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Updates for May 28th

13 May - 'I'm Really Opening Myself Up': Chelsea Manning Signs Book Deal

Only free for seven days, Chelsea Manning has been jailed again for resisting a grand jury. Below are a couple of updates and articles published in the interim.

MORE:

by Charlie Savage (*New York Times*)

Ever since she was publicly identified as the source who had disclosed a huge trove of military and diplomatic documents to WikiLeaks in 2011, Chelsea Manning, the former Army intelligence analyst, has been a polarizing cultural figure — called a traitor by prosecutors, but celebrated as an icon by transparency and antiwar activists. Her life story, and her role in one of the most extraordinary leaks in American history, has been told in news articles, an Off Broadway play and even an opera. But while she spoke at her court-martial and has participated in interviews, Manning herself has not told her own story, until now. Manning is writing a memoir, which Farrar, Straus and Giroux will publish in the winter of 2020, the publisher announced Monday.

Manning was convicted in 2013 and sentenced to 35 years in prison, the longest sentence ever handed down in an American leak case. After her conviction, Manning announced that she was a transgender woman and changed her name to “Chelsea,” although the military housed her in a Fort Leavenworth prison for male inmates. She had a difficult time there, attempting suicide twice in 2016, before President Barack Obama commuted most of the remainder of her sentence shortly before he left office in January 2017. In the meantime, WikiLeaks published Democratic emails stolen by Russian hackers during the 2016 presidential campaign, transforming its image from what it had been back when Manning decided to send archives of secret files to it.

Manning reappeared in the news this year, refusing to testify before a grand jury as federal prosecutors continue to build a case against Julian Assange, the WikiLeaks founder. Assange, currently in custody in Britain, is fighting extradition to the United States for a charge that he conspired with Manning to try to crack an encoded password that would have permitted her to log onto a classified computer network under a different person’s account rather than her own, which would have helped her mask her tracks better. She was jailed for two months for contempt over her refusal to answer questions about her interactions with Assange, then freed because the grand jury expired. But she has already been served with a new subpoena prosecutors obtained from a new grand jury and is expected to be jailed again soon.

Below are edited excerpts from a conversation between Manning and Charlie Savage, a *New York Times* reporter who has written about her court-martial and her time in military prison.

Tell me about your book.

It’s basically my life story up until I got the commutation, from my birth to my time in school and going to the army and going to prison and the court-martial process. It’s a personal narrative of what was going on in my life surrounding that time and what led to the leaks, what led to prison, and how this whole ordeal has really shaped me and changed me. I view this book as a coming-of-age story. For instance, how my colleagues in the intelligence field really were the driving force behind my questioning of assumptions that I had come into the military with — how jaded they were, some of them having done two three four deployments previously. And then also there is a lot of stuff about how prisons are awful, and how prisoners survive and get through being in confinement.

Do you have a title yet?

There is no title yet. I am trying very hard to have some control over that, but none has been decided yet. Noreen Malone from New York magazine worked on it with me. She did a lot of the groundwork in terms of the research, and I did the storytelling, so it was a collaborative effort. I'm still going through and editing where she has taken independent sources to help refine my story, fact-check, verify things and provide a third-person perspective in shaping things.

Is it written in first-person or third-person?

It is written in first-person, but there are parts of the book that reference material that are independent of me. I'm still under obligation under the court rules and the Classified Information Procedures Act of 1980 to not disclose closed court-martial testimony or verify evidence that was put in the record. Things like that. So I can't talk about that stuff and I'm not going to, and so I'm trying to keep this and maintain this as more of a personal story. There are parts of it that might reference reports or whatnot but I'm just going to say, "the media reported this, but I'm not confirming or denying it."

Are you going to submit the manuscript to the government for a classified information review?

We're trying our best to avoid the review process. There is a lot of stuff that is not going to be in the book that people would expect to be in there, but rules are rules and we can't get around it. It's more about personal experiences I had rather than anything specific. I'm not trying to relitigate the case, just tell my personal story.

So if it ends with you getting out of military prison, you're not going to address your current situation with the grand jury investigating WikiLeaks?

No, we're not planning on including that in this current stage. If there is a book that gets into the more juicy details about that stuff, then we'll probably get around to that after going through a review process, several years down the road from now, whenever the dust settles. But I think this is more about trying to contextualize my story from my perspective rather than get into the weeds of what is in the record of trial, what is in the documents, what the investigation focused on, because we're just not able to get into that area.

It sounds like you are a lot freer to talk about your gender identity than the WikiLeaks issue.

Yeah. This is less a book about the case and more a book about trials, tribunals, struggles, difficulties, and overcoming them and surviving. If people are expecting to learn a lot more about the court-martial and a lot more about the case, then they probably shouldn't be interested in this book. But if they want to know more about what it's like to be me and survive, then there are reams of information in here. It's much more autobiographical than it is a narrative thriller or crime story or anything like that. I have always pitched this to being very similar to "Wild" by Cheryl Strayed. I'm really opening myself up to some really intimate things in this book, some really very personal moments and much more intimate points of my life that I've never disclosed before. You're probably going to learn more about my love life than about the disclosures.

May 13th - Chelsea Manning Warns That Trump Will Go After Journalists With "Indictments and Charges"
by Rex Santus (VICE)

In her first interview since being released from federal jail, Chelsea Manning said that President Trump "clearly wants to go after journalists."

"We're probably going to see indictments and charges," Manning told CNN's Brian Stelter Sunday. "Whenever a journalist makes a misstep, I think that they are put on notice now that the FBI and the Department of Justice are going to go after them on the administration's behalf."

Manning — a U.S. whistleblower and activist responsible for releasing thousands of military documents to WikiLeaks in 2010 — recently spent 62 days in jail, largely in solitary confinement, after refusing to answer questions before a grand jury about WikiLeaks and its founder, Julian Assange. He's currently facing extradition to the U.S. for allegedly attempting to hack into Pentagon computers with Manning.

Manning said she already told the courts everything she knew when she testified in 2013 and did not approve of the secretive judicial process. The former U.S. Army intelligence analyst was only released because the grand jury's term expired. And before she even left jail, she received a second subpoena to testify for the same purpose — which she said she'll refuse again. That means she could be headed back to jail.

Manning and her team said they have no idea if she'll return to prison for once again refusing to testify before the grand jury. She said that her rights were violated during the last grand jury process when prosecutors attempted to entrap her.

"I think that we have a much stronger case in terms of, like, the legal objections, which the previous judge didn't — refused to even hear," Manning told Stelter. "He refused to even hear or act on the motions. He just simply placed me in contempt and ignored our motions."

As one of his final acts as president, Barack Obama commuted Manning's 35-year prison sentence for espionage after she had served just 7 years. In 2010, she leaked a cache of military documents to WikiLeaks, which included a video that showed a U.S. military attack in Baghdad that killed dozens, including two journalists.

May 16th - Statement from Chelsea Manning's Lawyers Regarding Chelsea Being Remanded Into Custody

Today, Chelsea Manning was remanded into federal custody, again, for refusing to testify before a federal Grand Jury.

In addition to being held in confinement for the duration of the Grand Jury investigation or until she purges her contempt and testifies, District Court Judge Anthony Trenga ordered Chelsea to be fined \$500 every day she is in custody after 30 days and \$1,000 every day she is in custody after 60 days.

While coercive financial penalties are commonly assessed against corporate witnesses, which cannot be jailed for contempt, it is less usual to see them used against a human witness.

In a sealed hearing, Judge Anthony Trenga heard arguments that this post-indictment subpoena should be quashed as an impermissible effort to compel Chelsea to participate in trial preparation, which is beyond the scope of the grand jury's investigative function.

Judge Trenga also heard arguments on whether Chelsea was subject to unlawful electronic surveillance, ultimately declining either to demand from the government further assurances on the matter, or to quash the subpoena.

