed relocation guide available here, including tips on researching healthcare options, connecting with LGBTQ+ community centers, and even relocating internationally.

For parents seeking out-of-state medical care or for their trans children, organizations like Elevated Access offer free private travel for those seeking health care. And for families considering leaving regions of the U.S. (or the country itself) for safer communities, Oregon's Trans Relocation Fund & Aid Network, the Trans Relocation Project, and Transitional Justice provide relocation assistance and access to affirming resource networks in safer states.

And for families seeking ways to better support the trans people in their lives, one of the nation's largest LGBTQ+ advocacy groups, PFLAG (a party to one of the lawsuits challenging Trump's gender affirming care ban) is a longstanding resource for LGBTQ+ people, including trans youth, and the people who love them. Originally called Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, the influential LGBTQ+ group was founded by the mother of a gay man beaten during a protest, and aimed at supporting LGBTQ+ people and their allies. The organization has been involved in landmark LGBTQ+ advocacy efforts since its founding in the early 1970s.

Resources for healthcare providers

Much like parents and families of trans youth, healthcare providers in particular may be worried about ending up in the legal crossfire of gender-affirming care bans, especially in states with criminal penalties. In the aftermath of Trump's order threatening gender affirming care for trans youth, many hospital systems paused or outright canceled care for trans youth.

Hospitals around the country, including in Massachusetts, New York, Washington, Colorado, Illinois, and Virginia, canceled services for trans patients receiving gender-affirming care, leading to protest.

Hundreds gathered outside of Lurie Children's Hospital (one of the top children's hospitals in the nation) in downtown Chicago to protest its decision to pause gender-affirming care for trans youth, and similar protests popped up around the country.

But not every doctor has bowed to the current administration's whims. Dr. Jeffrey Birnbaum of New York City made headlines when he said he would go to jail if that's what it took in order to provide his young patients with the care they needed.

Speaking to *Democracy Now!*, Birnbaum said he told patients that he “will go to jail to defend [their] care.”

But providers can still take steps to ensure that they don't end up behind bars and that their patients continue to receive best-practice medical care, despite efforts by the Trump administration.

Doctors seeking information and support about what care they can provide and how, GLMA—a national advocacy organization focusing on health equity for LGBTQ+ people as well as for LGBTQ+ health professionals in the workplace, is a vital resource to patients and providers alike and has repeatedly pushed

back against conservative efforts to restrict gender-affirming care as well as reproductive rights broadly. GLMA joined PFLAG in the ACLU's suit on behalf of trans youth and their families challenging the Trump administration over its gender-affirming care ban.

Complicating matters further, doctors who refuse to provide gender-affirming care may in fact face legal consequences of their own. After parents said that NYU Langone and Mount Sinai had canceled appointments for gender affirming care for trans youth, the New York Attorney General Letitia James warned hospitals in the state that they would be violating nondiscrimination law by pausing the care. And with Trump's ban on gender-affirming care blocked while it proceeds through the court, legal advocates like the ACLU say that care can continue without risk, at least for now.

22 May - Updates on Russian Anarchist Political Prisoners

Russia: With translations by Moscow ABC, Avtonom has provided updates for a few of the anarchist political prisoners whose cases we have been following.

MORE:

May 22nd - Alexey Rozhkov sentenced to 16 years for setting fire to a military enlistment office

Rozhkov committed the act on March 11, 2022, as a form of protest and a way to draw attention to the situation. In an interview Ivan Atashin conducted with Alexey in December 2022 — when he had managed to flee to Kyrgyzstan — the anarchist explained his motivation:

"I just understood that I couldn't stay indifferent. (...) Any war means death for ordinary, simple people. War in the 21st century seems completely alien to me. Especially with such absurd reasons [they gave]. We annexed Crimea in 2014, and even then, I said it was all done in vain. Crimea is not ours and never will be. There will be consequences. And that's exactly what happened.

I find it deeply upsetting that people are dying — civilians are dying, and those who don't want to fight but were conscripted are also dying. I wanted to make a statement, to get people to fight against this war. I wanted to influence the situation, to do something to stop or at least weaken [the Russian military]. That's why I set fire to the military enlistment office."

