

Daniel McGowan Lectures and Conversations

Daniel McGowan, Amy Goodman, etc.

2016-2022

Contents

News Shows	5
JUNE 11, 2007 - Exclusive: Facing Seven Years in Jail, Environmental Activist Daniel McGowan Speaks Out About the Earth Liberation Front, the Green Scare and the Government's Treatment of Activists as "Terrorists"	6
Synopsis	6
Transcript	7
JUNE 21, 2011 - "If a Tree Falls": New Documentary on Daniel McGowan, Earth Liberation Front and Green Scare	17
Synopsis	17
Transcript	18
 Lectures	 26
10/31/2016 - Former Political Prisoners Panel	27
Synopsis	27
Transcription	29
Part 1	29
Sekuo Kombui	29
John Tucker	31
Daniel McGowan	33
Kazi Toure	39
Part 2	41
04/07/2017 - Daniel McGowan Speaks at PSU	53
Synopsis	53
Transcript	55
05/19/2017 - Former political prisoner Daniel McGowan	90
Synopsis	90
Transcript	90

Conversations	111
01/16/2017 - Communication Management Units & Political Prisoners in the Age of Trump	112
Synopsis	112
Transcript	113
Labor Radio 3 Minute Call In	113
Prison Pipeline Show Begins	115
06/08/17 - June 11th: Interview With Daniel McGowan	123
Transcription	123
01/10/2020 - Certain Days Collective	133
Synopsis	133
Transcript	134
01/16/2020 - SOLECAST: w/ Sara Falconer & Daniel McGowan of Certain Days Collective	151
Synopsis	151
Transcript	152
03/16/2020 - Environmental activist Daniel McGowan	176
Synopsis	176
Transcript	176
02/04/2022 - Certain Days	187
Synopsis	187
Transcript	187
Prison Disturbances	188
Certain Days Calander	191
02/18/2022 – “If I Fall, And We Struggle Together...” Certain Days, Political Prisoners and Movement Defense with Josh Davidson and Daniel McGowan	197
Synopsis	197
Transcript	200
03/29/2022 - From Environmentalist to “Domestic Terrorist” with former Earth Liberation member Daniel McGowan (G&R 150)	229
Synopsis	229
Transcript	230

**09/20/2022 - Dousing the BBC’s Fake News Before It Can ”Burn
Wild” w/ Former ELF Member Daniel McGowan (G&R 182) 259**
Synopsis 259
Transcript 260

News Shows

JUNE 11, 2007 - Exclusive: Facing Seven Years in Jail, Environmental Activist Daniel McGowan Speaks Out About the Earth Liberation Front, the Green Scare and the Government's Treatment of Activists as "Terrorists"

Synopsis

Watch Full Show

TOPICS

- Domestic Surveillance
- Oregon
- Environment

GUESTS

- Daniel McGowan

environmental and social justice activist from New York. More info on his case is at SupportDaniel.org.

- Lauren Regan

executive director of the Eugene-based Civil Liberties Defense Center, which provides legal protection to environmental and social justice activists from corporate and governmental attacks on civil liberties.

LINKS

- SupportDaniel.org

This is viewer supported news. Please do your part today.

DONATE

Last week McGowan was sentenced to seven years in prison for his role in two acts of arson in Oregon in 2001. The judge ruled that one of the fires was an act of terrorism. He was sentenced along with nine other environmental activists. The

government compared the activists to the Ku Klux Klan. We also speak with Lauren Regan of Civil Liberties Defense Center.

Transcript

This is a rush transcript. Copy may not be in its final form.

AMY GOODMAN: Last week, a federal court sentenced environmental activist Daniel McGowan to seven years in prison for his role in two arsons in Oregon in 2001. The judge ruled one of the fires was an act of terrorism. McGowan was one of six environmental activists arrested in December 2005 in coordinated multi-state raids dubbed “Operation Backfire.” A month later, they were indicted, together with five others, by a grand jury on charges of property destruction, arson and conspiracy relating to actions going back nearly a decade, which were attributed to the underground Earth Liberation Front. No one was hurt in any of the actions.

The 11 activists were threatened with life sentences if they refused to cooperate with the government and serve as informants. After months of negotiation, in November of last year, McGowan and three others pled guilty to some of the charges, on the condition they would remain noncooperative with the state. As a result, the government has sought a “terrorism enhancement” for their sentences. The National Lawyers Guild called the terrorism sentencing enhancement issued to Daniel McGowan an unnecessary and excessive government tactic to discourage the exercise of free speech.

I’m joined now in our firehouse studio by Daniel McGowan, sentenced to seven years in prison last week. He begins his term July 2nd. This is his first national broadcast interview since the sentencing.

We welcome you to *Democracy Now!*, Daniel.

DANIEL MCGOWAN: Thanks for having me, Amy.

AMY GOODMAN: Let’s go back to 2001. What happened?

DANIEL MCGOWAN: Well, in 2001 I was involved with the Earth Liberation Front, and I was involved in two separate arsons in one year. One was at a company called Superior Lumber Corporation, that was logging an old-growth forest in Oregon and the Northwest. The other was a company called Jefferson Poplar Farms, which I believe was involved in genetic engineering tree research. So I was involved in this group; we did these two arsons. I had severe reservations about being involved in destroying property, but I felt very strongly about the issues. I felt, at the time, we were not getting anywhere with sort of polite protest, very disenchanted with the whole political process. And we targeted these two facilities for, you know, using fire, destroyed a significant portion of them. The actions were intended to destroy corporate property. We took extreme precautions in these actions so that we wouldn’t harm anyone. But after the second arson, I became incredibly disenchanted with the use of fire. I saw the rebound effect. I thought about how dangerous it was and the life—the lives that we put at risk by igniting basically a million-and-a-half-dollar arson at Jefferson Poplar Farms.

Along with some other issues, it just led to me leaving the group and moving on with life, getting back to the activism that I had been involved with for the last 10 years.

AMY GOODMAN: Jefferson Poplar Farms and Superior Lumber. Why Superior Lumber?

DANIEL McGOWAN: Well, it had—on some level, it had to do with the fact that Superior Lumber was very similar to many of the lumber corporations in the Northwest. They weren't particularly—they weren't the largest, but they certainly just were logging old-growth forest using helicopter logging and having a really devastating impact on the ecosystem there. They're very unpopular. A lot of people did not like the impact they were having on local ecosystems. But they were sort of picked because they were so unspectacular. But they're one of the many, many companies in the Northwest that are continuing to liquidate the national forest, as well as, you know, private lands.

AMY GOODMAN: How did you set them on fire?

DANIEL McGOWAN: Well, actually, I was a lookout for that action. I had been involved, but only for a short amount of time. I didn't have a lot of experience with the creation of incendiary devices. I was invited from some people that I had met a few months prior. And I was a lookout and with about four other people, including the main informant in the case, named Jacob Ferguson, who wore a wire, just in 2005, to wire our conversations. And it was—

AMY GOODMAN: In 2005.

DANIEL McGOWAN: Yes. In 2004, actually. But he was involved in that arson. He's not indicted for that. And, you know, it was a pretty simple affair, actually. And I was the lookout. And there was a few other people involved. And, you know, when we were driving off, we heard the four-alarm radio signal, and the next day we found out it was a million dollars in damage.

AMY GOODMAN: And what does it mean to say you became disenchanted? What then did you do?

DANIEL McGOWAN: Well, I had been involved in activism since around '97. And for a brief period of time of that activism, I took to destroying property as—because I'm essentially a very pragmatic person. I felt like I was willing to try other things. The tactics that we were using were not working. We were sort of bringing up safety issues for myself and others. I was willing to look at that and say, "Well, I need to step back from this." I have to say the—

AMY GOODMAN: Were you concerned that someone might have been asleep inside, or—

DANIEL McGOWAN: Well, I wasn't concerned about that, because I think we took extreme precautions. And definitely many actions were called off based on things like security guards. What did it for me was some of the members of the group that I was involved in went and, right when my friend Jeff Luers was about to go on trial, went back and destroyed 36 SUVs at the same exact car lot that Jeff was going on trial for burning a year prior. And I have to say that had a massive impact on his trial, and he chose a judge trial at the moment, and he—at that time, and got a 22-year,

eight-month sentence. And that sort of carelessness really made me step back and start to look at my actions as being very dangerous and having repercussions beyond my control.

