



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for October 6th

22 Sept - Jalil Muntaqim granted parole!

Jalil Muntaqim (Anthony Bottom), a 68-year-old respected elder, was granted parole on September 22, 2020, after serving nearly 50 years in prison.

MORE:

Jalil is one of thousands of incarcerated older people in New York State who was repeatedly denied parole for over two decades after completing his minimum sentence despite his excellent record, and “lower risk” score on the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision’s (DOCCS) COMPAS risk assessment instrument. Let us hope that his release brings inspiration for more change. Jalil is deeply humbled and grateful for the broad expressions of support he has received from his family and community throughout the years, and looks forward to coming home where he can reunite with his loved ones and continue to heal from COVID 19, which he contracted in prison last May.

September 24th - Former Black Panther to be released after more than 49 years in prison

by Ed Pilkington (*The Guardian*)

A former Black Panther who has been in prison for almost half a century has finally won his decades-long battle for freedom after a New York parole board ordered his release.

Jalil Muntaqim, AKA Anthony Bottom, has been in unbroken custody for more than 49 years having been arrested and later convicted of the 1971 murders of two police officers in Harlem. Under the terms of his parole he must be released from the maximum-security Sullivan correctional facility in upstate New York by 20 October.

At a hearing earlier this month – at least his 10th such panel appearance since he became eligible for parole in 1998 – Muntaqim expressed his remorse for the killings of Joseph Piagentini and Waverly Jones. The officers had answered what they believed was a domestic dispute call but were then ambushed and shot.

The two parole commissioners on the panel accepted his expression of remorse as genuine.

Muntaqim, 68, was the subject of a *Guardian* profile in 2018 as part of a series that looked at black liberation radicals incarcerated for decades in the wake of political and racial turbulence in the late 1960s and 70s. At the time of the Harlem incident he was a clandestine member of the underground wing of the Panthers, the Black Liberation Army.

In the course of a three-hour filmed interview with the *Guardian* in Sullivan, Muntaqim described how he was only 18 years old when he signed up for the Panthers, quickly going on to join the armed and clandestine BLA. He said that in his many years behind bars he had matured from the revolutionary position that he adopted in 1971, though he remained committed to the cause of racial equality and justice.

“I now take the ‘r’ off the word and make it ‘evolutionary,’” he said. “Revolution for me is the evolutionary process of building a higher level of consciousness in society at large. I’m an evolutionary revolutionary.”

Muntaqim’s release has been virulently opposed by the New York police union, the PBA, and by the widow of one of the murdered police officers, Diane Piagentini. In a statement she said: “We are heartbroken to see another of Joe’s killer set free by politics. But more than anything else, we are angry.”

Muntaqim was one of a dwindling number of black liberation radicals who were incarcerated during the heyday of the Black Panthers and who have been locked up ever since. Edward Poindexter, convicted of the killing of a police officer in Omaha, Nebraska, marked his 50 years in a prison cell in August.

Others have been released on parole in recent months. The surviving seven members of the Move 9, black liberation and environmental radicals from Philadelphia who were arrested following a police siege of their communal home in 1978, were all released on parole over the past two years.

One of the seven, Delbert Africa, died in June just five months after he was set free.

Muntaqim had two co-defendants at trial for the killings of the police officers in Harlem, when they each received sentences of 25 years to life. Albert “Nuh” Washington died in prison in 2000, and Herman Bell was released on parole in April 2018.

24 Sept - Update on support campaign for Jamil Al-Amin

We're writing to you to update you on some current developments on the campaign to end the isolation of Jamil Al-Amin (formerly H. Rap Brown).

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1) Around a thousand people, including prominent historians of the civil rights movement and a former Attorney General, have signed the open letter. However, the Bureau of Prisons has not reversed its decision and academics and journalists are still being prevented from interviewing Jamil Al-Amin. However, we are now considering legal options to challenge this decision. We'll update you as we move forward on this.

2) In the recent Fulton County (Atlanta) District Attorney runoff election, campaigners successfully pushed both candidates on the issue of re-examining Jamil Al-Amin's conviction, drawing a public statement of support from Fani Willis, the new District Attorney. She will take office in January and has the power to reopen Imam Jamil's case and exonerate him, based upon the clear evidence of his innocence—including a recently released video of another person confessing under oath to the crime for which Al-Amin was convicted.

3) A new student campaign has been launched to organize for Jamil Al-Amin's freedom, "Students for Imam Jamil." They are a group of youth organizers nationwide that formed in August. They are currently mobilizing students nationwide for an in-person National Rally, following COVID guidelines, in Atlanta, Georgia, on Imam Jamil's birthday, October 4, 3-5pm with prominent celebrities and activists.

This is the best chance we have had in years of freeing Imam Jamil and we now need to mobilize as widely as possible for the October 4 rally and the related online actions.

24 Sept - 11 years in prison: A Catholic priest serves time for crimes of conscience

For more than 850 days, the Rev. Stephen Kelly, a Jesuit priest, has hunkered down in a south Georgia jail in relative obscurity.

MORE:

by Patrick O'Neill (RNS)

On April 4, 2018, the 50th anniversary of the Rev. Martin Luther King's assassination, Kelly and I cut a padlock on a perimeter fence gate at Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay, the Atlantic home port of the Trident submarine, located in St. Marys, Georgia.

Five other Catholic peace activists passed through that gate with us that evening as we made our way to three different parts of the nuclear base to, in the words of the biblical prophet Isaiah, “beat swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks.”

The U.S. fleet of Trident subs, each armed with D-5 nuclear missiles, carry enough firepower to essentially end the human experiment.

The seven of us, who call ourselves the Kings Bay Plowshares (Elizabeth McAlister, Clare Grady, Mark Colville, Martha Hennessy and Carmen Trotta), were arrested and convicted in federal court of three felonies and misdemeanor trespassing, for what the U.S. attorney referred to as “vandalism” during our October 2019 trial.

Because Kelly was on probation for a 2017 misdemeanor conviction, in which he protested at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor, Washington, the Pacific home port of Trident submarines, he has been denied bail and remains in the Glynn County Detention Center in Brunswick, Georgia, for two nonviolent “crimes” of conscience.