Prior to being held in contempt, Ms. Manning was heard in open court on her objections to the grand jury as a secret process that runs counter to her values.

Today's hearings took place exactly one week after her release, following 63 days of confinement, 28 days of which she spent in solitary confinement conditions, for refusal to testify before a separate Grand Jury that sought answers to identical questions that were asked of her today.

The motions and transcripts may be partially unsealed following review and redaction by the parties and the Court.

The following is a statement to the press from Moira Meltzer-Cohen, Attorney for Chelsea Manning:

“We are of course disappointed with the outcome of today’s hearing, but I anticipate it will be exactly as coercive as the previous sanction — which is to say not at all.

“In 2010 Chelsea made a principled decision to let the world see the true nature modern asymmetric warfare. It is telling that the United States has always been more concerned with the disclosure of those documents than with the damning substance of the disclosures.

“The American government relies on the informed consent of the governed, and the free press is the vigorous mechanism to keep us informed. It is a point of pride for this administration to be publicly hostile to the press. Grand Juries and prosecutions like this one broadcast an expanding threat to the press and function to undermine the integrity of the system according to the government’s own laws.

“This administration is also obsessed with undercutting the legacy of President Barack Obama, from reversing healthcare policy to Chelsea Manning’s commutation.

“It is up to the press to stand up for themselves, to stand up for the practice of journalism, and to stand up for Chelsea in the same manner she has consistently stood up for the press.”

May 16th - Chelsea Manning Faces More Jail And Steep Fines To Force Compliance With Grand Jury Subpoena

by Kevin Gosztola (*Shadowproof*)

Unable to break Chelsea Manning’s spirit by jailing her, the United States escalated efforts to force her to testify before a grand jury investigating WikiLeaks by imposing steep financial penalties.

Judge Anthony Trenga held Manning in civil contempt and ordered her to be sent back to the William G. Truesdale Adult Detention Center in Alexandria. He also imposed a fine of \$500 per day after 30 days, and then a fine of \$1000 per day after 60 days.

The grand jury term is likely to last for 18 months. If she were to remain in jail until the term expired, she would face a fine of more than a half million dollars.

“While coercive financial penalties are commonly assessed against corporate witnesses, which cannot be jailed for contempt, it is less usual to see them used against a human witness,” Manning’s attorneys stated.

Manning was released from jail after 62 days on May 9. She was issued another subpoena prior to her release.

A motion to quash the subpoena, as well as other filings, were submitted in federal court. In particular, Manning’s attorneys urged the court to review her claims of alleged unlawful surveillance and instruct the government to disclose what they know about the surveillance.

The motion to quash was denied, and immediately, a contempt hearing was held, as Manning’s attorneys waived appearing before the grand jury.

“Jails and prisons exist as a dark institution, and despite that, it doesn’t frighten me or disturb me. I mean, I’ve already been to jail. I’ve already been to prison. So, attempting to coerce me with a grand jury subpoena is just not going to work,” Manning declared in a press conference prior to her contempt hearing.

She added, “Ultimately, this is an attempt to place me back in confinement. I think that the questions are the same questions I was asked at the court-martial seven or eight years ago. They’re not asking anything new.”

Manning suggested the government's goal is to "re-litigate the court-martial" because they do not like that President Barack Obama commuted her 35-year prison sentence. "They didn't like the outcome. I got out."

U.S. Attorney G. Zachary Terwilliger insisted, "The only thing that is being asked of her is to come answer questions truthfully. As someone who received the incredible gift of a commutation, was literally given 28 years of her life back, she now refuses to simply answer questions as part of our constitutional criminal justice process."

"It's interesting that she has such an abhorrence for grand juries, given that that mechanism is set forth in the Fifth Amendment and stands as a bulwark against unchecked prosecutorial power and its secrecy protects the innocent by not subjecting them to public scrutiny when no indictment is returned. That's especially interesting given that she swore an oath to defend and support that same Constitution as a soldier," rebuked Terwilliger.

Although Terwilliger may cheer the grand jury process, the United States and Liberia are the only countries that still rely on grand juries to issue indictments. England abolished their grand jury system in 1933.

Manning's attorneys argue the "enormous discretion held by prosecuting authorities in the United States allows them to use the law for political and other ends."

"Historically, the grand jury system was used to indict outspoken opponents of slavery for sedition, and then to harass and indict black people and Reconstruction officials attempting to gain suffrage."

"In the mid-20th century, the grand jury system was improperly used to frame labor organizers and union leaders," her attorneys additionally note. "During the Nixon administration, over one thousand political activists were subpoenaed to more than one hundred grand juries investigating lawful antiwar, women's rights, and black activist movements."

After Daniel Ellsberg, who worked for the RAND Corporation, provided copies of the Pentagon Papers to media organizations, the Justice Department convened two grand juries in the Boston area in 1971. They targeted Neil Sheehan, a *New York Times* reporter who was the first to write about the Pentagon Papers, as well as Noam Chomsky, Senator Mike Gravel, and journalist David Halberstam. They had Samuel Popkin, a Harvard University professor, jailed for contempt for refusing to testify.

What Terwilliger regards as a "bulwark against unchecked prosecutorial power" enabled a fishing expedition against anyone who had associated with Ellsberg and helped him blow the whistle on the Vietnam War just as the Justice Department is engaged in a fishing expedition against anyone who associated with WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange or worked on WikiLeaks publications.

Maira Meltzer-Cohen, attorney for Manning, asserted after she was sent back to jail, "I suspect that this sanction of further incarceration will be exactly as coercive as the previous sanction, which is to say not at all."

"In 2010, Chelsea took a principled decision to let the world see the true nature of modern asymmetric warfare. It is telling that the United States has always been more concerned with the disclosure of those documents than with their damning evidence," Meltzer-Cohen declared.

Prosecutors may contend that they need Manning to provide testimony that can bolster their case for Assange's extradition to the United States.

Assange plans to fight the U.S. government's extradition case until all avenues for appeals are exhausted. Plus, Sweden re-opened a case against Assange over sexual allegations.

When considering how it is likely to take multiple years before Assange is brought to the U.S. or he defeats the U.S. government, the efforts to break Manning and force her to comply may extend beyond 18 months if she is willing to take on hundreds of thousands of dollars in debt that will compound the physical and psychological harm she already has sustained.

Manning had gender confirmation surgery in October. She shared in a declaration to the court that her post-surgery regimen requires “delicate and regular self-care at least twice daily, including the use of anti-bacterial soap and dilators. Otherwise, I risk serious medical complications, including permanent injury and deadly infections.”

Before her court hearings, Manning told the press, “If I am in there for an extended period of time, it’s going to impact my health. I had surgery recently and I’ve had a few thankfully not life-threatening complications, but I’ve had complications.”

She acknowledged the jail where she will be confined does not have “the medical capacity to hold people too long.”

14 May - No More Deaths Trial Opens as More Bodies Found Along Border

Dozens of people turned out in support for Scott Warren at the federal courthouse in Tucson, Arizona, last week.

MORE:

by Ryan Devereaux (*The Intercept*)

But as friends and family filled the benches, there was a noteworthy absence: A team of Warren’s fellow humanitarian aid volunteers were out in the field. They were searching for a man reported missing on the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge — the same remote desert area where Warren was accused of leaving jugs of water, food, and medical supplies for migrants in distress.

The missing persons report came in Saturday night via a tip line operated by No More Deaths, one of the humanitarian groups Warren works with. As the volunteers searched the area the following morning, they came across a skull and scattered bones spread out beneath a wooden cross, partially covered by a tattered white blanket. It seemed to be the same set of bones that volunteers had reported finding in late 2017. Typically, authorities would have collected the remains once they were reported, so they could be turned over to the Pima County Medical Examiner’s Office. It appeared that hadn’t happened.