AMY GOODMAN: What were you recorded in 2004 saying by Jacob Ferguson?

DANIEL McGOWAN: Well, Jacob was an old friend. And I was recorded essentially reminiscing with old friends about things that we were involved in. So there was definitely a lot of leading me into conversations about these actions. There wasn't a direct confessional, but I was certainly—listening to the wiretaps, you can see that I was involved in these actions. I had a lot of knowledge about particular things. So it was certainly enough to get an indictment.

AMY GOODMAN: So, Jacob chose to cooperate.

DANIEL McGOWAN: Yes.

AMY GOODMAN: You have chosen not to.

DANIEL McGOWAN: Yes.

AMY GOODMAN: What does that mean?

DANIEL McGOWAN: Well, essentially, it's me living my life the way I was taught by my parents, which is you don't point fingers at people to get out of trouble. And I made promises to myself at that time and to others that I wouldn't ever, you know, blame them for—if we were ever in trouble, I would never blame them for getting into trouble. And my three co-defendants and I have chosen that route. And by choosing that route, we've definitely been—the government would say we haven't been punished, but we've definitely been punished in the sense of like just getting a lot of hostility and venom on the part of the prosecution and even the judge.

AMY GOODMAN: And Jacob's decision, your old friend, your thoughts?

DANIEL McGOWAN: Well, I think it's really sad. I think he fell into a really sad time in his life, and he was abusing drugs. And they used the threat of taking his child away from him. I think it's ultimately a really horrible choice, and I don't know how he lives with himself, but I mostly these days feel a lot of pity for Jacob, more than anything.

AMY GOODMAN: What happens to him?

DANIEL McGOWAN: Well, from what I understood from one of the defense counsel, said in court last month, Jacob is going to be pleading to one count of arson and receiving probation this month in Lane County—and I suppose a stern lecture from the judge, but that doesn't always make it easier on any of the nine-plus defendants that are now going to federal prison.

AMY GOODMAN: We're talking to Daniel McGowan, environmental and social justice activist, who will be reporting for jail. Well, it's not clear when, set for July 2nd, maybe longer. We'll talk about that. We'll talk about the Environmental and Animal Liberation Front when we come back with our guest, Daniel McGowan. Stay with us.

[break]

AMY GOODMAN: Our guest today is Daniel McGowan, environmental activist, has just been sentenced for two arsons he was involved with in 2001 in Oregon, sen-

tenced along with other people. He is headed to jail perhaps July 2nd, unless he's able to put it off for the month that he is asking for. We are also joined on the telephone by another guest. We're joined on the phone by Lauren Regan, executive director of the Eugene-based Civil Liberties Defense Center, which provides legal protection to environmental and social justice activists from corporate and governmental attacks on civil liberties. We welcome you to *Democracy Now!*, Lauren Regan.

LAUREN REGAN: Thanks, Amy.

AMY GOODMAN: Can you talk about this case, Daniel McGowan's case?

LAUREN REGAN: Sure. I think there are probably two overarching, important issues relating to this case that make it important for everyone across the country to really take a look at and to scrutinize what's going on here. And the first is that since Daniel's arrest and others' arrests in December of 2005, the government has attempted to say that this case is not political. However, the evidence sharply disdains that point of view. Primarily, as soon as these folks were arrested, Alberto Gonzales, our chief attorney and beleaguered head of the country's legal division, got on television stations and had a press conference where he labeled these American citizens as "eco-terrorists." These were individuals that were innocent until proven guilty. At this point, all of them had presumed innocence, and yet the head lawyer of the nation in a pretrial press conference labels them as eco-terrorists, basically destroying any possibility they would have had as a fair trial. And that theme has permeated throughout these proceedings, including even at the sentencing. The government was still trying to say that this case was not political. And it's sandwiched by the fact that as soon as nine out of 10 individuals were sentenced, Gonzales again has another press conference after the sentencing, thanking his crew for the good work they've done and again labeling them as eco-terrorists.

AMY GOODMAN: I want to go to that moment, to the sentencing, June 4th, the government's lawyers comparing Daniel McGowan and the other defendants to the Ku Klux Klan. This is a clip of your lawyer, Daniel, Jeffrey Robinson, speaking about this outside the federal courthouse in Eugene, Oregon.

JEFFREY ROBINSON: The thing that I'd like to say is that both Ms. Lee and I have a great deal of respect for the lawyers in the U.S. Attorney's Office, and in particular Mr. Pfeiffer, who made the argument for the government at the terrorism enhancement motion several weeks back. While I respect him and while I think he is a good and decent man, Mr. Pfeiffer lacks knowledge about things that he discussed in that courtroom. He stood in that courtroom as a representative of the United States government and told Judge Aiken that Daniel McGowan and his co-defendants were essentially the same as the terrorists from the Ku Klux Klan. That meant something to me personally as an African American. And I am disappointed that my federal government would make that kind of a comparison in a case like this. I grew up in Memphis, Tennessee, and I was born in 1956. I know something about the Ku Klux Klan and what they were about. And what they were about was murder, was killing—completely different from Daniel McGowan and these defendants.

AMY GOODMAN: Lauren Regan of the Civil Liberties Defense Center, would you care to elaborate on that point?

LAUREN REGAN: Well, you know, there was so much rhetoric, so many exaggerated statements made throughout each proceeding that occurred in federal court recently—I mean, some of them as outrageous as comparing them to the Ku Klux Klan, others much more subtle. And, you know, the judge—that statement went on, and the judge herself also stood silent and didn’t comment at all on this type of sort of slanderous statement. That, combined with the fact that the government and the court continued to protest that the government was not attempting to label these individuals as terrorists, that was the other giant miss that was going on. They repeatedly would say, “Oh, we’re not trying to label these individuals as terrorists for the rest of their life; we just happen to be seeking this terrorist enhancement against them,” for the first time in the history of the United States, that this enhancement was applied to individuals charged with property crimes that didn’t cause any harm to human life.

And so, regardless of the lip speak that the government continued to give to the court and to the public, it was incredibly clear that that is exactly what they were trying to do. There was no other purpose or reason that this terrorist enhancement should have been applied to 10 individuals, 10 young people who committed acts of sabotage, which of course are crimes. But the crime of arson and some of the other crimes that these individuals were already charged with carried more than a life sentence. One of Daniel’s co-defendants was looking at life plus 1,150 years for his role in two arsons. But yet the government somehow needed this terrorist enhancement to additionally punish them. If not to label them as terrorists and the resulting chill that would trickle down to the environmental movement, there was absolutely no other legal or other purpose that they would have needed this enhancement, other than to go back to Congress and be able to proclaim, “Look, we’ve convicted 10 terrorists. Now give us billions of dollars to continue this fight and to—you know, give us these tools to illegally spy on U.S. citizens,” as we know that they’ve done throughout the last several years.

AMY GOODMAN: I’m looking at an article on *Counterpunch* by Michael Donnelly that talks about this case. And it says, “Fast forward two years and the government’s target becomes the grassroots. Under the code name Operation Backfire, the feds began the largest roundup of eco-activists in American history. On Dec. 7, 2005, seven people were arrested and charged with participating in a wide array of property destruction actions the feds link to the Earth Liberation Front (ALF) and the Animal Liberation Front (ELF).”