Until the fall of 2022, such acts of arson were not always classified as terrorism. That's why, after six months in a pre-trial detention center (SIZO), Rozhkov was released under a travel ban, as he was initially charged with a mid-level offense of property damage. Alexey managed to escape to Kyrgyzstan, awaiting documents to travel to an EU country. But the bureaucratic process was painfully slow. After six months, the FSB and Kyrgyz authorities (GKNB) staged a covert operation to abduct Rozhkov, bringing him back to Russia, torturing him, and sending him back to pre-trial detention.

Later, the charge was reclassified as "terrorism." Rozhkov was also accused of "justifying terrorism" and spreading "fake news" about the Russian military due to an interview he gave to *Khodorkovsky Live*.

The final sentence: 16 years. A similar sentence was handed to anarchist Roman Shvedov from the Rostov region, who set fire to a government building involved in conscripting people for war. After receiving his sentence, he died by suicide.

At the very least, you can write a letter to Alexey Rozhkov. Nothing sustains a prisoner more than human connection. There's no need for pity or false hope — what matters is showing he's remembered and giving him space to express himself. You can share stories of other political prisoners who endured many years in prison but remained strong and made an impact after release — such stories were always a source of inspiration to him. Or you can simply talk about something unrelated — a reminder that there is life beyond prison walls.)

May 23rd - Lyubov Lizunova transferred to a new penal colony

On May 19, 18-year-old anarchist Lyubov Lizunova was transferred from her previous location at the Tomsk Juvenile Correctional Facility (TVK-2) to a new location.

According to the support group, she is being moved to one of the colonies in Buryatia. Lyuba spent more than two and a half months in TVK-2 after a three-week transfer from Chita SIZO-1. During her time in Tomsk, she completed the 11th grade, passed her final exams, and received mostly top marks — nearly all A's and a few B's.

According to the support group, despite the circumstances, Lyuba remains optimistic and strong. She says she finds it more interesting to interact with adults, is not afraid of change, and even if the conditions in the new colony are worse, she isn't intimidated. She's proud to have graduated from school and is very happy about it, and she hopes to see her parents soon.

As a reminder, over a year ago, on April 25, 2024, the 1st Eastern District Military Court, in an off-site session in Chita, sentenced Lyubov Lizunova to 3.5 years in prison. She was convicted under articles for inciting extremism and terrorism. Lizunova and another defendant in the "Chita anarchists' case," Alexander Snezhkov, were arrested in autumn 2022 in Chita, on suspicion of creating graffiti and administering Telegram channels "75zlo" and "Shugan-25," which published information about anti-war protests in Ukraine, guerrilla actions, and animal rights advocacy. On November 25, 2024, an appeal upheld Lizunova's sentence of 3.5 years without any reduction.

Alexander Snezhkov since the third decade of February and up until today has been held in hole (SHIZO, a punitive isolation ward). He is not being allowed to adjust peacefully to life in the colony; every effort is being made to make his stay there harder. By fabricating more reports of alleged "violations" and continuing to keep the anarchist in SHIZO, the administration is doing everything to have Alexander transferred to SUS (Strict Detention Conditions), the harshest regime in a general-regime colony.

May 23rd - The Trial of Ruslan Sidiki in Ryazan

Tuesday May 13, a panel of judges from the 2nd Western District Military Court began substantive hearings in Ryazan in the case against anarchist Ruslan Sidiki, who is charged under "terrorism" articles for two attacks on military infrastructure.

Ruslan Sidiki was brought into the courtroom in shackles, which were not removed even inside the defendant's cage. There were 10 bailiffs present in the room, some of them armed with rifles. As one attendee noted: "The level of security was like the Kremlin." Prosecutor Boris Motorin requested that the trial be held behind closed doors, claiming that it would include "methods of conducting terrorist activities" and details about the Dyagilevo military airbase, which Sidiki allegedly attempted to attack. He also argued that investigative techniques might be disclosed. However, defense attorney Igor Popovsky and Sidiki himself objected, stating that the case materials contain no state secrets. Judge Oleg Shishov denied the prosecutor's request but banned photo, video, and audio recordings.