When Warren’s trial kicked off in Tucson the following day, May 6, his fellow volunteers were still searching. They reported finding three sets of suspected human remains on Monday, another on Wednesday, and two more on Thursday. A majority were discovered within walking distance of a Border Patrol rescue beacon. All the while, the man the volunteers were searching for remained missing.

The grim work provided an apt backdrop for the court proceedings in Tucson, where Warren’s defense team argued that deeply held spiritual beliefs compel the 36-year-old geographer to confront the death and disappearance that encircle Ajo, Arizona, the tiny, unincorporated community where Warren lives and concentrates his humanitarian efforts — and where the remains of hundreds of migrants have been discovered in recent years. To prosecute Warren for those efforts would violate his religious freedom rights, the lawyers argued.

Facing six months in prison on federal littering and trespassing charges, the misdemeanor trial was the first of two for Warren this month. The stakes are even higher in the second case, set to begin on May 29, with Warren fighting multiple felony smuggling and conspiracy charges and facing up to 20 years in prison for allowing two undocumented men access to food, water, and a place to sleep for two nights last year.

Warren's lawyers have argued that the charges against him point to something bigger than one man's actions on a given day. It is about a multi-decade story of government policy leading to thousands of lives lost, and the people working to confront and expose that scandal now finding themselves in the crosshairs of the state.

As defense attorney Greg Kuykendall put it in his opening remarks: "Scott knows where the bodies are."

Bearing Witness

On June 21, 2017, Warren was among a group of No More Deaths volunteers who drove onto Cabeza Prieta to search for bodies and drop gallon jugs of water, cans of beans, blankets, and medical supplies in areas where migrants were known to die. Nearly all of the sprawling desert refuge is federally protected wilderness, meaning that virtually all of the administrative roads that run through the territory are off-limits to the general public without special permits — permits that land managers have steadfastly refused to provide to No More Deaths volunteers.

Warren, who holds a Ph.D. in geography and spent the last decade studying the social and geographic history of southern Arizona's borderlands, is accused of two violations: driving onto designated wilderness, and abandonment of property (for leaving water and other humanitarian aid supplies).

Federal prosecutors Anna Wright and Nathaniel Walters, assistant U.S. attorneys who have spearheaded multiple No More Deaths prosecutions since 2017, argued in court last week that Warren's case was clear-cut. Though U.S. Fish and Wildlife Officer Jose Luis Valenzuela testified that he never actually witnessed Warren leaving items in the desert and never described abandonment of property in his report of the incident, Walters nonetheless argued that the presence of both Warren and humanitarian supplies in the area was sufficient to make a "fair inference" to establish Warren's guilt.

"There's more than enough circumstantial evidence," the prosecutor said.

The defense disagreed. In a motion for acquittal, Amy Knight, Kuykendall's co-counsel, argued that the government failed to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Warren, specifically, had left aid supplies on the refuge. U.S. District Judge Raner Collins denied the motion. Kuykendall, meanwhile, noted that under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, efforts to prosecute an individual for actions that are extension of their religious or spiritual beliefs must flow from a government interest of the "highest order" and be applied with the "least restrictive means" possible.

To illustrate why Warren's humanitarian work should be protected from prosecution under RFRA, Kuykendall called several witnesses. The first was Warren himself. He described his belief that Ajo's surrounding desert is populated by the souls of people who died crossing through the area. Warren explained that in his particular corner of Arizona, the people who die in the desert often die alone, in horrible, agonizing ways, and as a result, their final moments are unacknowledged by the living.

"In places that I know, they remain in a sort of in-between place until they are witnessed," Warren said. "It is unconscionable to me, and it requires me to act and to do something."

In searching for human remains and "witnessing" the places where those remains came to rest, Warren testified, he believes that he is engaging in act of "spiritual completion," helping to provide the dead with "the thing that makes their soul live on in that place." The provision of humanitarian aid is an extension of that belief system, Warren testified, one that is "as sacred" as witnessing where people have died.

When asked what he would do if his belief system came into conflict with wilderness regulations, Warren was to the point. "If I were faced with that choice, I would go to those places of greatest need and risk violating those laws," he testified. To do otherwise, Warren said, "would be engaging in a hollow

experience of what's really needed." Warren acknowledged that he knew "full well" he was in designated wilderness when he stepped onto the refuge in the summer of 2017.

Walters accused Warren of engaging in a project that was not just spiritual, but political, at one point asking if Warren was aware "that one of the aims of No More Deaths is to build a global movement." Though the line of questioning was short-lived, Walters would return to a version of it the following day, offering a potentially illuminating window into the political lens through which Trump administration prosecutors seem to view the humanitarian group.

State of Emergency

Day two of Warren's trial saw Dr. Gregory Hess, a forensic pathologist and Pima County's chief medical examiner, on the witness stand. Hess noted that most medical examiner's offices do not employ a full-time forensic anthropologist. Pima County has two, a reflection of the explosion in deaths that followed a shift in border enforcement in the mid-1990s in which the U.S. government funneled migrants away from cities and into the Sonoran Desert.

With nearly 3,000 case files in his office, Hess testified that migrant deaths in southern Arizona meet the definition of a public health problem. In response, Hess testified, his office began compiling data in 2000 on the extraordinary loss of life. "That's the year that it really became a problem," he said.

The numbers indicate that Arizona's punishing summer months are the most lethal for migrants crossing the desert. In recent years, it has become increasingly clear that the Growler Valley, a remote stretch of Cabeza Prieta, is particularly deadly. Ed McCullough, a retired geology professor who supplies No More Deaths with maps of migrant remains found in southern Arizona each month, testified about the "trails of death" that run through the valley. When asked about the area where Warren was stopped in 2017, McCullough described it as "right in the middle" of one of those trails.

Despite the evidence of deaths, Sidney Slone, the manager of Cabeza Prieta, testified that he did not know how many human bodies had been found on the refuge in the last 20 years. When asked how many remains were found in 2018, Slone was again unsure, noting that it was "not necessarily" his job to know. While Slone's attention to detail in matters of human death occurring on his refuge was minimal, his focus on Warren and No More Deaths in the summer of 2017 was not. Emails published by *The Intercept* in January showed the land manager's intensive efforts to prohibit No More Deaths' work on Cabeza Prieta.

Catherine Gaffney, a longtime No More Deaths volunteer, testified about the group's 2014 decision to turn its attention to the so-called Ajo corridor. The mission of No More Deaths is to end death and suffering in the Sonoran Desert, Gaffney said, and the group prioritizes operations based where the most death and suffering is occurring. Ever since 2014, Gaffney testified, "most of the sources were pointing us to the west desert," and more specifically, to Cabeza Prieta's Growler Valley. The expansiveness of the region, coupled with Slone's refusal to grant No More Deaths special access permits allowing them to make water drops and look for people — alive and dead — in areas where migrants were known to be dying, presented a challenge, Gaffney explained.

On cross-examination, Walters again pushed for an admission that No More Deaths' work was not some altruistic, nonpolitical operation. "Would you agree that one of [No More Deaths'] goals is to abolish ICE?" he asked. Gaffney told the prosecutor that she did not believe that was one of the goals of the organization's working group. Walters pressed on, fishing for evidence that No More Deaths provides migrants in Mexico with material support to illegally cross the border and questioning the nature of the emergency that the organization devotes itself to.

"The fact that this emergency has been going on for more than a decade doesn't make it any less of an emergency," Gaffney testified. "It just makes it more of tragedy."

Unnecessarily Thoughtful

On the Sunday before Warren appeared in court, as No More Deaths was scouring the desert, Ana Adlerstein, a volunteer at Casa del Migrantes, a migrant shelter in the Mexican town of Sonoyta, was arrested as she accompanied an asylum-seeker to the Lukeville port of entry, just south of Ajo. Adlerstein told *The Intercept* that Customs and Border Protection officers had accused her of the same human smuggling charges Warren is currently facing in his felony case. The following morning, hours before Warren took the witness stand, more than 120 students at a Tucson high school walked out of class, protesting the detention of a classmate who, just a few weeks away from graduation, was pulled over in a traffic stop and landed in Border Patrol custody.