“The very same day, several more folks were subpoenaed to testify before a Grand Jury in Eugene, Oregon. A full-[scale] dragnet was launched against grassroots activists. On [Jan.] 20, 2006, Ashcroft’s successor (literally and philosophically) Attorney General Alberto Gonzales announced a 65-count indictment against a fictional entity the government calls, ‘The Family.’ Four more arrests brought the total to eleven, with conspiracy charges now added.

“Ironically, after serving ten years; also on the very same day, Michael Fortier, who was convicted for his part in the Oklahoma City bombing which killed 168 people, was released from jail. In contrast, the government is threatening the environmentalists who injured no one, with extraordinary sentences ranging from 30 years to life plus 335 years.”

Lauren, and then Daniel, I’ll get your response.

LAUREN REGAN: Well, that’s definitely accurate information. On the same day that Jonathan Paul was set to be sentenced, the government was seeking 57 months for his role as a lookout in an arson that happened in 1997 to the Cavel West horse slaughterhouse facility. And on that same day, Scooter Libby was sentenced for his role in outing Valerie Plame as a CIA operative to 20 months. So when you start comparing the prosecutions of the right versus the left, the fact that over 30 abortion doctors have been killed by right-wing extremists, yet this enhancement was never sought, the Oklahoma City bombing, as, you know, Michael Fortier being one of the defendants in that, the terrorist enhancement never sought in those cases. So you see clear discretion being exercised in favor of right versus left political wins, which of course is intolerable when you are talking about justice and equality and, you know, like crimes being prosecuted in like manners. All of these are grave injuries to our entire system of justice, not in particular to this case.

And let’s not forget that deforestation is the number two cause of climate change in the United States right now. And so, instead of actually addressing these issues and, you know, stop subsidizing the timber industry, the government has chosen to kind of deflect that nationwide attention onto these particular crimes. And they ask, you know, what could have been done to prevent this type of action, this action that Daniel and others took. And clearly, if the government had taken responsibility and had actually addressed some of these huge environmental issues, actions like this would not have been necessary, particularly with regard to climate change. Even the judge in court admitted that there are only eight years until the planet is tipped to the point of no return. But yet, we still see politicians and others sitting on their hands. If the government wants to know what is the easiest way to stop underground activists from acting in this way, well, being responsible politicians and actually dealing with these issues would be a real easy cure.

AMY GOODMAN: Daniel McGowan, would you care to respond to the disparity in sentences in a case like, well, Fortier, Michael Fortier, coming out of jail at the time that you all were being indicted?

DANIEL MCGOWAN: Well, it’s ironic, of course, but it’s something I was very familiar with, doing support for Jeffrey Luers, seeing all these arson cases where people get, you know, three—I think the federal, you know, average arson sentence is 3.5 years. And I’m looking at, you know, seven years. And, you know, looking at Scooter Libby, looking at these right-wing terrorists getting slapped on the wrist is really offensive.

One thing that was interesting is when the re-indictment happened with Alberto Gonzales, and John Lewis having a press conference in D.C. That was also the same day

as the Senate wiretapping investigation, or the hearings. So I think the government—you know, there's an analogy used in court often by the judge about having my cake and eat it, too. And I think it's really interesting, because there were times where I think everyone in the courtroom was scratching their head. On one hand, it's not a political case. I'm told that I'm an arsonist; I'm not going to be a political prisoner. The judge was very upset at that, seeing that on my website. But then I'm not being treated like an arsonist: I'm facing a mandatory life sentence. On the other hand, it's not terrorism, and then they're seeking the enhancement. And it seems like they were so sensitive to what was being said in the media. In particular, my co-defendant Jonathan Paul's sister had a very widely distributed op-ed piece about "My Brother, the 'Terrorist.'" And they were literally responding to it in court. And so, my answer—my question was, you know, if I'm not a terrorist, then why are you seeking an enhancement? And if D.C. is not running the show, as they claimed—they actually at one point said, "We haven't had a phone call from them in six months," as if that meant something, as if that meant or erased the legacy of the attorney general of the United States getting up there. And I was at Lane County at the time. I didn't even hear about it until I got an article, and I picked it up, and I was like, "Oh, my god, Gonzales just said something about my case." I'm really sensing that this is going to go bad at that point. And it's always felt like D.C. was pulling strings, I mean.

AMY GOODMAN: John Lewis, the deputy assistant director of the FBI, said one of today's most serious domestic terrorism threats come from special interest extremist groups, such as the Animal Liberation Front, the Earth Liberation Front and Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty campaign. Can you explain these groups, who these groups are?

DANIEL MCGOWAN: Sure. The Earth and Animal Liberation Front, I think, is a response to extreme disenchantment on the part of young people that don't see any way of effectively making change. I see it as they're groups that employ property destruction, arson and the liberation of animals from laboratories and other facilities. You know, I left the ELF in 2001, but when I hear, you know, these definitions being thrown around like that, it just—it kind of makes me shudder. Now, Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty is a—you know, until recently, a legal, above-ground campaign that was trying to close a animal laboratory named Huntingdon Life Sciences in New Jersey and England. And I think the property rights movement and the government likes to conflate, you know, sort of above-ground, legal groups with underground groups in a way of kind of like just having them blend in together, and so they can use the same exact legal tools and repression against groups like that. And they'll often throw Earth First! in with that definition. So they'll say ELF, ALF, Earth First!, as if they're all really the same thing, even though people are choosing radically different tactics based on their affiliation.

AMY GOODMAN: You grew up here in New York, in Queens.

DANIEL MCGOWAN: Yeah, yes, yes, in Rockaway, mm-hmm.

AMY GOODMAN: How did you end up in Oregon?

DANIEL McGOWAN: Funny question. Well, yeah, I grew up in the city. And it's strange, like, when people—you know, people were saying, "Oh, environmentalist that grew up in Rockaway, its kind of hard to imagine." But I was working in nonprofits in Manhattan, different rainforest protection groups. And I went to an environmental gathering out West, and I met a bunch of really interesting people, and it blew my mind. And I told myself I was going to go to the Headwaters Forest campaign. And when I was literally in the center of the nation on a train, David "Gypsy" Chain was killed by a logger, and by the time I got to San Francisco, I was told—

AMY GOODMAN: He was protesting logging, and a logger had cut a tree, and it fell on him.

DANIEL McGOWAN: Yes, exactly. It hit him, killed him. And so, I was told, you know, "We don't have spots in our campaign," so I stuck around in San Francisco and eventually moved to Eugene to work with the *Earth First! Journal*. I was blown away by Oregon. I had never seen trees like that before. I had never seen forests or animals or anything like that. And so, I had—it had a really profound impact on me. And I was already quite radicalized, but I was—couldn't believe the fact that people accepted what was going on there. I couldn't believe the clearcuts on the mountaintops. I couldn't believe the animal cruelty that I saw.

AMY GOODMAN: Daniel, how are you preparing for prison?

DANIEL McGOWAN: Well, it's been a long time coming. I got arrested 18 months ago, and it was pretty clear to me that I would be doing some time from that.

AMY GOODMAN: We had your wife on then.

DANIEL McGOWAN: That's right. That's right.

AMY GOODMAN: How is she doing?

DANIEL McGOWAN: She's doing well. She's really excellent. She's a great person, and she's handled this really well. She's been running my support campaign from day one, putting up the website, dealing with all the work that is required, the excessive fundraising that we have to deal with for legal costs. I have been in contact with a lot of people that have done time in the federal system. I've been reading as much as I can. I'm reading everything, obviously, on the Bureau of Prisons website, which is pretty minimal. I've been talking to prisoners and trying to figure out where I'm going. There's still just so many question marks. I know how long. I don't know where I'm going. So, just a lot of research—

AMY GOODMAN: You are asking to stay out of jail beyond July 2nd.