Meanwhile, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been awaiting sentencing to federal prison for 11 months. While the other six of us have been released on bond, the 71-year-old Kelly has stayed behind in a windowless jail where he rarely sees sunlight.

Prisoners are allowed “outside” occasionally when they are taken to a cement cryptlike box with high walls and a grate-like fence as a roof. If the sun is not directly overhead, the prisoners never see it.

Thankfully, despite being trapped in an environment where safe distancing is impossible, Kelly has managed to avoid illness.

This almost 30-month stint in jail has pushed the amount of time to beyond 11 years that Kelly has spent behind bars, all for nonviolent direct action in the cause of peace.

Once in prison, Kelly continues to live by his own set of stringent principles. Because all penal institutions rely on prisoner labor to function, Kelly opts out, refusing to do work that would support the racist prison industrial complex.

His noncooperation has had severe consequences. Kelly has spent more than six years of his life in what he calls “the SHU” (segregated housing unit), better known as solitary confinement.

According to Amnesty International, solitary confinement is a human rights violation and often constitutes a breach of international law. How he manages such intense suffering is a mystery. I can only conclude the Holy Spirit takes over for Kelly, helping him treat solitary confinement in a small one-person cell as his monastery.

A man of great discipline and a deep and abiding faith in the God of love, Kelly spends his time reading, commiserating with the 30-plus guys in his cellblock, leading a Bible study and maintaining his solitary witness for peace. He never bemoans his plight and always sounds upbeat on his frequent phone calls to his co-defendants and friends.

A brilliant man, Kelly was asked to deliver the homily in May 2016 for the funeral of his mentor and brother Jesuit priest the Rev. Daniel Berrigan at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Manhattan.

In what Kelly called “a break with funeral convention,” he directed his opening comments to the FBI.

“We may let members of the FBI assigned here today validate that it is Daniel Berrigan’s funeral Mass of the Resurrection, so they can complete and perhaps close their files.” The crowd roared its approval.

“Are we to remain in a catatonic stupor, asleep, drunk, unconscious or in flatlined existence?” Kelly said. “In these United States of Amnesia? Will we arrive at perdition, dominion of death with our freedom never used, intact? What good is it if paralyzed in fear? Liberated, but not loving.”

Kelly said Berrigan and his brother activist, the late Philip Berrigan, “risked the retaliation of those beholden to death’s sway. They touched the idol of the state. Inspired, they, and other draft board raiders, retrieved the place and preeminence of the conscientious objector as imitating the love of Christ, averred by Vatican II’s *Gaudium et Spes*, but kept a secret in local pastoral settings.”

While most Jesuits teach, author books and pastor parishes, Kelly refers to himself as itinerant. His primary purpose in life is to resist nuclear weapons and war by putting his body on the line.

What puzzles me is after more than two years of incarceration for his selfless, courageous witness, Kelly and his plight have received almost no media attention.

Even though he belongs to the same religious community as Pope Francis, I have not seen any efforts by the Jesuits to promote Kelly’s work for peace. As far as I know, Kelly has not given even one interview from jail. That is tragic.

In the many planning retreats the seven of us spent together, Kelly was our de facto spiritual shepherd. He prefers to listen, but when he did speak, we would all perk up and pay close attention to the wisdom he would impart to us.

Kelly mentioned often his motivation to be part of the Kings Bay Plowshares: “I’m in this for community and cross,” he would say.

I knew what he meant.

When I read the words of Jesus who said, “Pick up your cross and follow me,” it is basically an abstract passage. When Kelly talks about the cross, he picks it up.

October 3rd - Steve Kelly and Patrick O’Neill to be sentenced October 15

Kings Bay Plowshares 7 defendants Father Steve Kelly and Patrick O’Neill are planning to go forward with in person sentencing in Brunswick, Georgia on October 15.

The other four defendants are asking for further continuances because of the virus. They should hear in a few days if their request is granted by Judge Wood.

They ask, “In the interest of public safety, and out of love for our supporters during this covid 19 pandemic, the seven Kings Bay Plowshares members request that no one come to Brunswick for the sentencing hearings scheduled for October 15-16. We do, however, encourage you all to join the October 11 pre-sentencing Zoom meeting. Thank you all for your love and support, which sustains us.”

There is expected to be an audio link from the court to listen to the proceedings as was done with Liz McAlister in June. The number and times will be posted on the website when we get them.

Steve Kelly has now served 30 months in county jails and so has satisfied the sentencing guidelines the government is proposing for him. However, he has a probation violation where he is facing up to six months stemming from a prior trespass conviction at Kitsap, Washington at the west coast Trident base. It is not yet known what will happen with this.

25 Sept - Free longest held COINTELPRO prisoner

A march in Omaha, Nebraska for Ed Poindexter called for his immediate release from prison.

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Black and white, young and old, approximately one hundred marchers paraded down North Twenty-fourth Street in Omaha seeking freedom for Edward Poindexter from the Nebraska State Penitentiary. Poindexter, former chairman of the local Black Panther Party affiliate chapter, has been imprisoned fifty years for the August 17, 1970 murder of Patrolman Larry Minard.

Poindexter and David Rice (later Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa) were leaders of the National Committee to Combat Fascism and targets of a clandestine counterintelligence operation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation code-named COINTELPRO. FBI agents worked behind the scenes during the murder investigation and steered detectives toward the men who have come to be called the Omaha Two. The FBI Laboratory was ordered by Director J. Edgar Hoover to withhold a report on the identity of an anonymous 911 caller that lured police into a bomb ambush. The COINTELPRO operation was successful and resulted in the conviction of the Poindexter and Rice after a controversial trial marred by conflicting police testimony and apparently planted evidence.

Omaha was recently the scene of a similar but more somber event, a prayer vigil for families of racial violence. Prayers were offered for both the families of Larry Minard and Ed Poindexter. The Nebraska Board of Pardons has a pending request from Poindexter to have his sentence commuted to make him eligible for parole.