The walkout, the arrest, and the active search operations around Ajo hovered over the days of testimony that followed. They also served as a window into the atmosphere immigrant rights advocates in southern Arizona are operating under as Warren's felony trial approaches. As the misdemeanor trial came to a close, prosecutors offered a preview of what that fight could look like.

In her closing arguments, Wright took aim at Warren's religious freedom defense, asserting that the government can administer its lands as it sees fit — to do otherwise in an effort to accommodate an individual citizen's religious needs would provide that citizen "a veto" over the federal government, she said. In Warren's case, she went on to say, "there's still ways for him to aid people who are crossing the desert" without violating the rules of the Cabeza Prieta refuge.

Wright then turned her attention to Warren, arguing that there were "several reasons" he was not credible. Warren was "construing his beliefs in a way to fit a legal theory," the prosecutor alleged. Not only that, his habit of pausing to consider questions before answering them was a sign that he could not be trusted. Warren "took long pauses that were unnecessary," Wright said.

The prosecutor made the accusation in a courtroom filled with Warren's closest friends and supporters, as well as his mother and father, who were sitting in the front row. The anger in the room was palpable. "I am at once saddened and terrified to hear the prosecutor describe Scott Warren the way she did," Kuykendall told the court. Rather than time in prison, he said, "what Scott Warren does in his free time should earn him a medal."

The trial came to a close Thursday without a verdict. Collins, the judge, gave both sides until May 24 to file final motions, raising the likelihood that his decision could come just days before Warren's felony trial, which he is also presiding over.

Criminalizing Kindness

In the desert outside Ajo, the work continued. By the end of the weekend, two sets of suspected human remains reported by humanitarian groups had been collected by law enforcement and turned over to the medical examiner's office, Pima County Sheriffs Deputy Daniel Jelieno told *The Intercept*.

As for the remains reported in December 2017 and seemingly left in the field, Jelieno said his office received the report at the time, and that a recovery team collected the remains and turned them over to the medical examiner's office. However, an interactive map of migrant deaths in southern Arizona, based on medical examiner case files, offers no indication of remains received by the office on the date in question, raising questions as to whether the remains No More Deaths came upon last week were indeed new, or if they were never completely recovered.

As the sun dipped behind the mountains in Ajo on Friday night, a crowd of people made their way into the parish hall at the Immaculate Conception Church. For more than a century, the white adobe building has sat in the center of the community, which itself sits like an oasis in the middle of a vast stretch of the Sonoran Desert.

Inside the hall were rows of tables and a spread of home-cooked food. Advertised in the local paper, the potluck was billed as a topical affair, titled “How to Support Scott Warren’s Trial and the Right to Give and Receive Humanitarian Aid.” By Ajo standards, the event drew an unusually large crowd. Many attendees were part of the retired snowbird community that inflates Ajo’s population up to about 3,000 people in the off-summer months. They were joined by Nahuatl-speaking activists from southern California, No More Deaths volunteers, college students visiting from Montana State University, and off-the-grid desert rats.

Jose Castillo, a lifelong Ajo resident born in 1939, was first to speak. Castillo had lived through Ajo’s boom and bust, having worked in the copper mine that provided the backbone of Ajo’s economy before closing in the mid-1980s. A quintessential border-dweller, toggling between English and Spanish, he speaks of migration the way most people here do — as a fact of life. Addressing the crowd Friday night, Castillo noted the risks migrants face, now exacerbated by the legal action taken against Warren and other aid providers. For him, Castillo said, “it’s personal.”

Warren was next at the podium. He had spent the day in the desert with the students from Montana. His suit replaced by dusty jeans, it was a stark departure from his appearances in court that week. Warren began by thanking the community that has rallied around him. “This past week has been a difficult one for those of us working in the desert,” Warren said, noting the ongoing search-and-rescue operations and the human remains they had uncovered.

“I wish could say that that was uncommon,” he said. “But those kinds of experiences, particularly in the Growler, are pretty typical.”

Warren then addressed his cases. Speaking of his upcoming felony trial, he noted a fact often absent from accounts of his experience: that he was arrested with two other people, 21-year-old Jose Arnaldo Sacaria-Goday, of Honduras, and 23-year-old Kristian Gerardo Perez-Villanueva, of El Salvador. “The judge released me on my own recognizance after about 24 hours,” he explained. That was not the case for Sacaria-Goday and Perez-Villanueva. “They kept Jose and Kristian in detention for something like eight weeks,” Warren said. The young men were held as material witnesses and deposed in the government’s case. Once those needs were met, the government “very quickly deported them back to places which they had been fleeing.”

Soon, the conversation in the parish hall opened to the audience. As questions and comments piled up, the extraordinary moment that the community of Ajo is living through became clear. One by one, people shared their experiences of providing help to migrants in need in the desert, their outrage over Warren’s arrest, and their fears about what it might mean for their lives in the borderlands.

“Is it my responsibility as a United States citizen to get identification for every person I give a glass of water to?” Bevin Anumpa asked.

Micah Perry, who lives outside Ajo in what he described as “the sticks,” echoed that sentiment.

With a property that sits alongside several million acres of remote wilderness, Perry said the government was using “lethal deterrence” in his backyard, and pressuring him to join in. “If I don’t intervene to help them, then I’m complicit in lethal deterrence. We all are. Everyone here is if they’re not willing to help people,” he said. “If I don’t stand up and make noise on Scott’s behalf, then I’m complicit in that lethal deterrence, and that’s not OK, that’s sociopathic.”

“If Scott goes to prison, what’s going to happen to me, as his neighbor?” he added. “My garden is not a war zone.”

Kathy Sicora, a longtime volunteer with the Ajo Samaritans, a local humanitarian group, then rose to her feet. “I know we’re frustrated,” she said. “We want to know: What is legal? What can we do legally?”

Sicora told the audience that, for her, history provided useful guidance. “When slavery was legal and slaves were running away, and people were helping them, it was probably illegal,” she said. All of this, Sicora argued, was a matter of doing what one knows to be right, regardless of the government’s current position. When Warren’s verdict comes down, whether he’s found “innocent, of being a human being,” or “guilty of providing help to somebody who’s dying,” she suggested that “maybe we can all go out and put water wherever it’s needed.”

As Sicora returned to her seat, 18-year-old Enzo Javier Mejia stood up.

The aspiring doctor was not an Ajo resident, but instead one of the Montana State students who Warren had taken into the desert that day. “My parents are both immigrants — my dad’s from El Salvador, my mom’s from Nicaragua,” he explained. “They made that trek over to the United States back in the 80s and 90s. My mom was 7 years old. I have a little sister that’s 13 and I can’t imagine her doing that trek at that age. The fact that this community cares this much and is putting out water, food, and blankets means a lot.” These were things his family didn’t have, Javier Mejia said. “They walked here, miles and miles and miles,” he went on to say. “So, on behalf of them, on behalf of my aunts, uncles, parents, grandparents, thank you so much.”

“Thank you for being such a great community,” he said.

15 May - May 2019 Letter to Supporters From Mutulu Shakur

Mutulu provides an update on his life, support, and legal filings he has in the works, among other things.

MORE:

I would like to thank you for the support. I received your letters/cards, and they are greatly appreciated. So many of you know my methods of communication leave a lot to be desired, but my desire is to assure you that your letters and questions in relation to the issues we are all concerned with are important to me. It fuels my fire to move forward and not give up.

I would like to say that many of your questions I tried to answer over the years in various forms of interviews, commentary, while also giving a historical analysis. In the event that you don’t have knowledge of these platforms where you can find needed information in relation to me or answers to some of the questions you may have, you can find them on my website: Mutulushakur.com, Facebook group: “FREE Mutulu Shakur,” or Instagram & Twitter: @FreeDrMShakur. Though I am not the direct administrator over those platforms, it is my understanding that the information provided is usually accurate while every detail may not be available and every detail did not come directly from “the horse’s mouth.” If you need more please ask, and I do appreciate those platforms’ efforts to support.