DANIEL McGOWAN: We will be asking that at some point, yes. The judge gave me a self-report day of July 2nd. My intention was to finish my classes, which end in about a week and a half, and to wait for the Bureau of Prisons to let me know where I'm going, and then just go right to that prison. But I, in April, started a program, a master's program in environmental sociology, at Antioch University, just sort of a self-directed, self-created program. I have my own—I recruit my own instructors, make my own classes, and it will end up with me getting a master's degree in two years. And hopefully I will be able to do that in prison.

AMY GOODMAN: As you reflect on your life right now, what are your thoughts?

DANIEL McGOWAN: It's really hard to say. I'm still trying to get the big picture of all this. I definitely have regrets. I have regrets that I, you know, employed arson as a tactic. I don't think morally I'm wrong about what I did, but I do think strategically and tactically it was an unwise decision. I wish that I had people in my life at the time to kind of guide me back to a different path. But, you know, I was very disenchanted and very upset about what I saw. I think those feelings are legitimate. And I think young kids that have these feelings right now, and not-so-young kids, are—you know, they're legitimate thoughts, and we have to come up with ways of dealing with this crisis and stop ignoring it. And that was my message to the media that day, after sentencing, was we have to stop pretending this is all about crime and punishment, and start dealing with, like, real issues, like global climate change.

AMY GOODMAN: Your lawyers filed a motion compelling the government to disclose whether the National Security Agency had conducted illegal surveillance and monitoring during the investigation. Can you talk about the surveillance? And I would also like to put the question to Lauren Regan, in a bigger sense.

DANIEL McGOWAN: We were never able to determine whether or not there was any actual surveillance. I think, from what we're seeing in the media and what we're seeing from Gonzales and Bush's failed statements about surveillance, I'm assuming there was a lot. But the government was really very squeamish about it. They fought the motion very hard. And when we were in plea negotiations, removing that motion was a key part of the plea agreement going forward. So we removed—or, we rescinded our motion as a result of that.

AMY GOODMAN: Lauren, your response?

LAUREN REGAN: Well, I would agree with Daniel that the motion was probably the tipping point, strangely, for the government to accept noncooperation deals. Up until that point, they had said, "You'll either go to trial and get life in prison, or you will cooperate with the federal government and name names." And for the last four defendants, that was just an unworkable situation. And we filed that motion. Basically, the judge ordered a person from Washington, D.C.—it was interesting. When the hearing first happened, the U.S. attorney stood up and tried to say that he personally was not aware of any illegal surveillance, and so that should be good enough. And the judge said, "No, you'll need to bring somebody from Washington, D.C., that is in the Central Intelligence Agency and have them testify under oath that in fact that did not occur." And prior to pushing that envelope as far as we possibly could, the government capitulated to the noncooperation deals, and, like Daniel mentioned, the motion was rescinded based on that. It was also filed in the case of Briana Waters, which is a co-defendant, who's being prosecuted for the University of Washington arson in the state of Washington. And interestingly, those Washington cases, no terrorist enhancement is being sought for them. But her attorneys also filed a motion seeking NSA disclosures, and that's currently being battled in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals here.

AMY GOODMAN: If people want to get more information on your case and what's happening to you, your time in prison, Daniel, where can they go online?

DANIEL McGOWAN: Well, they can go to the website run by friends and family. It's www.SupportDaniel.org.

AMY GOODMAN: Well, I want to thank you for being with us.

DANIEL McGOWAN: Thank you.

AMY GOODMAN: Daniel McGowan, we will certainly follow your case—

DANIEL McGOWAN: Thank you.

AMY GOODMAN: —and follow the latest also when you are going to prison. Lauren Regan, executive director of the Eugene-based Civil Liberties Defense Center, thanks very much for joining us. This is *Democracy Now!*, democracynow.org, *The War and Peace Report*. When we come back, we'll look at the debt in Africa, in Latin America, in Asia, and we'll look at vulture funds, with Greg Palast. Stay with us.

JUNE 21, 2011 - ‘If a Tree Falls’: New Documentary on Daniel McGowan, Earth Liberation Front and Green Scare

Synopsis

Watch Full Show

This is viewer supported news. Please do your part today.

DONATE

TOPICS

- Environment
- Domestic Surveillance
- War on Terror
- Police Brutality
- Oregon

GUESTS

- Marshall Curry

filmmaker and co-director of the new documentary, If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front.

- Andrew Stepanian

an animal rights activist who was jailed at the same CMU as Daniel McGowan for six months. Andrew was freed from prison in 2009 after serving a total of 31 months behind bars.

- Will Potter

freelance reporter who focuses on how the war on terrorism affects civil liberties. He runs the blog, “GreenIsTheNewRed.com.” He his also the author of the new book Green is the New Red: An Insider’s Account of a Social Movement Under Siege.

LINKS

- June 11, 2007 Interview with Daniel McGowan
- Official website for “If A Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front.” The film opens Wednesday in New York City at IFC.

- “Green Is the New Red: An Insider’s Account of a Social Movement Under Siege.” By Will Potter (City Lights Books, 2011)

A new documentary, “If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front,” tells the story of environmental activist Daniel McGowan. Four years ago this month, McGowan was sentenced to a seven-year term for his role in two acts of politically motivated arson in 2001 to protest extensive logging in the Pacific Northwest—starting fires at a lumber company and an experimental tree farm in Oregon. The judge ruled he had committed an act of terrorism, even though no one was hurt in any of the actions. McGowan participated in the arsons as a member of the Earth Liberation Front but left the group after the second fire led him to become disillusioned. He was arrested years later after a key member of the Earth Liberation Front—himself facing the threat of lengthy jail time—turned government informant. McGowan ultimately reached a plea deal but refused to cooperate with the government’s case. As a result, the government sought a “terrorism enhancement” to add extra time to his sentence. McGowan is currently jailed in a secretive prison unit known as Communication Management Units, or CMUs, in Marion, Illinois. We play an excerpt from the film and speak with the film’s director, Marshall Curry. We also speak with Andrew Stepanian, an animal rights activist who was imprisoned at the same CMU as McGowan, and with Will Potter, a freelance reporter who writes about how the so-called “war on terror” affects civil liberties. [includes rush transcript]

Transcript

This is a rush transcript. Copy may not be in its final form.

AMY GOODMAN: The Human Rights Watch Film Festival has opened in New York. One of the films that has just premiered at the film festival is called *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front*. It tells the story of environmental activist Daniel McGowan. Four years ago this month, McGowan was sentenced to a seven-year term for his role in two acts of politically motivated arson in 2001. McGowan had helped start fires at a lumber company and an experimental tree farm in Oregon. The judge ruled he had committed an act of terrorism, even though no one was hurt in any of the actions, an outcome the defendants said they had taken pains to ensure. Daniel McGowan participated in the arsons as a member of the Earth Liberation Front but left the group after the second fire led him to become disillusioned. He was arrested years later after a key member of the ELF, himself facing the threat of lengthy jail time, turned government informant.

Daniel McGowan ultimately reached a plea deal but refused to cooperate with the government’s case. As a result, the government sought a “terrorism enhancement” to add extra time to his sentence. The National Lawyers Guild called the terrorism sentencing enhancement an unnecessary and excessive government tactic to discourage the exercise of free speech.

McGowan is currently jailed in a secretive prison unit known as Communication Management Units, or CMUs, in Marion, Illinois. The units are designed to severely restrict prisoner communication with family members, the media, the outside world. Most of the prisoners held in the CMUs have been Muslim men, but the units have also held political activists. McGowan is allowed just one visit per week, behind a glass partition.

Well, the new documentary film, *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front*, looks at this case and examines the history of the Earth Liberation Front. We're going to turn right now to an excerpt of the film.

CHUCK WERT: It was somewhere between 2:00 and 3:00 a.m. when I was home, sound asleep, and I got a phone call. And, of course, anytime you get a phone call at 2:00 a.m. in the morning, it's not good news.

It turned the office into just a fiery oven. I mean, I don't know how hot it got in here, but we had keyboards that were — I mean, you couldn't tell one key from the other. They were just melted together.