During the first hearing:

- The prosecutor read out the charges.
- Four representatives of the victims were questioned.
- Part of the written case materials was read.

The Trial of Ruslan Sidiki — Day 2, May 14

The hearing ran from 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM, with a break for lunch. The prosecutor read out written case materials, and three witnesses were questioned. Two of them were local residents who could not provide any significant testimony.

The third witness was O.V. Melnikov, a representative of the military unit at the Dyagilevo airbase. He stated that there was no damage from the explosion of the quadcopter that Sidiki launched. The drone fell on an aircraft parking area, but at that moment there were no aircraft present. The nearest plane was located several hundred meters away from the explosion site.

Reminder: Ruslan Sidiki acknowledges that he attempted to damage bomber aircraft that are used to attack Ukraine, but he does not consider his actions an act of terrorism. In a letter published by Mediazona, he wrote the following about his motivations:

"The roar of Tu-22s and Tu-95s outside my window coincided with strikes on Ukraine, and that determined my choice of target: the Dyagilevo military airbase, just ten kilometers from home. I lived with my 80-year-old grandmother and understood how hard it is for the elderly and the sick to go without heat and light in the winter. While filling the bathtub with hot water, I thought about those, a thousand kilometers away, who were deprived of basic conditions because of geopolitical ambitions. And yet they talk about 'brotherly nations' and say that 'Russia doesn't fight civilians'."

The Trial of Ruslan Sidiki — Day 3, May 15

Court session included witness testimony from Ruslan's childhood friends and three local residents. Additionally, Prosecutor Boris Motorin completed the reading of the case materials.

Ruslan Sidiki was arrested in late November 2023 on suspicion of sabotaging railway tracks, which led to 19 freight train cars derailing. Later, charges were expanded to include A drone attack on the Dyagilevo airbase in summer 2023, and Preparation for another sabotage action on the railway.

Sidiki admits to the railway sabotage and sending drones with explosives to the military airbase but does not consider these acts terrorism. He emphasizes that he planned the actions to avoid harming people, with the aim of damaging military infrastructure only.

In late August 2024, Sidiki publicly reported that he had been tortured during his arrest and filed a criminal complaint with the Investigative Committee. No action has been taken by the authorities so far, despite legal obligations.

May 25th - Ruslan Siddiqui Sentenced to 29 Years in a Maximum-Security Penal Colony

Judge Oleg Shishov of the 2nd Western District Military Court, during an off-site session at the Ryazan Garrison Military Court, sentenced 37-year-old Ruslan Siddiqui to 29 years in a high-security penal colony, as reported by a Mediazona correspondent from the courtroom.

Siddiqui will serve the first 9 years in prison, after which he will be transferred to a strict-regime colony. The total sentence was the result of cumulative charges under five articles of the Criminal Code. Siddiqui was also fined 2 million rubles (\$21,500).

The court also upheld civil lawsuits filed by victims:

- Alexander Bogatyrev, a KamAZ driver who ran over one of Siddiqui's abandoned drones, will receive 250,000 rubles (\$2,690).
- Dmitry Unshakov, a train engineer whose train derailed after an explosion, will receive 300,000 rubles (\$3,230).
- Sergey Tarabukin, the assistant engineer, will receive 350,000 rubles (\$3,760).

Additional compensations ordered:

- Russian Railways (RZhD): 3.6 million rubles (\$38700)
- Rosagrottrans: 13.2 million rubles (\$141900)
- A fertilizer company whose cargo was on the derailed train: 38.1 million rubles (\$410000)

In his final remarks, Siddiqui once again stated he was tortured following his arrest and clarified that his goal was to disable Russian military infrastructure.

Prosecutor Boris Matorin sought a sentence of 30 years in a strict-regime colony.

The prosecution accused Siddiqui of orchestrating a train explosion and an attack on a military airfield near Ryazan, allegedly on behalf of Ukrainian intelligence services — charges that Siddiqui did not deny.