The March For Ed proceeded to Kountze Park where organizer Preston Love and others spoke. Retiring Senator Ernie Chambers participated in the march and spoke briefly calling for Poindexter's release from prison. Freelance writer Kietryn Zychal, long an advocate for Poindexter's freedom, also called for immediate release.

Chambers, who was named on a police suspect list in the bombing murder, has always insisted that innocent men were wrongfully convicted in April 1971. Chambers once took a trip to Spokane, Washington with City Councilman Ben Gray to obtain a voice sample of Duane Peak, the confessed teen-age bomber. Peak, who planted the bomb that killed Minard, made a deal with Douglas County Attorney Donald "Pinky" Knowles and escaped prison. In exchange for his freedom, Peak claimed that Poindexter and Rice built the bomb and put him up to delivering it to a vacant house.

Preston Love had a message for Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts. "Part of the change we need and part of the reform is to let our political prisoners go."

One marcher, Rikki Payne, has a personal interest, Ed Poindexter is her uncle. "You can't talk about the overpopulation of the prison and keep this man, who is innocent, in prison. Please write Pete Ricketts and ask him to put my uncle on the Pardons Board agenda for October. He's in a wheelchair, he can't hardly see. He is not a threat to this society."

Poindexter, in poor health, remains imprisoned under maximum-security and continues to maintain his innocence. Mondo, also sentenced to life in prison, died in March 2016.

Members of the public that want to share an opinion with the Nebraska Board of Pardons may write to them at Post Office Box 95007, Lincoln, Nebraska 68509. Those that want to talk to someone may call Governor Pete Ricketts and give him an earful at 402.471.2244.

25 Sept - Support Reverend Joy Powell: framed activist against police brutality!

As a pastor and a consistent activist against police brutality, violence and oppression in her community, Rev. Joy Powell was warned by the Rochester Police department that she was a target because of her speaking out against corruption.

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On many occasions, from 1995 to 2006, Rev. Joy had held rallies and spoke out against the police brutality and "police justifications" in Rochester, New York. In 2006, she was accused and convicted of 1st Degree Burglary and Assault. Joy is sure the prosecution was politically motivated based on her activism through her organization, Equality and Justice For All.

An all-white jury tried her; the state provided no evidence and no eyewitnesses. Rev. Joy was not allowed to discuss her activism or say that she was a pastor. The person that testified for her was not allowed to tell the court that he knew Rev. Joy through their activist work and the church. Furthermore, Judge Francis Affronti promised he was going to give her a harsh sentence because he was biased against her. While serving a 16-year sentence for the conviction, a cold murder case was pinned on her. The trial was fraught with misconduct, yet she was convicted and sentenced to 25 years to life.

All funds will go to fees necessary for Joy's family to do the important legal work that needs to be done to secure her freedom: fundrazr.com/freejoypowell

28 Sept - In Defense of Black Bloc at NYC Protests

A recent critique of street protests in New York City.

MORE:

via *Abolition Media Worldwide*

On the Breonna Taylor March

On September 23rd, Breonna Taylor is dead; there is no justice. Another court upholds white supremacy, acquitting the murderers. Days earlier, a call had been circulated in New York City's activism community for autonomous action at Barclays, emphasizing "No Good Cops, No Bad Protesters, No Megaphones, No Peace Police." By 8, Barclays was flooded with activists, organizers, and allies numbering close to 1000.

While the language of "No Bad Protesters" and "No Peace police" is common amongst abolitionists, anti-fascists, and anarchists, many within the broader Black Lives Matter movement were shocked to see the Black Bloc. One protester accused the Black Bloc of being outside agitators and inciting violence. Another questioned why the Black Bloc insisted on thoroughly disguising their identity. In the most dramatic incident, one organizer confronted the Bloc while they were peacefully marching with the larger group. The organizer accused the Bloc of putting other protesters in harm's way and threatened the Bloc with violence if they did not disperse. The threats of violence to the Bloc escalated as other protesters filmed members of the Bloc, producing evidence for the NYPD and the Federal Government that could be used in their

ongoing assault on activists. When asked to stop filming, one protester began yelling at the Bloc, accusing them of being white agitators bringing negative media attention to the protest.

Overall, the crowd exhibited a widespread misunderstanding of what the Black Bloc is. Black Bloc is an organizing tactic in which activists dress in black to disguise their identity, avoid surveillance, and minimize the risk of police retaliation. Disguise allows the Black Bloc to de-arrest other protesters without fear of future retribution. While Black Bloc often attack corporate and government property, a broken window or a scorched precinct is nothing compared to the murder committed by the police and white supremacists. Protesters also failed to understand that members of the Bloc also grieve for Breonna Taylor and for the miscarriage of justice. Bloc members are protesters who have shown up at countless other protests and who feel that other tactics are necessary to achieve police and prison abolition.

Black Bloc is a tactic, not an organization. As activist Harsha Walia puts it, “tactics can be effective, they can be ineffective, but inherently they are neither,” so instead they must be evaluated “in specific contexts.” The accusations hurled at the Black Bloc during the march are worth confronting within the larger context of months of protesting since George Floyd’s murder. If we allow disagreements over tactics to divide us, we will not only fail ourselves, but those who are imprisoned and murdered by the state.

Where Have All the Anarchists Been?

Anarchists and anti-fascists have been organizers, allies, and accomplices throughout the George Floyd Uprising. The burning of the Third Precinct in Minneapolis, the bravery in fighting the Department of Homeland Security in Portland, and the removal of confederate statues are examples of autonomous actions in which anarchists and anti-fascists participated. In New York specifically, Black Bloc strategies were applied to keep protesters safe throughout the summer, including during the reactionary curfew, blue lives matter counter protest, Portland Solidarity march, and at Abolition Park. The use of the tactic effectively defended barricades from police attacks, physically protected other protesters, and de-arrested seized protesters.

On the ground, protesters raised four concerns about Black Bloc’s participation: 1) violence 2) risk to other protests of arrest or police violence 3) whiteness 4) negative media coverage. While these activists acted in bad faith by physically and verbally attacking the Bloc and placing protesters in danger by filming, these strategic questions should be considered in good faith as we collectively oppose white supremacy, policing, and prisons.