DANIEL MCGOWAN: I went up to Portland and wrote the communiqué and sent it in. Even then, it wasn't real. It was just like still like kind of this cartoonish thing. And it wasn't real until I really saw the newspapers, seeing the man from the company, I think Steve Swanson, just walking through this like charred remains. And I was just like, "Holy crap!"

STEVE SWANSON: That was a major blow to our mental psyche, at least in the short run. Just felt like a big hole in my heart.

TIM LEWIS: In Eugene, people were jazzed. When the big bad bully gets, you know, hit in the stomach and feels a little something, and maybe a little fear or whatever, that felt good.

SUZANNE SAVOIE: It was exciting. The next day I felt, you know, like, wow, I've actually done something where it stopped.

DANIEL MCGOWAN: I didn't have a problem with what I was doing. I thought it was effective. It was a million dollars or something like that. You know, it's like when you're involved with it and you're in the thick of it, it's hard to look at like all the consequences and like the real repercussions of that. Like, you know, did this action push them in a better direction? Did it scare them? Did it help the movement, in any capacity, on old-growth logging? There's lots of questions, but I don't think at the time I was asking those questions too much.

AMY GOODMAN: That was a group of people, Daniel McGowan and others, describing the firebombing of the offices of Superior Lumber, Superior Lumber president Steve Swanson, and also activist and filmmaker Tim Lewis, and former ELF activist Suzanne Savoie. Chuck Wert was also describing the night of that fire.

This is *Democracy Now!*, democracynow.org, The War and Peace Report.

Marshall Curry, you are the director of the film. Talk about the significance of this today, and explain more about why you chose to focus on the Earth Liberation Front.

MARSHALL CURRY: Well, the story sort of just dropped in my lap, actually. My wife runs a domestic violence organization in Brooklyn and came home from work one day and told me that four federal agents had walked into her office that afternoon and arrested one of her employees, this guy Daniel McGowan. And he was actually somebody who I knew a little bit through her. I had, you know, met him at the company picnics. And he was not at all what comes to my mind when I think of somebody who would be facing life in prison for domestic terrorism, as the government called it. And for me as a filmmaker, when reality clashes with a stereotype that maybe I have, that's interesting. And so, you know, Daniel, he doesn't look like a terrorist, doesn't talk like a terrorist. He grew up in Rockaway, Queens. His dad's a New York cop. He was a business major in college. And so, I just thought, how could this have happened? How could this guy have been involved in these arsons, and how could he be facing life in prison for them? And so, Sam Cullman, who's the cinematographer and co-director on the project, and I just said, "Let's try to figure it out."

AMY GOODMAN: And talk about what you found. Talk about how you structure this film.

MARSHALL CURRY: Well, over the course of five years, we — first we spent time with Daniel. So there's a — part of the movie is the time that — from the time that Daniel was arrested until the time that he went to prison, a year later. He was released on house arrest. So we got to spend a lot of time with him while he was on house arrest and really kind of probed the back story. You know, how had this kid from Rockaway, Queens, gotten involved in radical environmentalism, and how had his philosophy changed over that time?

And in some ways, his story is a story that we heard a lot when we talked to folks that were involved with the Earth Liberation Front. You know, he started off writing letters and gathering petitions and became increasingly frustrated with that, got involved in civil disobedience, felt like that was not effective. The sort of violent police response to some of that civil disobedience, I think, helped radicalize people. And eventually got involved in property destruction, you know, was part of the Black Bloc at the WTO, and finally got involved in these arsons, these big multimillion-dollar arsons.

And after participating in two arsons, he kind of had a change of heart and began to question arson as a tactic, both in terms of its effectiveness, you know, the ethics of it. And so, he moved back to New York, got involved in organizing protests against the RNC, worked at the Rainforest Foundation, and ultimately was working at my wife's domestic violence organization doing aboveground activism, when he was arrested. And these fires that he had committed years before kind of reached out from the past and grabbed him.

AMY GOODMAN: I wanted to turn to a clip of Daniel McGowan in his own words. He appeared on *Democracy Now!* June 2007, just before he began serving his seven-year term. We'll go to that in a minute, but we're going to go to break first. This is *Democracy Now!*, democracynow.org, The War and Peace Report. And when

we come back, we'll also talk to Andy Stepanian, who was held at the same prison that Daniel McGowan is being held at right now. Back in a minute.

[break]

AMY GOODMAN: We're looking at a film that just aired at the Human Rights Watch Film Festival here in New York called *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front*. Marshall Curry, the director, is with us. We're also joined by Andrew Stepanian. He was jailed at the same CMU unit that Daniel McGowan was held in for four months. Daniel McGowan has just been moved. We're also joined in Washington by Will Potter, freelance reporter who focuses on how the war on terrorism affects civil liberties.

But I wanted to go to the clip of Daniel McGowan just before he went to jail. We interviewed him on *Democracy Now!* June 2007.

DANIEL MCGOWAN: It's really hard. I'm still trying to get the big picture of all this. I definitely have regrets. I have regrets that I, you know, employed arson as a tactic. I don't think morally I'm wrong about what I did, but I do think, strategically and tactically, it was an unwise decision. I wish that I had people in my life at the time to kind of guide me back to a different path. But, you know, I was very disenchanted and very upset about what I saw. I think those feelings are legitimate, and I think young kids that have these feelings right now, and not-so-young kids, are — you know, they're legitimate thoughts, and we have to — we have to come up with ways of dealing with this crisis and stop ignoring it. And that was my message to the media that day, after sentencing, was we have to stop pretending this is all about crime and punishment and start dealing with, like, real issues, like global climate change.

AMY GOODMAN: At Daniel McGowan's sentencing hearing, June 2007, prosecutors compared him and other defendants to the Ku Klux Klan. Daniel McGowan's lawyer, Jeffrey Robinson, criticized prosecutors outside the federal courthouse in Eugene, Oregon.

JEFFREY ROBINSON: He stood in that courtroom as a representative of the United States government and told Judge Aiken that Daniel McGowan and his co-defendants were essentially the same as the terrorists from the Ku Klux Klan. That meant something to me personally as an African American. And I am disappointed that my federal government would make that kind of a comparison in a case like this. I grew up in Memphis, Tennessee, and I was born in 1956. I know something about the Ku Klux Klan and what they were about. And what they were about was murder, was killing — completely different from Daniel McGowan and these defendants.

AMY GOODMAN: The attorney for Daniel McGowan. Will Potter, author of *Green is the New Red: An Insider's Account of a Social Movement Under Siege*, is with us in Washington. Can you put this in context, Will?

WILL POTTER: Sure. This threat, this threat of animal rights and environmental activists as the number one domestic terrorism threat, according to the FBI, has been a manufactured threat. This has been manufactured since the early 1980s, when corporations created the term "ecoterrorism." And over the next several decades,

they relentlessly pushed that — in the press and in the courthouses and in Congress and congressional hearings. And so, by the time Daniel McGowan was arrested, that threat had been pretty firmly established. So the government held these national press conferences announcing a major victory in the war on terrorism and, as we heard Marshall talking about, labeling him in the courtroom with terrorism enhancement and now putting him in the CMU. So this was really the culmination of a long-running campaign by corporations to demonize their opposition and silence dissent.

AMY GOODMAN: And talk about what else you have found. I mean, in your book, *Green is the New Red*, is about the environmental movement overall. And talk about the spectrum, from the ELF to the other movements that you've covered, Will.

WILL POTTER: I think the most important thing to point out when we're talking about tactics in that spectrum is that the spectrum has been quite narrow. So when you look at other social movements, there are a wide range of tactics, from protest to leafleting, lobbying, and, across the board, physical violence. But that physical violence hasn't been a part of the animal rights or environmental movements. So we've heard about arson, but it's arson against property and empty buildings — not to say it's not a serious crime, but that these movements have made a very concerted effort to not reach that point. And so, to use the word "terrorism," which to most people automatically conjures images of violence and planes flying into buildings and murder, against groups that are actually trying to save life, I think really reflects these disproportionate policies.