The last time we spoke, I informed you we were preparing for the filing of my Federal complaint, which unfortunately was not successful. At this point, Judge Wilson’s court order– after denying an oral argument– stated the following; “Circuit case law supports the conclusion that plaintiff’s claims can be made in a section 2241 petition, even though a favorable resolution of the claims might not necessarily lead to speedier release. Third, plaintiff has not identified any alternative vehicle to section 2241 for seeking relief. The court thus dismisses plaintiff’s claims and suggests that plaintiff for a writ of habeas corpus.” We will now be appealing this decision and filing a Habeas Corpus.

It seems to me that the new, recently-elected women of the 2019 Congress are demonstrating political back bone. In an entrenched chamber, their unwarranted targeting for exposing obvious contradictions in Congress requires civic and political awareness by our young women– and men, they will need your support and your critical analysis to give them courage and create political space and capital. That will allow them to continue to confront the abuse of power and the exercise of Congressional favoritism, and give them space for their creative policies.

It is evident that from many sacrifices and consistent challenges to racially disparaging laws, targeting Black and Brown people involved in the underground economy of drugs and opioids keeping them victims trapped in a cycle of economic despair, that the Crack law was unjust, legally indefensible, and contempt to the US constitution. Because of this awareness, we have seen limited, but real, relief coming from the courts: Senator Corey Booker, Van Jones, Jared Kushner and Trump's First Step Act Bill has resulted in many people getting relief of their sentence. Yes, there is serious criticism that can be leveled, but after spending almost 40 years in prison, to see men and women going home in a correction of a wrong is encouraging and important.

Do not think for a moment that the exposure of the Crack law will discourage those who are hell-bent on creating laws specifically to affect the underclass, Black and Brown of the Nation. There is a statute in the law, titled "924(c)" (the use or carry of a firearm in the midst of a drug trafficking or violent crime), that is not similarly applied to violators in the areas of the NRA political strongholds. Research from the community and surveys will determine that this has replaced the new Crack laws in targeting the underserved, and compounding by stacking mandatory terms of 25-year sentences. It is not uncommon to see young men and women with little to no criminal history being subject to hundreds of years in prison due to this statute. Due to the realization and correction of the law, it has been repealed, but still thousands of the initial victims of the law languish in prison because the law was not made retroactive. Here we go again with the same pattern of delay in ruling to determine whether it will become applicable to all the victims of the law, like the Crack law. This cup is not half full. It is said, 'take no easy victories, the victory must be earned and the task understood.'

The "Redemption Project" creates public awareness and speaks to the necessity of a process for alternative conflict resolution, and, similar to Margaret Burnham's "Restorative Justice Project," is another step towards the road to alternative dispute mechanisms while we're searching for needed healing. These dispute mechanisms have been implemented all over the world to heal our eternal pain of violence and horizontal aggression that we have inflicted on each other, and have been the target of. To understand and heal our souls requires various forms of Truth and Reconciliation, restorative justice and redemption. Paul said, "Try them all." Do not underestimate our ability to confront our pain and criticism for the purposes of healing. We must have faith that we can heal, and healing is a process that requires creativity and endurance. There can be no recompense to personal suffering and pain of innocence, but that is the caveat of Redemption and Reconciliation. If a comprehensive approach is found, it can stop there. If you let vengeance stop you from saving a life, the grief will stay with you for life; we must heal. The Redemption Project speaks to real pain caused by historical events, and it requires both that circumstances be properly analyzed and forms of reparations to be addressed. Such as could be done with the COINTELPRO, church bombings, voting rights in southern states, etc. so that those victims may feel inclusive in their process to democracy.

This last summer the FBI identified "Black Identity groups" for domestic surveillance, with no plausible rationale that could be explained but the obvious, by then, Attorney General Burger session. If history has taught us anything, this will lead into another period of abuse of power and criminalization of thought. This would create another class of abused people detracting from hopes and aspirations for their race. To ensure some safeguards and not to be a fortune teller, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to monitor and provide a platform that abuses of such power will be addressed could be developed. This would naturally reach a reconciliation phase such as was done in Ireland, Argentina, Uganda, and South Africa. These three steps of creative, objective conflict resolution processes as a dispute mechanism may lead to healing.

There will be a documentary coming out soon this year, on Lincoln Detox Acupuncture drug unit history. That will explain important history about acupuncture and my involvement. I know a lot of you ask me many questions based on this topic, and have lots of interest as well. I believe this documentary will answer a lot of your questions. Please support this project, and stay tuned for its release.

The painful loss of Nipsey Hussle seems to have snatched hopes and possibility from us all, and yes it always seems there's something like that. Our loss of my son Tupac, as well as Biggie, reminds us of this

type of despair. Do not despair; it is now time to struggle for reconciliation and alternative resolution inside of our community. The only way to end grief is to save a life. Critique, heal and create, so that we can rebuild. Pain will almost always be there, but as my son said, “how long will you mourn me?” More importantly, what will you do to memorialize them? I send my love and respect from the Shakur family to Nipsey’s family. The royalties of the ceremony was unforgettable, and we thank you. Well done to the Red and Blue; they honored his purpose on this plane with their unity. RIP Nipsey... they’re working on it.

21 May - Grant Release to Black Panther, Say Activists, Artists, Lawyers, Academics

Jalil Muntaqim, Jailed 48 Years, Has 12th Parole Hearing This Year. Sign the letter to support his release at freedomarchives.org/Support.Jalil/Campaign.html

MORE:

Russell “Maroon” Shoatz was seen today in the prison infirmary where he was lucid, able to speak, but complained of nausea, abdominal pain and was unable to keep any liquids or food down. He was seen by the doctor where the decision was made to send him to a hospital for diagnostic testing. The head nurse at SCI Dallas has been very cooperative and has kept the family informed regarding his condition. Maroon is unable to make calls, receive emails or have any visits. The family is also working with Maroon’s legal counsel.

The family is asking that you keep his spirits up once he returns to SCI Dallas by sending get well letters.

5 May - Pipeline Fighter Arrested After Barricading Themselves Inside Mountain Valley Pipeline

Another pipeline fighter has been arrested in West Virginia for barricading themselves inside a pipe which is part of the Mountain Valley Pipeline.

MORE:

via the *Center for Constitutional Rights*

Today, a group of prominent academics, lawyers, and activists published an open letter calling for the release of political prisoner Jalil Muntaqim (a/k/a Anthony Bottom), the only remaining Black Panther incarcerated in New York. He was arrested 48 years ago, when he was 19 years old, and is scheduled for his 11th parole hearing in September 2019. Signers include Professor Angela Davis of the University of California at Santa Cruz, Professor Cornel West of Harvard, actor and activist Danny Glover, musician and filmmaker Boots Riley, author Michelle Alexander, and co-founder of Black Lives Matter Patrisse Cullors.

The letter reads:

We the undersigned offer our strongest support for the release of Jalil Muntaqim (aka Anthony Bottom) on parole. We also ask that New York Governor Andrew Cuomo commute his sentence to time served. Jalil was arrested in 1971 when he was only 19 years-old and a member of the Black Panther Party. Forty-eight years later he is the only Black Panther prisoner who remains incarcerated in New York State prisons. It is time for this father, grandfather and great grandfather to come home.

Over the decades, Jalil has consistently demonstrated his commitment to sustaining family relationships, pursuing educational advancement and providing service to the community, inside and outside of prison. He has served as a teacher, mentor and role model for hundreds of other incarcerated people. He stands as an example of the potential to reflect, change and grow despite the many challenges of the prison environment.