1. Violence: Critics claim Black Bloc incites violence through vandalism and property destruction.

This criticism can be separated into a question of why property damage is valid and whether it encourages other forms of violence against people. Black Bloc justifies property damage through attacking the connective tissue between white supremacy and capitalism. The Louisville Metro Police Foundation, a private entity raising money for the police department that murdered Breonna Taylor, has board members from Kroger, White Castle, KFC, GE Appliances and public sponsors from Wendy’s, PNC Bank, and the United Parcel Service (UPS). In attacking corporate targets, the Bloc stresses abolishing the police cannot happen without severing the influence of private corporations over our lives. While other activists may question the effectiveness of these tactics, destroying corporate property should never distract from the real violence inflicted by police and prisons.

Why do likeminded anti-racist protesters focus on property damage over the injustices of police and prisons? When a fellow protester yells at the Black Bloc, they shift the march’s focus from the real violence enacted by the police. They do the work of conservative media and the police by focusing on so-called “bad

protesters” instead of the repeated acts of violence carried out by the police. Since police violence is always a presence at New York protests, activists would be better served working with the bloc to prepare for inevitable violence from the police.

2. Arrests and police violence: Critics claim Black Bloc incites police violence and encourages arrests

The truth of the matter is the police put protesters in danger, not Black Bloc. What differentiates Black Bloc from more liberal strands of the movement is that Black Bloc acknowledges the violence of the police is always present at protests. From peaceful vigils to sit-ins, the police have been increasing their violent attacks on protesters over the last month.

When an activist critical of the Bloc worries about the risk of arrests, they confuse the victim of state violence for the perpetrator. They betray those engaged in the same struggle by accepting the police’s violent crackdown on activism. With the Trump administration’s escalating violent rhetoric against activists and ongoing violence committed by white supremacists, Black Bloc illustrates the need for collective anonymity for protesters to protect themselves. The federal government targets and encourages right-wing violence against activists. Black Bloc acknowledges the need for safety and privacy against these forces. Given the murder and disappearance of many activists involved in the Ferguson Uprising, such protections are essential for current activists.

3. Whiteness: Critics argue Black Bloc is white people coopting the struggle against police and prisons

To anarchists of color and indigenous anarchists, this is insulting. Many come from oppressed identities, joining Black Bloc because they are frustrated with lack of commitment to liberation amongst other organizers. While many within the Black Bloc are white people, there are contradictions concerning the role of white people in the movement. On the one hand, it is common to urge white people to take the front line at protests to protect black people. On the other hand, when white people take the front line through Black Bloc, they are criticized as coopting the movement. To square the two, Black Bloc should be considered another form of taking the front line, of putting one’s body on the line in the struggle against police and prisons, of accepting the state persecution that may follow.

At the same time, white Black Bloc participants must constantly be self-critical. Racism does infiltrate organizing spaces. Disagreeing over tactics should never escalate to racist attacks on other activists. White Black Bloc participants must turn the advantages accrued from being white against the white supremacist foundations of society. This demands abolishing whiteness within organizing spaces through building transformative justice processes, creating accountability, and stamping out racism in ourselves.

4. Media: Critics argue Black Bloc attracts bad media

At the march, this claim was made by someone filming the Black Bloc. Filming places Bloc members in legal and physical danger from the state. To those who film, know that your camera is a cop.

To those who are concerned with the media, it is worth being realistic. The mainstream media has largely ignored protests in NYC after June. They do not care about the violence the police commit beyond ratings. Right-wing media will demonize the protests regardless of the involvement of Black Bloc. Media coverage is not a means to liberation. In many ways, the media is an impediment, as they allow self-interested leaders to coopt the movement for their own advantage, such as with the #8CantWait campaign that distracted from more radical calls for police and prison abolition. The media is not concerned with

presenting a vision of abolition. At the end of the day, the struggle is to build power within communities, to allow people to have control over their own lives, not to get favorable bylines.

Conclusion

As the president and armed white supremacists threaten protesters with violence, activists should not play into right-wing narratives by demonizing the Black Bloc. Instead, the question always concerns whether the usage of the tactic is appropriate to the context. Given the absence of meaningful justice for Breonna Taylor and the increasing police violence in New York City, Black Bloc is a tactical response to police repression, surveillance, and the need to strike against the supporters of white supremacy. Instead of rejecting the tactic outright, other activists should consider how to work with emerging Black Blocs to communicate security and intelligence needs and to truly shut shit down. Black Bloc is an embodiment of “No Justice, No Peace.”

Pressingly, activists should learn from the security culture cultivated by the Black Bloc, the way in which anonymity is prioritized in order to protect other activists from future state repression. While activists uncomfortable with Bloc assume its presence brings violence at protests, the reality is violence is ever present due to the continued existence of the police. The violence against Ferguson activists should force contemporary activists to consider security and privacy.

In the end, we are all involved in the same struggle against police, prisons, and white supremacy. The Black Bloc is another way in which we keep us safe.

28 Sept - The Real Home Stretch

This is likely the last missive by anti-racist political prisoner David Campbell before his release.

MORE:

Hey Everyone, I'm on the real home stretch now, with less than 30 days to go. Thank you all so very much for keeping me sane, healthy & engaged this past year! It's been truly amazing to experience first hand and gives me hope for a future that, let's face it, often looks pretty bleak, despite whatever opportunities it may afford us.

I'll be out on October 16th and partying the next day. In the meantime, I'm gonna keep doing what I've been doing and finish responding to your letters. This site should be up for a year after my release and I'll definitely have a post-release update for you. Thanks again so much for everything. See you soon!

P.S. It was great running down the walls with you!

29 Sept - “A Raging Heart”

Eric King's support crew recently received a new drawing by him. While we can't include that, we are publishing what he wrote about his feelings in making the piece. We're also including his amazing account of life in solitary confinement in the Bureau of Prisons.