AMY GOODMAN: Andy Stepanian, you were in the Marion, Illinois, unit that Daniel McGowan was in until very recently, in a CMU. Explain what that is and, well, what his experience is like there, based on your experience when you were there.

ANDREW STEPANIAN: Daniel McGowan and I were at the CMU Marion, Illinois, for about four-and-a-half months together in 2008. The CMU essentially is a prison within a prison. It's on a maximum security yard, but if people out there can imagine, there's a smaller unit within the prison itself, walled and contained, and done such a way that notes and other messages can't be passed out. All communications are closed down. You're limited to one 15-minute phone call per week and two four-hour visits per month. Daniel McGowan was able to see his wife during those visits, but it was behind glass, unlike other maximum security prisons, where you could actually interact with your families or hold your children. The CMU is different because you don't have any of that family contact anymore.

And so, it's subject to a lawsuit not only under the grounds that people that aren't of that security classification, custody levels that are federally mandated, are being held like they're supermax prisoners or the absolute worst of the worst — it's being sued for that process as well as for the processes of these people not being able to access due process. These people that are being held at the CMU don't really have — it's kind of a litigative black hole, where these people can't find their way out, because they don't have an administrative remedies process in place, set forth by the Bureau of Prisons, to actually challenge their designation to that unit.

AMY GOODMAN: Andy, talk about why you were in jail.

ANDREW STEPANIAN: I was in jail for participating in an aboveground protest campaign called the Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty campaign, where the government alleges that because of our aboveground protests, that were also shadowed by underground movements doing actions in solidarity with our aboveground movement, that our movement caused \$300 million in damages to a private biotechnology company based out of New Jersey called Huntingdon Life Sciences.

AMY GOODMAN: You weren't a part of the environmental — the Earth Liberation Front.

ANDREW STEPANIAN: No, I was not. However, upon my designation to the CMU, they listed me as a leader in the Animal Liberation Front, which was news to me when I arrived. I guess that they needed to kind of pad my paperwork to say that I actually was a terrorist when I arrived.

AMY GOODMAN: And so, who is held there? You were there. Daniel McGowan was there. But you represent the minority.

ANDREW STEPANIAN: In a nutshell, people that are held there are very politically charged cases, cases that are either the focus of scrutiny by the media or cases that the government doesn't want to be dragged through the media. So, the majority of the people that are held there, roughly 67 percent of them, are Muslim Americans and Arab nationals. The remainder is this kind of hodgepodge of people that are environmental activists, animal rights activists, tax protesters like Edward Brown, antiwar tax protesters, and some people from right-wing hate groups.

AMY GOODMAN: And talk about your interaction with the other prisoners. The majority of the prisoners there are Muslim?

ANDREW STEPANIAN: Majority of the prisoners there are Muslim. Like I said, this remainder is this hodgepodge. Compared to the prison yard where I was — I only spent six-and-a-half months of my three-year prison sentence at the CMU. Where I was before that was a medium-high security, general population prison, where there were fights, you know, at least once a week. There was violence, not like what's depicted on television, but there was regular violence, and I had to be aware of it and prepare myself for it.

When I arrived at the CMU, it was peaceful. Everyone worked together. Everyone showed a great deal of solidarity with one another. There was no violence. And above all else, I kind of had my stereotypes of what people that are labeled normally as terrorists kind of broken once I arrived. I saw people that were labeled as members of al-Qaeda that, at the moment I arrived there, were asking me what they can get me in the way of food. They knew I was a vegetarian. They wanted to be able to give me products that I was able to eat. They gave me shower shoes. None of this was because they wanted to indoctrinate me. It was simply because they wanted to support me when I arrived at the unit with nothing in my hands. And this was this kind of camaraderie that was at the unit. Everyone showed respect for one another

and also respect for the guards, which was pretty much unheard of in any other unit where I was beforehand.

AMY GOODMAN: Why are you able to speak out about the CMUs for the first time? We had you on before, Andy. You were the first person to be released from the CMU, but you couldn't speak openly about it at the time.

ANDREW STEPANIAN: During the time when I was on the air last, I was on probation. And I could be violated by my probation officer for not committing a crime, but rather for speaking to the media about things that were sensitive to the government. Between that time and now, there have been exposés into the CMU that have leaked who the people are that are actually there. My lawyer was concerned that if I mentioned the people that I actually had emotional ties with, people that I played chess with or people that I worked out with on the yard, that I was going to be subpoenaed to a grand jury about al-Qaeda investigations, simply because of what I had been through in being subjected to these individuals. I'm not Muslim myself, and I don't have any sympathy for terrorism of any sort. However, my lawyer was concerned that I was going to be roped into a larger investigation, and by default, as an activist, I wouldn't want to cooperate with authorities. So I took the avenue of not talking about it until I got clearance to do so.

AMY GOODMAN: The film aired last night here in New York, Marshall, *If a Tree Falls*. You have been applauded both by the Earth Liberation Front and by the district attorney.

MARSHALL CURRY: Right. I mean, the film really — it's not a polemical film. It's a film about an important issue, and we really try to understand that issue from all the different sides. And, you know, we spoke to folks whose businesses were burned by the Earth Liberation Front. And from their perspective, they didn't know who these people were that were doing this, and they didn't know whether their house was going to get burned down or whether — you know, they really did feel fear. You know, people like Daniel say this was not terrorism, that this was the Boston Tea Party: symbolic property destruction designed to draw attention to things that people weren't paying attention to. But it's not an easy issue, I mean. And so, it's been interesting both understanding this question of terrorism but also understanding the sort of mechanics that radicalize people, because, you know, the film is kind of designed to be a cautionary tale to activists to think clearly about the tactics that they take, kind of the ethics and the effectiveness of different types of tactics, and also a cautionary tale to law enforcement to think about the way that they respond to activism, because there are responses that radicalize people and responses that bring people into democracy.

AMY GOODMAN: I mean, the images of the police, I mean, looking like they're performing a surgical operation, when they're peeling back the eyelids of — I remember playing this for years on *Democracy Now!* as it was happening, pulling back the eyelids and applying pepper spray to the inner lids of people who were peacefully on the ground.

MARSHALL CURRY: It's breathtaking. I mean, it really is. And, you know, when you play it for a room full of people, there are gasps.

AMY GOODMAN: Very quickly, the informant who first recorded Daniel McGowan, his name and who he was.

MARSHALL CURRY: So, Jake Ferguson was actually the person who did the very first Earth Liberation Front arson in the United States and had been involved in many, many fires. And when he was brought in for questioning by the government, he believed that they had more information than in fact they did, and agreed to cooperate. And so, the government flew him around the country, getting him together with his old friends, who had put arson behind them years before, and getting them to talk on tape. He would wear a wire and get them to talk on tape about the actions that they had been involved in. And so, he was kind of the crack that broke open this group.

AMY GOODMAN: Will Potter, talk about the use of informants.

WILL POTTER: It's been pervasive. And what we found in Daniel McGowan's case and in many others is that they weren't broken by following leads or law enforcement investigations. They put pressure on someone through the power of fear to make them turn informant and to have them testify against their friends. And that's really a theme we've seen throughout these cases, is the government manipulating this fear, using the word "terrorism," using outrageous prison sentences, using new legislation to intimidate these social movements and try to get people to turn against each other.

AMY GOODMAN: The ultimate message, Marshall, that you want people to take away from this film?

MARSHALL CURRY: Think carefully. I mean all different types of people. I was a religion major when I was in college and really wanted to figure out if there was a god and how we should live our lives. And when I was graduating, one of my friends said to me, "You know, I'm still confused, but just at a higher level." And in some ways I think a lot of these questions about what sort of activism is appropriate and how we should respond are complicated. And I'm just hoping that it prompts more conversation.