Jalil is scheduled for his twelfth parole hearing this coming September. One of his co-defendants, Albert ‘Nuh’ Washington, died in prison in 2000. The other, Herman Bell, was released in April 2018 after serving almost forty-five years in prison. There is no justification for Jalil to be held in prison any longer. He should be released at his next parole hearing when he will be sixty-eight years old.

We believe in the principles of restorative justice. While we understand the serious nature of the crimes for which Jalil has been convicted, a life sentence should not be a death sentence. Forty-eight years is long enough. After all this time, Jalil Muntaqim belongs with his family and his community.

Muntaqim's two codefendants are Herman Bell, who was released from prison in 2018 after serving almost 45 years in prison, and Albert "Nuh" Washington, who died in prison in 2000. Muntaqim will be 68 years old at his parole hearing.

22 May - Eric King Back in Segregation after attack at USP McCreary

Last week Eric got news that his CMU transfer was rejected. He was placed on the yard at USP McCreary despite officers and lieutenants expressing their knowledge he was in danger being an anti-fascist prisoner.

MORE:

The 280 days of solitary confinement has done emotional damage to him and he couldn't stand the thought of 6 more months that would be given to him if he chose to be safe and refused to enter general population. On the yard he was told that the "long term" phone block Eric has would end after "a few years of good behavior". This means no hope of talking to his family anytime soon.

Monday Eric was attacked by two fascist prisoners with the prior knowledge of staff. Eric was placed back in segregation and we believe he was given a disciplinary shot which will mean likely loss of visits and commissary as well as indefinite time in segregation. We don't know the extent of his injuries but believe (and hope) that they were not as bad as his last attack at Florence. His family still has been unable to see him for 283 days and have not yet been able to speak with him on the phone.

22 May - Louisiana Law Turning Pipeline Protests Into Felonies Violates Constitution, New Lawsuit Alleges

A lawsuit filed on May 22nd in federal court in Louisiana challenges the state's "critical infrastructure" law, used to press felony charges against fossil fuel pipeline construction opponents, as unconstitutional.

MORE:

by Sharon Kelly (*DeSmog*)

Louisiana's critical infrastructure law is unconstitutionally vague and broad, the suit alleges, because it lets "any authorized person" exclude people from public places like sidewalks and roads if the state's 125,000 miles of mostly unmarked pipelines cross there. The law could even be used to bring felony charges against a landowner for being on their own land, the lawsuit alleges.

"And, as more than a dozen arrests of peaceful protesters under the new law demonstrate, its actual aim is to chill, and harshly punish, speech and expression in opposition to pipeline projects," the complaint adds.

The Louisiana law went into effect in August 2018 and was immediately used against opponents of Energy Transfer's Bayou Bridge oil pipeline. It carries severe criminal penalties — "up to five years in prison, with or without hard labor, for being on or near a type of critical infrastructure which could be completely invisible and virtually anywhere," the complaint says.

"The Louisiana law emerged as part of a national trend of similar legislation pursued by oil and gas interests aimed at cracking down on and chilling protests against fossil fuel infrastructure projects, which are taking place as part of an important national debate about the worsening environment and climate crisis," the complaint alleges. "It is therefore no accident that the law was invoked immediately after its passage by a private security company working in tandem with local law enforcement at the behest of a private oil pipeline company."

Louisiana's "critical infrastructure" law, the suit adds, was drafted by an oil industry trade organization and resembles a model bill circulated in 20 states by the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) — which means that if Louisiana's law is struck down as unconstitutional, it could potentially set an important precedent affecting other states.

ALEC, which also circulates a model bill describing climate change as “a historical phenomenon” and subject to continuing debate, counts Bayou Bridge pipeline builder Energy Transfer among its donors, according to the Center for Media and Democracy’s Sourcewatch project.

At least six states have passed laws since 2016 that would restrict the right to protest near oil and gas pipelines and dozens of other similar bills or executive orders have been introduced nationwide. Missouri, Indiana, and Illinois are among the states that have seen critical infrastructure bills introduced this year. In Texas, delaying pipeline construction will be punishable by a decade in prison — a sentence similar to that for an attempted drive-by shooting, according to Bloomberg — under a bill that passed both the Texas House and Senate this month.

In March, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed suit in South Dakota over another law criminalizing pipeline protests — a recent South Dakota law creating the crime of “riot boosting,” (which ACLU attorney Vera Eidelman told Inside Climate News “poses a unique threat to speech and appears to be targeted at protests.”)

Today’s suit is brought by three public interest organizations — RISE St. James, 350 New Orleans, and the Louisiana Bucket Brigade — as well as 10 individuals, who either face felony charges under Louisiana’s critical infrastructure law or who say their First Amendment rights to speech, expressive conduct, and assembly have been chilled by fear of facing felony charges, in part because it’s so difficult to know what conduct is legal or illegal under the Louisiana law.

Some of the plaintiffs in the case say that they live in communities at the center of the petrochemical industry’s planned expansion. They “have organized marches, press conferences, and events in the area to express their anger about and opposition to the attempted petrochemical buildout, including a march through Cancer Alley,” the complaint explains, referencing the Louisiana hotspot for petrochemical industry activity and health issues. But now, they are “concerned the law could be used against them and others in RISE and in the broader community as they necessarily march and protest in the vicinity of pipelines given that their community is overrun by the industry and its infrastructure.”

The plaintiffs identify several areas where they say the Louisiana law falls short of what the Constitution requires. “There is no requirement in the amended law that a trespasser do or have any intent to do damage, cause harm, or commit any act of violence or other criminal offense, even though it carries a harsh sentence of imprisonment of up to five years and a heavy fine,” the complaint says. “There is no indication in the amended law as to what area around a pipeline is to be considered part of the ‘pipeline’ or critical infrastructure. There is no indication in the amended law as to who can revoke permission from those who have lawfully entered onto the pipeline or infrastructure.”

Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry is named as a defendant in today’s suit. Landry, who counted the oil and gas industry as his top donor during his time as a state representative, according to OpenSecrets.org, continued to make his personal support for the oil and gas industry clear in his role as attorney general. “I am — and make no bones about it — a un-bashing [sic] supporter of oil and gas and our energy sector here in this country,” Landry told an oil and gas conference in 2017, as DeSmog previously reported.

Some of the earliest arrests under the Louisiana law occurred on land where it turned out the pipeline builder was itself trespassing.

“A representative of the pipeline company testified during trial that the company made a business decision to trespass on the property and begin constructing the pipeline without having concluded easement agreements with all of the co-owners or obtaining an expropriation judgment because the company considered it less expensive to violate the law than to adhere to it,” the complaint alleges.

In December 2018, Energy Transfer was fined \$450 after a trial judge found that the company was in fact trespassing during Bayou Bridge construction.

“The fact that so many protesters have been arrested on property where they had permission to enter and where it was the pipeline company that was knowingly trespassing,” plaintiffs in today’s lawsuit wrote, “demonstrates clearly that the law as amended is subject to arbitrary and discriminatory enforcement.”

“By turning so much of the land in this state into critical infrastructure, the average person can find themselves facing five years in prison for literally just being in the wrong place at the wrong time,” said Center for Constitutional Rights attorney Pamela Spees, who is representing the plaintiffs. “The oil and gas industry pressed this law forward as a means of chilling and discouraging speech and expression in opposition to pipeline projects, but almost anyone can find themselves on the wrong side of this law.”

Attorney General Jeff Landry’s office told DeSmog, “Attorney General Jeff Landry will vigorously defend the law as our State has an obvious and compelling reason to protect vital infrastructure from criminal trespass, damage, or possible attack. The environmental groups who filed this suit are free to protest, but they are not free to do it in a manner that obstructs and threatens infrastructure.”