MORE:

“it's about how I'm feeling both physically and emotionally. The rage comes from not only the violence itself, but also their refusal to acknowledge their role in it. this annoying indoctrination where authority convinces us that we did these things to ourselves. Every time the head cracking is brought up someone will say “you should have kicked him” or “well you weren't innocent”... As if I slammed my own head into the ground. Not a single admin said it was wrong or fucked up, though a few good guards have. I didn't break my own laws, I didn't build my own prisons, I didn't attack myself in a fucking closet. There is no ‘criminal thinking’ there is a strong will and a raging heart and maybe a miscalculating brain. They do

this shit baby, convincing us that all punishment is our own doing, we do it to ourselves... We are infantilized then whipped for throwing tantrums. we aren't allowed to be adults but we are disciplined with grown up punishment. This mind game that most people buy into "I am bad, I do bad, I need to adapt and be better" ...that is sickening isn't it? My accountability isn't to you and only for the purpose of getting to you at no point do I EVER want to be seen as adapting or adjusted to prison... That is a twisted game"

September 28th - Eric King can get magazines sent in

He can get magazines sent directly right now. if you have any, can you send some to him. The package needs to be sent in a plain white envelope only, with no letter included, no labels, and must have a handwritten to/from address.

Eric is feeling pretty isolated right now and cannot get letters or books but can get magazines, it seems.

October 3rd - Voices from Solitary: Flipping the Script

by Eric King (SW)

My toilet is right next to my cellmate's face, not hyperbolically, it is literally three inches from where he lays his head. I am in the FCI Englewood Secure Housing Unit (SHU)—the oddest SHU in the Bureau surely. In this segregation unit, you will get inmates from the Low [security prison], pre-trial people and folks like myself and my cellie who are on writ [having a court case] from other penitentiaries. This oddball combo makes no sense and causes a localized class system, all a part of the psych-ops of this odd rust bucket of a prison.

On August 17, 2017, I was taken into a mop closet by Super Patriot Lieutenant. I have been in solitary ever since, 19 months and counting. I learned how bad it can get, discovering new ways they can torture you; mentally and physically. Whether being choked while being held in four-point restraints for seven hours, being held in a cell for four days without a functional toilet filled with someone else's feces, I have seen their brutality and am stronger for it. I hope.

The last SHU I was in before the indictment hit was the penitentiary in Virginia: USP Lee. There is no oversight at these joints. At USP Lee, you have nothing coming. NOTHING. You cannot receive or buy magazines, newspapers, books, radios, coffee, hygiene or pens. You can buy a rubber pencil which shows up horribly on all papers. You are completely isolated, which in my case included a phone ban from a previous SHU and visiting restrictions that were never explained to me. This is a SHU that holds 200 and only had 150 mattresses, many of which have no covering and are just urine-reeking slabs of foam. If you don't stand for count, they take your mattress as punishment. Skip standing a second time and they will take you out and replace your clothes with 'paper clothes': see-through orange shirt and see-through bikini bottoms. You will be marched up and down the tier while the guard calls you 'faggot' and spineless 'inmates' join in with cat calls and whistles. You will stand next time. If you refuse the new wardrobe, you will get beaten and charged with assaulting staff. This is the BOP's SHU. Resistance is not tolerated and no one will hear you scream. No one is listening.

I was told I would be returning to Colorado on August 10, after a short and glorious four-day holdover at Grady County Jail. The US Marshals returned me to the FCI Englewood SHU where I would learn I was now facing 20 more years for the Lieutenant mop closet incident from over a year ago. They are charging me for my own attack: classic BOP.

I have been in this SHU ever since, seven months as of March 2020. Facing and fighting BOP charges while being held at a BOP facility, in segregation, to ensure any defense will be interrupted and complicated. Let me tell you about my physical existence. It is not pretty. The cells here are the smallest I have ever experienced. I am not certain they could literally get any smaller. 6 x 8 feet—double bunked.

These cells were built for troubled children in the 1930s. This is not supposed to be a long term segregation unit, and it only becomes such for people like myself. Then it gets really overwhelming and mentally exhausting. That's the Bureau's game plan; shatter spirit, disrupt, dissent, blame you for the horrors of this SHU, then expect lapdog loyalty when they give out small comforts.

At 6 am sharp, the four-foot-long fluorescent light comes on and will stay on until evening. This light is about two feet from my face and could make even the most level headed person homicidal. Breakfast is brought around 6:15 am, hot oatmeal and a weird cramp-inducing cake, seven days a week. It is at breakfast where you can sign up for your government approved one hour of 'outside' recreation or 'rec'. Rec is basically the same everywhere: one hour of standing in a dog kennel. At Englewood, there is a chain-linked yard so you can at least see the sky and pretend you are hearing birds singing. Going out to rec can be a curse also; we only get showers on Monday, Wednesday and Friday on my range. If you slip up and work up a sweat, you will be annoying your cellie and birding bathing [cleaning yourself at your sink].

For some ungodly reason, we are not allowed to buy decent soap, toothpaste, body wash, shampoo or deodorant. We used to have that right and after they announced the cancellation of hygiene, coffee and radios from canteen, my current cellie organized a SHU-wide cell barricade, to force them to come and take our stuff. We were not handing away our only comforts. The fear of the administration and high level of boot-licking is incredibly real. People will stab their neighbor over a stamp but won't lift a pinky for their own dignity against the suits and ties. The barricades resulted in a lot of pepper spray balls and weeks in paper clothing. We stood up though, and they remember that, often acting more respectful.

My SHU existence until recently has been overwhelmingly lonely. Starting in November 2018, the gang and terrorism people at USP Leavenworth permanently banned me from the phone after an anarchist website posted updates on my earlier beating. That ban and a visiting ban followed me here to FCI Englewood and stuck. Other SHU prisoners do not have it much better with only one phone call, 15 minute tops, a month. If your loved one accidentally disconnects, tough. After the barricade, I organized a three-person hunger strike to get visit privileges back. Eighteen missed meals later and a lot of pressure from my legal team, non-contact one hour per week visits were restored. On December 14, I got to see my wife for the first time in 16 months. Plexiglass or not, it was one of the best days of my life.