AMY GOODMAN: Andy Stepanian, we have 10 seconds. Same question to you.

ANDREW STEPANIAN: I guess, in terms of his film, it follows an emotional arc of Daniel's life. He was motivated by compassion, by what he saw happening in the forest with clearcut. The same thing that draw him to help battered women at Women's Law Collective is what motivated him. He was motivated by compassion. I could say the same thing for the men that were at the CMU. A lot of them are motivated by compassion. People like Ghassan Elashi is motivated by charity, Yassin Aref. These people are involved with charitable causes. People should question this moniker of terrorism and support prisoners.

AMY GOODMAN: Well, Andy Stepanian, I want to thank you for being with us. Marshall Curry, *If a Tree Falls* is the name of the film. And Will Potter, *Green is the New Red* is his book.

Lectures

10/31/2016 - Former Political Prisoners Panel

Synopsis

<https://thefinalstrawradio.noblogs.org/post/2016/11/13/naabc-former-political-prisoners-panel-2016-pt-1/>

<https://thefinalstrawradio.libsyn.com/pt-2-former-political-prisoners-panel-2016>

The Final Straw Radio

Oct. 31, 2016

Here we present the first half of the Former Prisoner Panel of the 2016 North American Anarchist Black Cross Conference. During the hour, you'll hear words from Sekou Kombui, Daniel McGowan, John Tucker, Kazi Toure.

These speeches will be prefaced by some brief introductions, the texts of which can be found below. This audio will air soon as a radio episode. For more info on political prisoners in the U.S., check out denverabc.wordpress.com or nycabc.wordpress.com

Sekou Kimbui:

Sekou is a former political prisoner who survived 47 years of incarceration. Throughout the 1960's, Sekou participated in the Civil Rights movement, organizing youth for participating in demonstrations and marches across Alabama, and providing security for meetings of the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC), Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Sekou became affiliated with the Black Panther Party in 1967 in Chicago and New York. While in Detroit, he became a member of the Republic of New Afrika, before returning to Birmingham. Back in Alabama, Sekou coordinated community organization activity with the Alabama Black Liberation Front, the Inmates for Action (IFA) Defense Committee and the Afro-American People's Party in the mid 1970's. Sekou was also a soldier in the Black Liberation Army (BLA) during these years before his capture.

In 1975, Sekou was falsely arrested and charged with the murder of two white men: a KKK official from Tuscaloosa and a multimillionaire oil man from Birmingham. There was absolutely no evidence against him, only coerced testimony from individuals who subsequently recanted their statements. The judge refused to allow the recanted statements to be stricken from Sekou's record. Sekou continued the fight throughout his time in Prison. On June 30th, 2014, Sekou was released on parole.

Daniel McGowan:

Daniel is an environmental and social justice activist from New York City. He was charged in Federal court on counts of arson, property destruction and conspiracy, all relating to two actions in Oregon in 2001, claimed by the Earth Liberation Front (ELF). McGowan was facing a minimum of life in prison if convicted when he accepted a non-cooperation plea agreement. His arrest is part of what the US government dubbed Operation Backfire; a coordinated, multi-state sweep of over 15 activists by the federal government who have charged the individuals with practically every earth and animal liberation action in the Pacific Northwest left unsolved. Many have considered this round up indicative of the government's 'Green Scare' focus which has activists being arrested and threatened with life in prison. Many of the charges, including Daniel's, were for crimes whose statute of limitations were about to expire. Daniel was released from prison on December 11, 2012.

John Tucker:

John was one of five antifascists arrested in May 2012, after an altercation between white supremacists and antifascists in the Chicago suburb of Tinley Park that left ten injured fascists, three of which needed hospitalization. The case of the Tinley Park 5 received an overwhelming amount of public support. Despite the fact that the meeting was organized by violent white supremacist organizations including the National Socialist Movement, Council of Conservative Citizens, and Ku Klux Klan, the state showed their cozy relationship with white supremacy by refusing the accused antifascist activist bail or a plea deal comparable to any other criminal defendant in Cook County. In January 2013 the Tinley Park Five accepted a non-cooperating plea deal. John Tucker was released in February 2014. As of September 2014, all of the TP5 are released. This audio will air soon as a radio episode.

Kazi Toure:

As a member of the United Freedom Front (UFF), Kazi was imprisoned for his role in 20 bombings combating Apartheid in South Africa and United States Imperialism in Central America. The UFF has been called "undoubtedly the most successful of the leftist [guerrilla groups] of the 1970s and '80s" and struck powerful blows to South African Airways, Mobil, IBM, Union Carbide, & various courthouses and US Military targets. Toure was convicted on federal charges of possession of firearms, and Seditious Conspiracy—conspiring to overthrow, put down, destroy by force and violence the US government. He is one of few, if any, New Afrikans to be charged of this act.

In the question and answer portion, we hear from Sekuo Kombui, Kazi Toure, John Tucker and Daniel McGowan about their thoughts on incarceration in the U.S., steps forward in resistance, violence in struggle and sources of hope among other things. For info on these prisoners, check out the above link for short bios.

Transcription

Part 1

BURSTS: This is the Final Straw Radio now burst to goodness. Here we present the first half of the former prisoner panel of the 2016 N American Anarchist Black Cross Conference. During the hour, you'll hear words from Sekuo Kombui, Daniel McGowan, John Tucker and Kazi Toure. This audio will air soon as a radio episode.

STEPHANIE: Welcome to the 7th annual former political prisoner panel. Thanks for coming, so we're going to start with a brief introduction and then they're each going to talk about each panelist. We're going to talk about turtles. They've been involved in their cases and their time. But their support was like, well, they were inside and what it was like coming out and anything else we want to talk about. And we have time, Tucker. They could come. Between Daniel McGowan and hopefully Kathy Turay and when he arrives from the airport.

Sekuo Kombui

So we're gonna start with take. Thank you is a new African and Cherokee former political prisoner who survived 47 years of incarceration back in 1960s, taking participated in the civil rights movement, organizing youth for participation for participating in demonstrations and marches across Alabama, and providing security for meetings. Of the Southern Christian Leadership Council, Congress of Racial Equality and the student. Nonviolent coordinating comma. They became affiliated with the Black Panther Party in 1967 in Chicago and. New York While in Detroit he became a member of the Republic of New Africa before returning to Birmingham back in Alabama. State of coordinated Community organization activity with the Alabama Black Liberation Front, the inmates for action. Defense Committee and the Afro American Afro American. People's Party in the mid 1970s.

Sacred was also a soldier in the Black Liberation Army during the years before his capture in 1975, Sikan was falsely arrested and charged with the murder of two white men, KKK official from Tuscaloosa and a multimillionaire oil man from Birmingham. There was absolutely no evidence against him, only coerced testimony. From individuals who subsequently recanted their statements, the judge refused to allow the recanted statements to be stricken from seconds record. He continued to fight throughout his time in prison. On June 20th, 2014, Seiku was released on parole.