23 May - Nebraska Governor asked to open commutation investigation for Edward Poindexter

Nebraska governor Pete Ricketts asked during book tour to examine 1971 Black Panther case

MORE:

by Michael Richardson (*Richardson Reports*)

A book tour for FRAMED: J. Edgar Hoover, COINTELPRO & the Omaha Two story to Nebraska included a stop at the State Capitol in Lincoln. Governor Pete Ricketts was out of town when I stopped by to give him a copy of the the book but his personal secretary assured me that she would see that Ricketts got the book.

FRAMED is the story of justice undone, a policeman's murder where the guilty go unpunished, and two men were wrongfully convicted. The book is a true story of the 1970 bombing murder of Omaha Patrolman Larry Minard, including the manipulation of the police investigation by competing federal law enforcement agencies and the tampering of the 1971 state trial by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and agents of the BATF. FRAMED is a window on a case never fully or accurately reported.

Two Black Panther leaders, Edward Poindexter and Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa (former David Rice), were convicted in a controversial capital murder trial where both men faced the electric chair. Poindexter remains imprisoned at the Nebraska State Penitentiary while Mondo died serving his life without parole sentence in March 2016. Duane Peak, the fifteen year-old confessed bomber, never served a day in prison for Minard's murder. Peak obtained a deal from Douglas County Attorney Donald Knowles and was judged to be a juvenile delinquent in exchange for his testimony that Poindexter and Mondo put him up to the crime.

The governor's free book came with a letter requesting his action. "I request that you review Edward Poindexter's case in light of the federal tampering with the police investigation and state trial. I believe an innocent man is in prison while Minard's killers walk free. There is no statute of limitations on murder. Justice has not been done in Nebraska in this case. With this book, I now put the matter on your desk, in your hands."

My request to Governor Ricketts is not a small one nor one he may be eager to honor. First, he has to read the book. Next, Ricketts has to square the facts of what happened with his well-known "law and order" philosophy. Then, Ricketts must stare at himself in the mirror and question his own decision to restore the death penalty in Nebraska. Had the jury not spared Poindexter's life in 1971, Ricketts would not be faced with the prospect of letting a convicted cop-killer out of prison for wrongful conviction. Ed Poindexter's case calls into question Ricketts own leadership role in restoring the death penalty.

Ricketts may try to dodge the issue by saying there is nothing he can do and that the courts control the matter. However, there is much Ricketts can do to bring justice to Nebraska. The governor could pardon Poindexter and release him immediately. Ricketts could also initiate a commutation investigation for wrongful conviction. Poindexter's sentence could be commuted to time served by the Board of Pardons, chaired by Governor Ricketts.

In New York, Governor Andrew Cuomo is being asked by seventy-five professors, attorneys, activists, and celebrities to commute the sentence of Jalil Muntaqim (former Anthony Bottom), also a Black Panther leader imprisoned forty-eight years for the shooting of two New York policemen. In New York. The issues are not about guilt or innocence, but rather a fairness factor in parole decisions. Those arguments could also be applied to Poindexter's case.

However, in Nebraska a more fundamental issue confronts Ricketts, the punishment of an innocent man for a crime he did not commit while the guilty go unpunished.

25 May - Move 9 women freed after 40 years in jail over Philadelphia police siege

Janine Phillips Africa and Janet Holloway Africa have been released!

MORE:

by Ed Pilkington (*The Guardian*)

For 40 years, Janine Phillips Africa had a technique for coping with being cooped up in a prison cell for a crime she says she did not commit. She would avoid birthdays, Christmas, New Year and any other events that emphasized time passing while she was not free.

“The years are not my focus,” she wrote in a letter to the *Guardian*. “I keep my mind on my health and the things I need to do day by day.”

On Saturday she could finally begin accepting the passage of time. She and her cellmate and sister in the black liberation struggle, Janet Holloway Africa, were released from SCI Cambridge Springs in Pennsylvania, after a long struggle for parole.

The release of Janine, 63, and Janet, 68, marks a key moment in the history of the Move 9, the group of African American black power and environmental campaigners who were imprisoned after a police siege of their home in August 1978. The pair were the last of four women in the group either to be paroled or to die behind bars.

The saga of Move was one of the most dramatic and surreal of the 1970s black liberation struggle. Along with their peers, the women lived in a communal house in Philadelphia under group founder John Africa, AKA Vincent Leaphart. All members took the last name Africa to show they considered themselves a family.

A cross between the Black Panthers and west coast hippies, Move campaigned not only for equal treatment for African Americans but also for respect for animals and nature, caring for 48 stray dogs in the house.

Such unconventional attitudes brought them into conflict with neighbours and the Philadelphia police, a notoriously brutal force even by American standards. After a siege lasting several months, on 8 August 1978 officers went in to clear the group from the property. In the melee, officer James Ramp was shot and killed with a single bullet.

Despite the single shooter, and despite the fact that the group always protested that they were unarmed and that Ramp was killed by fire from fellow officers, the five men and four women were each sentenced to 30 years to life.

Janine Africa's release was bittersweet. While she was in prison, she corresponded over two years with the *Guardian*. In her letters she talked about the double tragedy of her life.

Two years before the 1978 siege, police turned up at the Move house in Powelton Village and began harassing the group. A scuffle ensued and Janine was knocked over as she held her three-week-old baby, Life, in her arms.

The baby appeared to have been trampled, his skull shattered. He died later that day.

Then on 13 May 1985, by which time Janine Africa had been in prison for seven years, she was told the terrible news that the remaining members of the Move "family" had been assaulted a second time. On this occasion police didn't just go in guns blazing – they dropped an incendiary bomb from a helicopter.

It caused a fire that destroyed the Move house and 60 other homes in a largely African American neighborhood. Eleven Move members burned to death. They included founder John Africa and five children, one of whom was Janine's other son, Little Phil, aged 12.

The *Guardian* asked Janine how she came to terms with having seen two children killed by police brutality.

"There are times when I think about Life and my son Phil," she wrote, "but I don't keep those thoughts in my mind long because they hurt. The murder of my children, my family, will always affect me, but not in a bad way. When I think about what this system has done to me and my family, it makes me even more committed to my belief."

The parole of the two women follows the release last June of Debbie Sims Africa, who was arrested in the 1978 siege when she was eight months pregnant and who went on to give birth to her son, Michael Davis Jr, in a prison cell. A fourth woman, Merle Austin Africa, died in prison in March 1998.

Of the men, three remain in prison: Eddie Goodman Africa, who has recently gone before a parole panel, and Chuck Sims Africa and Delbert Orr Africa. Michael Davis Africa Sr, the father of the boy born in a cell and husband of Debbie, was released in October. Phil Africa died in prison in January 2015.

The attorney for the two released women, Brad Thomson of People's Law Office, said their parole was a victory not only for them and their loved ones but also for the Move organization and the "movement to free all political prisoners". He pointed out that prison staff had described them as model prisoners and that neither has had a single disciplinary incident in more than 20 years.

"While in prison, they have participated in community fundraisers and social programs including training service dogs," Thomson said. "They are remarkable women to deserve to be free."

The *Guardian* corresponded with Janine Africa as part of a journalistic project to chronicle the lives of 19 black radicals who then remained behind bars. She described how having been arrested at 22 she went on to share a cell with Janet and Debbie Africa.

Over 40 years they kept their spirits up by caring for a dog kennelled in their cell which they trained to work with vulnerable individuals. They also helped younger female prisoners and grew vegetables in the prison grounds.

Janine and Janet Africa are likely to return to live in Philadelphia. The Move organization still exists in the city, where it continues to campaign on issues of racial justice and environmental protection.

Neither Debbie nor her husband Michael Sr have had any infractions or violations under their parole terms since they were released. Once joined by their colleagues, they will press for the release of the three remaining members of the Move 9.

25 May - Fund Raiser For A Comrade

Our comrade Anne Lamb, of NYC Jericho, recently fell while walking to a community organizing event, resulting in knee surgery and a host of medical bills.