This is a very violent SHU but not in the typical ways. In most SHUs, the violence stems from staff placing known enemies together, then loving the show when hell breaks loose. I experienced that first hand at FCI Florence. They sure love a good battle. Here though, it is ALL psychological and a lot of people—myself included for a time—had a very hard time handling that. On every Tuesday, the admin (Warden, Assistant Warden, Captain, etc.) will do their walk-throughs along with S.I.S. (investigation goons) and your unit team (counselor and such, staff that handle your legal visits and calls, normal visits, transfers). This is your ONLY chance to try and either learn about your situation, try to get out or get grievance forms. In the Bureau of Prisons, our only legal protection against overzealous admins, is the grievance process. You must file these forms to resolve an issue before you initiate litigation. The only person who can give or receive them from you is your counselor.

They have mastered this routine to ensure prisoners in the SHU stay confused, angry, on edge or just broken and give up. You will hear people begging S.I.S. or the Warden to get out, and they being experts, will spin you so delicately that you really believe they will help you. Next week, same thing. Next week, still more of the same. At this point, you are shouting and losing it and they will tell you: "You can't act this way if you want me to help you," flipping the script. Maybe you realize the games, so you ask your counselor for a BP-8 grievance form. Well, don't you know he is all out but he'll be back in a day or two... You will not see him for weeks! Finally, you see him and get a BP-8 but then the next week, he loses the reply. Start over... It is maddening beyond words until you check their game. When you trash the tier or

scream, they love it because they are in control. They have got you in this sick web where you start seeking their approval, when all along you never got your issues close to being resolved. But you feel good because they “will look into it”...

Another way that plays out is with the mail. In the SHU, you are at their mercy for mail call. There is nothing you can do when you know you have letters. They shamelessly gaslight you with “Sorry, nothing for you. Sure they sent it?” I have been lucky to always get pretty solid mail days when they decide to deliver it. Last month, after weeks of complaining to the SHU Lieutenant about missing mail, trying to convince her S.I.S. is doing too much, the Lt. and Captain went and grabbed a big crate filled with letters and months old magazines from S.I.S. (who claimed they ‘overlooked’ it).

If you are any sort of activist, S.I.S. will read and inspect every letter. In theory, they still have to follow guidelines and get it to you within 48 hours. This has never happened during my entire sentence. Even with the Captain forcing S.I.S. to hand deliver my mail, my most current letter was eight days old. Mail from my wife and friends will take 10-15 days at least. Isolation as a tactic, cutting you off from the world, making you feel forgotten and unloved and then showing up with a stack of letters saying “See, we aren’t holding it” result in some people thanking them and groveling. I mark the days and let my lawyers do the fighting for me but they will never get a ‘thanks, boss’ from me!

I have been imprisoned 69 months—38 of those months have been in solitary (nearly three years of my life), with no let up in sight until after trial in August. I have seen all the horrors you pray never to see: suicides, homicides, brutal beatings, hunger and water strikes, flash grenades and bear mace foam. I have seen floods, fires and prisoners get dropped on their skulls without care or concern. I have seen happy relationships torn to shreds by the forced isolation; seen drugs turn people out of their heads. Yet there are also victories sprinkled in little pockets of life where convicts show true heart and self determination. People standing up even when their fellow prisoners back down. Once you have faced their worst and survived, you have won, they have to work with you now because they cannot step on you. We hold tier poetry readings, keep our family alive with stories, have firm conversations about our worth and power, re-instilling what the system tries to take.

New cats come and go weekly, my cellie and I try to prepare them, get their minds ready for the lies and the dull days and boring nights. I always share magazines and stamps to help people get on their feet and remove the desperation and panic. To let them know they are not alone and give space to express themselves, either with moaning, bravado, singing, whatever. The prison staff wants us bickering and fighting with each other—classic divide and conquer. We are not having it. I won’t allow it.

30 Sept - Support the ABCF Warchest

The Anarchist Black Cross Federation (ABCF) initiated the Warchest program in November 1994 to send monthly checks to Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War who have been receiving insufficient, little, or no financial support during their imprisonment.

MORE:

Its purpose is to collect funds from groups and individual supporters and send that money directly to commissary accounts of vetted Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War (PP/POW) via monthly checks. Since its inception, we have distributed over \$130,000 in funds. The ABCF Warchest program distributes \$50 in funds every month to 20 long-time political prisoners and has been doing so since 1994.

Watch the Warchest video at tinyurl.com/y435rbf7

More info about the Warchest and the political prisoners who receive assistance.

Donate:

Paypal: paypal.me/abcfwarchest

Cash app: [cash.app/\\$Timabcf](https://cash.app/$Timabcf)

Venmo: @TimFasnachtABCF

1 Oct - A very special celebration

Please join us in celebrating pre-trial anti-police brutality prisoner Lore all this month of October. Her birthday is coming up on the 27th!

MORE:

Lore has dedicated her life to helping people and making them feel safe and loved. If you're seeing this appeal, you might be one of the countless Philadelphians who's life was changed or saved by this selfless community care worker. She and all political prisoners and victims of mass incarceration deserve that same kind of support from us, now more than ever.

Lore will spend her birthday in captivity this year; convicted of no crime, she remains in federal detention nonetheless as a convenient scapegoat for Philadelphia's local Trump sycophant while he rallies people like the FOP and the Proud Boys to support his political career.

Here is how you can let Lore know that she is loved and not forgotten:

Wish Lore a happy birthday! Let's send an avalanche of birthday love. Reading and writing to friends and loved ones is always the best way to spend the day, but now we have an extra special reason to share. Follow the directions to reach Lore directly with your messages of hope, support, and solidarity.

Send a birthday gift. Select an item off of Lore's Wishlist at Powell's Books: tiny.cc/LoreBooks

Having reading material is a very important way to help Lore (and the whole block that she shares with!) stay grounded and well.

Donate. Being a political prisoner is expensive but we won't let that stop us from supporting Lore every day. All donations through welovelore.com (or Venmo: @WeLoveLore) go towards her legal defense, health, and well-being as she carries this unimaginable burden.