However, the prosecution also claimed that he had traveled to Turkey and Latvia for terrorist training and was preparing a third attack. Siddiqui denied this, saying he learned nothing new during his encounters in Turkey and Latvia, and had no plans for further bombings due to being in depression over the death of his grandmother.

Defense Arguments

Lawyer Igor Popovsky requested the court:

- Drop the terrorism training charge,
- Reclassify the airfield and train incidents from terrorism to sabotage, and
- Dismiss the charge related to the preparation of a new bombing due to lack of evidence.

The defense also argued that Siddiqui should be recognized as a prisoner of war under the Geneva Convention of 1949, which applies this status to members of resistance operating in enemy territory.

Siddiqui's Final Statement in Court

"I regret that my actions endangered [Alexander] Bogatyrev, [Sergey] Tarabukin, and [Dmitry] Unshakov. They were not my targets, and I'm glad no serious harm came to them.

My aim was the Russian military equipment and the logistical chains used to transport it and fuel. I wanted to complicate combat operations against Ukraine.

Of course, any explosion or news of sabotage can frighten people. But so can missile flyovers and the beginning of military operations — they are meant to terrify civilian populations too.

I have repeatedly stated that I had no intent to deliberately intimidate anyone. I chose my targets myself. I attacked the military aircraft parking area to destroy warplanes. I bombed the railway line to disable it, after confirming military transport was using it.

I made sure no passenger trains ran on the track I sabotaged and maintained visual contact to confirm this. If I didn't care about human life, I could've derailed a train without being physically present.

I had nothing to do with the alleged attempt to create a new explosive device or blow up another train. After the November 11, 2023 explosion, I knew security would tighten. Plus, I had many personal issues.

I have no ill will toward the people of Russia. I do have disagreements over events since [20]14, but that's no reason to hate anyone.

When peaceful means to influence government decisions are unavailable, and dissent is criminalized, some people will emigrate, while others will act.

Regardless of the severity of the crime, torture during interrogation is unacceptable in a lawful state. To electrocute and beat a restrained person is despicable. Responsibility lies not only with those who commit such acts but also with those who know and do nothing.

*And finally, I will read a stanza by Nestor Makhno:
Though now they lay us in the ground,
Our truth will not be swept away.
It will arise when time comes round,
And win — I do believe that day.*

22 May - Cruelty Is Now the Point for BOP

Just before leaving office in January 2025, outgoing President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. removed 37 federal prisoners from death row, but incoming President Donald J. Trump immediately directed his new Attorney General to look for ways to bring state capital charges against them so that they can be killed anyway.

MORE:

via *Prison Legal News*

None of those 37 prisoners have faced such charges yet. But Bondi sent another federal prisoner to face an execution in Oklahoma on March 3, 2025, granting a request from Oklahoma AG Gentner Drummond (R) to extradite John Fitzgerald Hanson from a federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) lockup in Louisiana to carry out a state capital murder conviction.

Hanson, 60, was serving a life sentence for a bank robbery at the United States Penitentiary in Pollock when Drummond requested his extradition to Oklahoma to carry out his execution for the 1999 murder of Mary Agnes Bowles, 77. It was her car that Hanson then used to hold up a Tulsa credit union. Biden had blocked former AG Merrick Garland from granting the request since Drummond made it in 2023, shortly after his election.

Trump also told Bondi to review the confinement conditions of those 37 prisoners that Biden took off death row and “take all lawful and appropriate action to ensure that these offenders are imprisoned in conditions consistent with the monstrosity of their crimes and the threats they pose.”

“The one thing that was clear from the order was that it sounded like the administration was going to try to influence placement of people, and try to do so under conditions that they called ‘monstrous’ in their order,” said Yale Law School Prof. Miriam Gohara, a former federal public defender. “That suggests that they’re actually encouraging the [BOP] to maintain monstrous conditions, or that they think they’re already monstrous conditions in the BOP somewhere, and that somebody could be put there.” Which, added Gohara, “seems like a very odd thing for the executive to be saying about one of his agencies.”

“I was really taken aback by the number of adjectives in the order,” agreed former federal public defender Dale Baich. “So, I just think it’s going to be a real heavy lift going forward to challenge those conditions.”