MORE:

Anne has been an active supporter of political prisoners for decades and we owe folks in our communities doing the work the same support we offer our imprisoned comrades. Please take the time to visit gofundme.com/g24bv-support-for-anne for details on how to donate as well as to stay up to date on the campaign and Anne's process through rehabilitation.

31 May - Bluestockings' 20th Birthday Bash!

WHAT: Party

WHEN: 7:00-11:59pm, Friday, May 31st

WHERE: Bluestockings—172 Allen Street, New York 10002

COST: FREE

MORE:

Bluestockings is so proud to share that we're celebrating 20 years as a radical hub on the Lower East Side. Join us to ring in Pride Month, celebrate 20 years, and build the groundwork for 20 more years of radical futures. The party will also be the kickoff for our community-powered grassroots program to invest in 20 more years of anti-oppressive spaces thriving even in the face of our landscape of hypergentrification and displacement. We're joined by an amazing lineup of poets, writers, and performers connected to our store's past and present. Setlist below:

Kate Bornstein (writer, performer, and playwright, Gender Outlaw), Darcie Wilder (literally show me a healthy person), Jeremiah Moss (author, Jeremiah's Vanishing New York), Andrea Abi-Karam (poet, EXTRATRANSMISSION), Larissa Pham (artist and writer, Badlands Unlimited, The Paris Review, Asian American Writers' Workshop), Charlotte Shane (TigerBee Press, Bookforum, Dissent Magazine), Lorelei Ramirez (comedian and performance artist, @PileOfTears), Marcella Durand (Belladonna* Collaborative), Arti Gollapudi (Comedian, Cunt Comedy Collective @ Bluestockings, Your Body, Yourself Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre, NY), Davey Davis (the earthquake room, TigerBee Press, them.), Sabrina Imbler (essayist, Catapult), Malav Kanuga (founder of Common Notions, former Bluestockings collective member), Red Schulte (Bluestockings collective and 20th Anniversary Zine editor), Natalie Braginsky, Victoria Lee

1 Jun - Everybody's Got a Right to Live Propaganda Party

WHAT: Propaganda Party

WHEN: 1:00-5:00pm, Saturday, June 1st

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

COST: FREE

MORE:

Join Interference Archive and the NYC Poor People's Campaign for the Everybody's Got A Right To Live Propaganda Party. We'll gather at Interference Archive to screenprint posters, t-shirts, fabric, make buttons, banners and more.

What is a propaganda party? It's where we invite organizations, activists, designers, and folks like you to come together in our archive of material produced by social movements, to hang out, meet each other, and make and distribute material in support of a cause. At this event we'll be collectively producing graphic material for upcoming NYC PPC activities around the state.

8 Jun - Trauma: Personal & Political Dimensions of Psychological Trauma

WHAT: Workshop

WHEN: 3:00-5:00pm, Saturday, June 8th

WHERE: Woodbine—1882 Woodbine Street, Ridgewood 11385

MORE:

Woodbine is excited to host this event as part of our ongoing series on Mental Wellness co-hosted by our friends at the Metropolitan Anarchist Coordinating Council (MACC)

Psychological trauma is one of the more politicized areas of mental health, and its inclusion in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) is an area of ongoing struggle. Sigmund Freud set the tone for over a century's worth of denial and dismissiveness when he decided his patients had not **really** experienced sexual assault in childhood, and instead were prone to fantasies of sex with their caregivers. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was eventually added to the DSM in 1980, due to political pressure from converging interest groups (i.e., Vietnam veterans and the women's movement). As a result, single-incident trauma began receiving attention, while other forms of trauma continued to be overlooked. As recently as 2013, the American Psychiatric Association declined to add complex trauma (defined as trauma from multiple sources occurring over a long period of time) as a diagnostic category, despite decades of empirical research indicating a distinct symptom profile with unique treatment considerations.

In this two-hour workshop, this history will be reviewed with the aim of developing a working understanding of trauma's personal and political dimensions. Participants will explore the effects of trauma on individual, family, and community life. Treatment options will be discussed from a radical left perspective, and the problem of pervasive liberal ideology in mental health will be addressed. Participants will work through practical questions, including: Does my therapist need to know everything about me for the treatment to work? How effective will the treatment be if my therapist takes a hard line against my politics? What types of trauma therapy are available? Is professional help even necessary?

Billy Somerville is a licensed clinical psychologist in private practice, offering insurance-based and sliding scale therapy. Billy completed his doctoral training at The New School for Social Research in 2016. Billy and his partner, Alana López, hosted the NYC Anarchist Mental Health Conference in February 2019, and currently manage a referral list for anarchist mental health professionals.

9 Jun - Running Down the Walls 2019

WHAT: Fun Run

WHEN: 2:00-7:00pm, Sunday, June 9th

WHERE: Prospect Park—Lincoln Road/East Lake Drive, east of the Terrace Bridge

COST: \$10 registration (includes food and drinks afterwards)

MORE:

Please encourage your friends, loved ones, and comrades to donate at [paypal.me/nycabc](https://www.paypal.me/nycabc)

Every year, prisoners and supporters of political prisoners organize solidarity events with Running Down the Walls. In the last few years, we've had runs in Albuquerque (NM), Arcata (CA), Ashland (OR), Bellefonte (PA), Boston (MA), Buffalo (NY), Chico (CA), Denver (CO), Elmore (AL), Inez (KY), Los Angeles (CA), Marion (IL), Minneapolis (MN) New York (NY), USP Navosta (TX), Pelican Bay (CA), Phoenix (AZ), Tucson (AZ), Seattle (WA), and Toronto, Ontario. This year we hope to expand the amount of runs in prisons and other cities, as well as increase the amount of funds raised for community projects. NYC ABC's goal with this year's run is \$4,000. You can donate online by going to [paypal.me/nycabc](https://www.paypal.me/nycabc)

This year's run will take place on Sunday, June 9th, 2019 at 2:00 pm in solidarity and conjunction with runs that will take place in cities and prison yards across the country at the same time.

REGISTER AS, OR SPONSOR, A PARTICIPANT

To raise our goal of \$4,000, we need your support:

- * Promote – print and distribute flyers <nycabc.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/rdtw_2019_quartersheet.pdf> to friends and local businesses, your doctor's office, laundromat, food co-op, wealthy benefactor, et cetera.
- * Run/walk/bike/roll in the 5k – We need participants who can run/walk/bike/roll the 5k and are able to collect financial pledges to offer as donations to the run. Download the brochure, complete with registration and sponsor form at nycabc.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/2019_participant_sponsor_form.pdf
- * Volunteer for the run – We need folks who are willing to staff a registration/literature table, hand out water, bike the route as street medics, and help chalk the route beforehand.
- * Donate online at <https://www.paypal.me/nycabc>
- * Donate to the run/sponsor a participant – If you are not able to attend, but want to support this fundraising effort, please mail donations to:

NYC ABC

Post Office Box 110034

Brooklyn, New York 11211

Your donation of \$10 or more entitles you to the celebratory picnic after the event.

Each year, we split proceeds between the Anarchist Black Cross Federation's Warchest Program and a local organization. This year, local funds are going to New York state political prisoners released within the last year.

9 Jun - NYC Anarchist Book Fair Music Night

WHAT: Fund raiser

WHEN: 5:30-10:00pm, Sunday June 9th

WHERE: Brooklyn Bazaar–150 Greenpoint Avenue, Greenpoint 11222

COST: \$5

MORE:

Music by:

Rebuschaos (youtube.com/watch?v=uoF8KFeXbSM), **Her Dad's Banjo** (youtube.com/channel/UCBq2NjAUQRxNtJvyU0lKbAg), **Under some bridges** (undersomebridges.bandcamp.com), **Kaosmosis**

Community Groups Tabling include:

NYC Anarchist Black Cross (nycabc.wordpress.com), **MayDay Space** (maydayspace.org), **Metropolitan Anarchist Coordinating Council** (macc.nyc)