Share. Tell a friend, share this post, our Instagram <@we.love.lore> and Twitter <@welovelore>, and/or write a message in the sky to make sure that people know they can support Lore, too.

And most importantly:

Support political prisoners and the victims of mass incarceration. Everyone deserves to be loved and supported like Lore. You can help to support them by donating funds or your labor to these organizations doing the front line work every day in Philadelphia.

Wishing you all the love and light that this season of change has to offer in the meantime.

1 Oct - Prison Break: With Arms Wide Open

Check out the latest monthly column by Certain Days collective for It's Going Down.

MORE:

In the last few weeks, the public has gotten a rare glimpse into the horrific plight of prisoners locked away in U.S. prisons and jails. With forest fires devastating the West Coast, prisoners continue to suffer and bear the brunt of indifference. A whistleblower at an ICE detention center in Georgia alleged that hysterectomies were performed on numerous women without their consent, drawing comparisons to the medical atrocities performed throughout history. In Rochester, New York, the police murder of Daniel Prude has led to daily protests and continued calls for structural change. In Washington State, police murdered an unarmed suspect, Michael Forest Reinoehl, who was alleged to have been involved in a shooting of a right-wing protester in Portland, Oregon. Meanwhile in Washington, Attorney General Barr has encouraged prosecutors to consider charging protesters with sedition, a charge often brought against those confronting the State.

Visitation is scheduled to re-open at the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) on October 3, while numerous state jails and prisons have already resumed visitations. COVID-19, however, continues to wreak havoc in jails and prisons, with many fearing that visitations will only exacerbate the problem.

As you flip your Certain Days: Freedom for Political Prisoners calendar to October, you'll experience a vibrant yet haunting self-portrait by formerly-incarcerated Richard Rivera, who spent 38 years imprisoned. The article for October is written by political prisoner and Certain Days inside collective member Xinachtli, and titled 'Knitting Together Our Struggles: Global Capitalism as Our Common Unifier.' As you will know by now, PRE-SALES ARE NOW OPEN for the 2021 Certain Days: Freedom for Political Prisoners calendar. Order 1, 10, or 100 and rest assured that you're doing your part to support North American political prisoners.

In addition, this past year the Certain Days collective was honored with a Shuttleworth Foundation grant in honor of the tireless work we do in solidarity with political prisoners. We will be making some special offers to send copies to people in prison via our social media pages, so be sure to stay tuned.

Here's a rundown of what went down in September, and a look ahead at October.

Releases

On September 9, Indigenous Water Protector and political prisoner Red Fawn Fallis was released to a halfway house after serving a full four-year sentence in a federal penitentiary. Fallis was arrested in Standing Rock, ND in 2016, during the standoff between Indigenous activists and militarized wings of the state. You can learn about additional Water Protectors still serving time at waterprotectorlegal.org/water-protector-prisoners.

Anti-fascist political prisoner David Campbell is scheduled to be released on October 17. Like others locked away, he will need continued support upon his release.

Longtime Black liberation political prisoner Jalil Muntaqim has finally been granted parole, after at least 10 parole hearings, and is scheduled to be released in mid-October. As one of the longest serving political prisoners in North America, we look forward to his upcoming release.

Running Down the Walls

The 2020 Running Down the Walls (RDTW) events that took place in early September seem to have been successful, raising awareness and lots of money to support those locked away. A really well-done video of the Philly run captures the revolutionary spirit and solidarity involved in RDTW, in case you missed it. Find out more about how funds are used and how to get involved: abcf.net/warchest-program

Fundraising

Resistance to escalating state violence and authoritarianism continues to grow with each passing week. In mid-September two Indigenous people were arrested and held incommunicado following a border wall protest in Arizona, both since released. Unrest in Lancaster, Pennsylvania following the police murder of a local man has culminated in 12 protesters facing riot charges, with each being held on an astronomical \$1 million bail.

Support sites for Urooj Rahman, Colinford Mattis, and Lore Elisabeth Blumenthal are still active, with each facing heavy charges from protests in response to the police murder of George Floyd.

While we are currently seeing an influx of political prisoners, we cannot forget those currently incarcerated and those recently released:

Red Fawn Fallis (recently released to halfway house): paypal.me/RedFawn303

Sundiata Acoli (fighting an appeal on a recent parole denial)

Eric King (fighting additional charges carrying 20 more years): cldc.org/donate

Chuck Africa (recently released): gofundme.com/f/help-chuck-africa-rebuild

Certain Days to Keep in Mind

Besides there being a ton of political prisoner birthdays in October, there are also a ton of dates that commemorate radical history and those who struggled to make it happen. In October we celebrate, mourn, and learn from the various revolutionary struggles of John Brown, Angela Y. Davis, Che Guevara, Huey Newton, and Seth Hayes and numerous other Black Liberation militants. We recognize imperialist wars and the grassroots movements to end them, liberationist struggles for survival and freedom, and so much more. Be sure to pre-order your 2021 Certain Days calendar now so that you don't miss out on all this radical history!

2 Oct - US Justice Department cracks down on Portland protesters with law from civil rights era

At the end of August, in a green leafy park in Northeast Portland, Renn Cannon laid out a new effort surrounding incidents at racial justice protests.

MORE:

by Conrad Wilson (*Oregon Public Broadcasting*)

"The FBI is going to take a larger role in investigating these nightly acts of violence," the special agent in charge of the FBI's Portland field office said.

At the time, Cannon said he was concerned about the toll protests were having on the city.

"What I'm letting people know is we're expanding that investigative footprint," he said. "After 90 days, the cumulative effects are becoming more and more severe. And that's the role of the federal government: to help with problems where the public's safety is in danger."

The U.S. Department of Justice has expanded its resources in the city of Portland. The agency's goal was to bring criminal cases against people who it believes have broken the law amid nightly racial justice protests that have now entered their fifth month. But in some cases, the federal government is acting more like a local prosecutor, and some say that is going too far.

So far, the U.S. attorney's office in Oregon has brought more than 90 federal charges, mostly misdemeanors either involving federal officers or federal property.