25 May - Jack Mazurek Update

An Update from the Jack Support Crew.

MORE:

On Monday, May 5, Jack attended his scheduled court appearance. This hearing was intended to hear his final plea, but the judge has yet to rule on any of the motions and the proceedings remain stalled. Prosecutors say a jury trial is a last resort. Once again, the fate of his life is kicked down the line to yet another court appearance. He is expected in court again at the end of June, where his final plea and trial date is set.

Morale was high on May 5 as a support rally outside of the court house with banners, music, chanting, news crews, yard signs and donuts. See the picture above!

Jack’s court case continues to move slowly and without much clarity, typical of court processes in the US.

Notes of gratitude:

Jack is able to go to evening events again as his curfew was extended to 11 pm.

Jack’s first child is expected in the early weeks of June and he will get to be there with his lovely partner as she delivers.

Letters of support mean so much to Jack during this time. Over the last six months, he has received hundreds of letters from all around the world, and he carefully reads each one. His gratitude is unending for everyone that takes the time to send him sweet messages of support. If you or anyone in your crew would like to write to Jack, please email **FreeJack@riseup.net**

Huge thanks to everyone who has thrown a fundraiser for Jack, without y’all we couldn’t afford a robust legal defense and we appreciate it!!!

5 Jun - Cops Out of the Art World

WHAT: Zine Launch

WHEN: 7:00pm, Thursday, June 5th

WHERE: The Word Is Change - 368 Tompkins Avenue, Brooklyn

COST: FREE

MORE:

Join the Art Workers' Inquiry to celebrate the launch of their new zine Cops Out of the Art World.

This publication gathers research on the links between arts institutions and policing by art workers committed to abolition. The launch will include readings from contributors, followed by the opportunity to join in an inquiry investigating strategies to organize against deportation.

7 Jun - Letter Writing for June 11th Prisoners

WHAT: Political Prisoner Letter-writing

WHEN: Saturday, June 7th, 2025 2:00-5:00pm

WHERE: Interference Archive – 314 7th Street, Brooklyn, 11215

COST: FREE (Donations to cover the cost of stamps greatly appreciated)

MORE:

While Memorial Day will be in the rearview, leaving a lot of folks still eating leftovers after firing up the grill—more likely in celebration of a day off from their shitty jobs than to memorialize anything, NYC ABC turns our thoughts to those who were captured or died fighting for the movement(s). Join us as we respond to the June 11th call for solidarity with long term anarchist political prisoners, while recognizing the history of this day by including earth and animal liberation prisoners. In addition to encouraging people to write to those captured by the state, we hold space for those we have lost in recent decades from those movements.

From the June 11th call:

“Spring is unfolding, and the time has again come to look towards June 11th, the International Day of Solidarity with Marius Mason and Long-term Anarchist prisoners. While our celebration of this day is to lend attention to Marius and other anarchist prisoners at risk of being forgotten because of their long sentences, we’re also continually thinking about how to emphasize how integral prisoners are, and an anti-prison struggle as a whole is, on our path towards freedom.”

In case you’re joining us having never written to a political prisoner or prisoners of war, we’ve got a handy set of guidelines to make it easy and fun, demystifying elements that might otherwise feel stressful or intimidating. You can check check those guidelines out at <https://nycabc.wordpress.com/write-a-letter>

Writing a letter to a political prisoner or prisoner of war is a concrete way to support those imprisoned for their political struggles.

A letter is a simple way to brighten someone’s day in prison by creating human interaction and communication—something prisons attempt to destroy. Beyond that, writing keeps prisoners connected to the communities and movements of which they are a part, allowing them to provide insights and stay up to date.

Writing to prisoners is not charity, as we on the outside have as much to gain from these relationships as the prisoners. Knowing the importance of letter writing is crucial. Prisons are very lonely, isolating, and disconnected places. Any sort of bridge from the outside world is greatly appreciated.

With that in mind, avoid feeling intimidated, especially about writing to someone you do not know. And if possible, try and be a consistent pen pal.”