But this month, for the first time, the office brought new charges against protesters — ones that didn't have a clear federal connection.

"We're doing it because we believe in having an impact at ending this violence; that's why we're doing it," Oregon's U.S. Attorney Billy Williams said. "We're looking at every tool available."

Those new cases revolve around civil disorder charges, and they signal a shift at the Department of Justice to a more aggressive approach against protesters.

In one case, the FBI said a protester allegedly used a slingshot to strike a Portland firefighter with a ball bearing. In a separate case, the FBI alleges a protester threw a helmet at a Portland police officer, hitting the officer, who was also wearing a helmet.

Those incidents, and others like them, didn't take place on federal property and didn't involve threats to federal law enforcement. But federal prosecutors argue they're able to charge the cases because the so-called civil disorder prevents interstate commerce, in this case blocking roads.

Williams said FBI agents have combed through hundreds of arrests by local police, looking for possible federal charges.

"And we continue to look through," he told *OPB*.

So far, federal prosecutors have focused civil disorder charges against those protesting police. It's a little-used charge passed by Congress in 1968. At the time, some pro-segregationist U.S. senators wanted the federal government to be able to crack down on the civil rights movement.

"It's tragically ironic that the federal government is using this civil disorder statute," said Lisa Hay, the federal public defender for the District of Oregon. "I mean when you look back to the Congressional record, it has such racist overtones when it was passed. ... It's terrible to be using this statute for this kind of protest."

Hay represents protesters, including those charged more recently with civil disorder. She argues these charges go too far and show the federal government ignoring state sovereignty.

"The U.S. attorney is appointed by the president," Hay said. "He's not accountable to the people of Oregon in any way. So that's where there's a concern, when the federal government steps in and starts prosecuting cases that could be prosecuted in the county. And I don't want to guess on the motivations, but obviously, the U.S. attorney reports to Washington D.C. And this U.S. attorney's office is definitely aggressively prosecuting what they perceive to be federal crimes."

In May, newly elected Multnomah County District Attorney Mike Schmidt was elected with nearly 77% of the vote.

Just after taking office in August, Schmidt declined to prosecute nonviolent crimes at protests because he said it could be seen as stifling First Amendment rights. The result: hundreds of protest related arrests were dismissed.

Schmidt declined interview requests to talk about federal prosecutions, but he did speak about his policy this month on *OPB's* "Think Out Loud."

"I was sending a signal and saying this is where I'm going to put our resources: to people that are causing harm and violence," Schmidt said. "We can actually do damage to the legitimacy of the criminal justice system if we are seen being heavy headed, potentially chilling legitimate speech that is critical of this very system."

Schmidt's policy has angered many in law enforcement.

During the last several months, the U.S. Marshals Service deputized more than 100 local law enforcement officers, including Oregon State Police troopers, Multnomah County Sheriff deputies and Portland Police officers. For the rest of the year that gives local police the option of sending cases directly to federal prosecutors rather than going through Schmidt's office.

Late Tuesday, Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler, who is also the city's police commissioner, asked Williams to de-deputize Portland police. Williams rejected that request, saying the deputations are needed to end "dangerous conditions prevalent in downtown Portland due to a lack of leadership."

11 Oct - Carnival Funeral for David Graeber

WHAT: Memorial Carnival

WHEN: 3:00pm, Sunday, October 11th

WHERE: Zuccotti Park—Broadway at Liberty Street, NYC

COST: FREE

MORE:

More information on this transnational event and a letter of invitation to participate can be found at davidgraeber.industries

This space is to celebrate the life and work of David Graeber, the anarchist and anthropologist, who never stopped dreaming another world was possible.

David died in Venice. The Venice Carnival, which has been turned into a tourist commodity, originally constituted a political space of radical democracy. This is why David's memorial will be a carnival. Anyone who feels like coming to his funeral is welcome to dress up, put on a mask and join us. Whoever wants to speak can do it through an open mic with facilitation.

Simultaneously with a carnival in Zuccotti Park, there will be carnivals in other places. Please send your suggestions! We'd like to coordinate the carnivals through a common stream, so that those who cannot join in person can participate via Zoom.

Bring your own carnival mask!

11 Oct - Dare to Struggle: Lenny Foster on Peltier & Native American Issues!

WHAT: Discussion

WHEN: 3:00pm, Sunday, October 11th

WHERE: facebook.com/jerichoamnestymovement

COST: FREE

MORE:

Lenny Foster of the Diné Nation is the former Director of the Navajo Nation Corrections Project and the Spiritual Advisor for more than 2,000 Native American inmates in ninety-six state and federal prisons in the Western U.S. He has co-authored legislation in New Mexico, Arizona, Utah and Colorado allowing Native American spiritual and religious practice in prison and resulting in significant reductions in prison returns.

He is a board member of the International Indian Treaty Council, a sun dancer and member of the Native American Church. He has been with the American Indian Movement since 1969 and has participated in actions including Alcatraz, Black Mesa, the Trail of Broken Treaties, Wounded Knee 1973, the Menominee Monastery Occupation, Shiprock Fairchild Occupation, the Longest Walk and the Big Mountain land struggle. Lenny Foster has received many accolades and honors for his groundbreaking work with Indigenous prisoners' human rights and has testified many times at the United Nations on both Indigenous issues and Political Prisoner Leonard Peltier.

Leonard Peltier is a Native American activist who was unfairly and illegally tried and convicted for his participation in a firefight on the Pine Ridge Reservation in 1975. This event took place amid the high tensions and extreme violence known as the "Reign of Terror" and left one Native American and two FBI agents dead. After a trial the following year, in which two other firefight participants were acquitted on the grounds of self-defense, the FBI went to extraordinary lengths to get Leonard Peltier—someone had to pay.

Leonard Peltier was illegally extradited from Canada to face a trial filled with Constitutional violations. Since his sentencing, documents proving FBI misconduct that included the fabrication and suppression of evidence have been revealed. During subsequent oral arguments, the US Prosecutor admitted "... we can't prove who shot those agents." Leonard Peltier remains in prison after being denied Executive Clemency by President Obama.