SEKUO: I didn't say Cook Camboy formerly incarcerated political prisoner, as you heard, I spent four or seven years in prison within Alabama failing system. But that is not the beginning. Of my life I have been involved in civil rights movement pretty much all of my life. I started in 1955 after the 1954 decision of. Brown versus the Board of Education won by Thurgood Marshall abolishing separate but equal and

ordering. Schools around the country to become integrated. Students who made a. A pluses will have were recruited around the country. Some of them became notorious because there were government officials. Police who protested and sought to construct their integrated schools in their particular city and state. Fortunately, I went to Detroit and there I was able to imitate the bear elementary school without any problems and without any harassment without any abuse. How does that relationship form with the civil rights Organization of that era? Southern Fishing Leadership Conference, comma racial equality, student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. I became undesirable with Jehovah. And eventually a victim will cointerra wrong. After a few years. Of training. I'll send back S again with the Freedom rides. Marches, civil demonstrations. I was very popular among the young of my time and so I was able to develop relationships. That allow me to help organize them in the community to support the efforts of the civil rights organizations of that time. In that area across the South, wherever we were and was in Mississippi and Alabama Georgia excellent all across the South, we travel. In later years I became disgruntled somewhat and became a member of the Black Panther Party. I wasn't really too good turning the other cheek. So I became involved with so-called militant organizations that. Or radical in philosophy, politics and ideology and. Became a non black counterpart of the self-defense. As Jay Hoover and the LPI. Enhance their assaults against the Black Panther Party out of that relationship with form the Black Liberation Army. Which part? Becoming a part of the like Liberation Army Provisional. Government of the. Republic made me a target. For Jehovah and Cohen temple. As a result of that attempts were made on my life and the life friends associated with me in the movement. But as you see, I survived him. Although I'm bears and moons. From stars mentally and physically. But the idea is, is that all? They did was motivate me more to be more determined. More more active. More inclined to search out new ways of understanding how to be a contributing constructive participant in civil rights movement. And so for quite a number of years. A trial of the cause. The country participating as a representative of these organizations did not mention. Until I was captured. And placed in prison. In the late 60s. Jim Hoover was determined to kill us, defame us, destroy us, or imprison us. Consequently, I ended up in prison. Two years after entering prison House state. Over the 27 years of my imprisonment, I escaped about 3/4 times. During which time, since I was on escaping on the ground, I continued my work with the liberation struggle. Throughout the country. I became known. As very. Influential brother in Chicago. In all my life I. Sometimes look back and say was it worth the sacrifices of my life that's been made? But when I went and. Travel around the country. Having just come up to in which I came through. Here and not long. With the way of planning for freedom. Talking about mass incarceration. Political prisoners and why they should be freed. Children in poverty. Human trafficking, sex and labor trafficking. People are being. Held hostage in prison far too long. All of this equal genocide. We are a people who understand and respect the need to have more freedom in our life. To grow, grow our children in in a humane. So struggling containings. As I shared with some brothers and sisters around

the country, our revolution area does not get a vacation. He has an obligation. He has a duty. To be his brother's keeper. To provide the right example for our. Youth who will. Restrain too much of the time as we all know. From direct and indirect experience. So these days, having finally managed to influence enough. Know worthy people around the country who protested and demanded my release. Also, Denver, ABC. And other ABC groups around the country contributed to my being free today. So I never would like I never want to miss an opportunity to say up close and personal that all that sacrifices all that helpless in my behalf. To see me free, to insist that Noah. Is not an. Option for the state of Alabama and denying. Me my freedom. It will be a cherished memory. Our chairs relationship. And very much appreciate it. I wanted them to know personally that. Nothing they've done for me to cure my needs. Helped me when I was in trouble in prison. Wardens would threaten to kill me and. To ride. Make phone calls, write letters and sign petitions demanding that they have clean hands off their food. I don't know that situation. There have been many of my brothers who were murdered in prison. Black skate alive. Of course, you noticed him because I'm. Sitting before you today. I am no longer an inclusion. Or a formerly incarcerated political prisoner? And so my objective, my goals, my my plan, my reason for. Being here is to open up dialogue with people of the community of the various and sundry groups. Call our communities. We want to abolish racism. We want to abolish. We would like to see the abolition of prisons and we know that people say, well, we need. There will be. Many alternatives open to us to consider. Encouraging our legislators to establish. Yes, some people. May need incarceration. Or some kind of treatment? Why not provide it to them? You're taking the taxpayers money anyway, and supply that. Use it. Meaningfully constructively, by actively providing opportunities for an Envision will become habilitative. Overcome the indignity of being ignorant. Of his responsibility to his role in society. Again, I'd like to say humbled. Returning invitation that was sent out for me to come back here and be part of this. I hope that something about my life will serve as an inspiration or motivation for you. To recognize that in your sales is the key to our liberation across the country, across racial lines and ethnic lines. You know political lines and philosophy and ideology that we have different. That's like. We're not supposed to be all alike. But we are supposed to recognize in ourselves the capabilities of being respectful and. Kind, courteous, and encouraging one another. And the helping hand here and there. In the community, or if your communities. Set up programs that help the elderly and the young. Teach them what they need to know and understand and how to survive police terrorism. Police terrorism. Police terrorism. Thank you.

John Tucker

STEPHANIE: Thanks again, next is John Tucker. John was one of five anti fascists arrested in May 2012 after an altercation between white supremacists and anti

fascists in the Chicago suburb. Of Tinley Park. That left 10 fascists in injured and three of them. In the hospital. The case of the Tinley Park 5 received an overwhelming amount of public support, despite the fact that the meeting was organized by violent white supremacist organizations, including the National Socialist Front Council of Conservative Citizens and the Ku Klux Klan, the state showed their cozy relationship with white supreme. By refusing the accused anti-fascist activist bail or plea deal comparable to any other criminal defendant in Cook County. In January 2013, the Tinley Park 5 accepted a non cooperating plea deal. John was released in February, February of 2014. As of September of 2014, all the TV funds have been released.

JOHN: Thank you. I don't normally do these speaking events as she said I'm a member of the anti-fascist organization to heavily harm the who's your anti racism. Our goal is to pick up the most violent and most mobile. Of fascist organizations and silence them with a variety of attacks. Oftentimes these underframes disqualifications. They tend to make the news. We tend to be very open interactions. And yes, it's being part a little bit and you go ahead and start with. The reason I joined. I've been involved in altercations involving fascists for a good portion of my. Life my family is. Mixed Middle Eastern and European also have. Some mixed new African family. Members as well. Growing up racism is just a simple fact of life, especially in India. Oftentimes it was called. Tell my cousins, other family members interact with these people as I. Build stations tend to grow a bit more. Eight years ago, I don't know with the organizations you want with other like minded individuals. The altercation that I was arrested for, we tracked for a few months and they changed the venues. Our information on the inside has changed repeatedly, so the story is a bit. There's enough feel according to the rulebook. My particular role in that was to make sure that everybody that was involved on our side made it out OK. I was the Anchorman. After being arrested. And going to Cook County, the world's largest single site jail facility for. Those that don't know. The treatment was sporadic, it was heavily modified by the press. The lawyers of National Lawyers Guild and. The very large support of people supporting the political prisoners they received the mail that we received drew. A lot of attention, a lot of. Notoriety which ended up being a good thing. It allowed us to. Open up conversation with the inmates on the inside. It was a physical proof of actual support, along with commissary donations, et cetera. That allowed me to keep people out of the gating cycles of Cook County. they were and that's best having to go to a game for the initial was so your toothpaste, your literal basic hygiene products. With the support of various organizations, I was able to keep enough on hand to keep people out of those particular circles. Outside of Cook County. Again, media support helped out. I was able to receive phone calls etcetera, so great. Just based on the nature of the case and the nature of the media. And again, the large amounts of mail we tend to get those in very large packets as they hold. Them and review them. Before delivering them to us. Outside of them. Post release let there be the news had died down. It was not so much about who. We're on. Whenever we got on the transitioning back to normal life. I guess you'd say no, why? It ended up going fairly smoothly. Due to

local support, I was able to acquire a job and live fairly peacefully. And this is my first weekend. That's about all I've got.

Daniel McGowan

STEPHANIE: Thanks John. OK. Next we have Daniel McGowan. Daniel's environmental and social justice activist from Queens, NY. He was charged in 2005 with 15 counts of arson, property destruction and conspiracy, all related to two actions in Oregon in 2000. Daniel is facing a minimum of. Life in prison if convicted when he accepted a. Non cooperating plea agreement. He received a seven-year. Sentence and did most of it. In two communication management units. His arrest is part of what the US government dubbed Operation Backfire a coordinated. Multi state sweep. Of over 15 activists by the federal government who charged the individuals with nearly every earth and Animal liberation action in the Pacific Northwest. To left, left unsolved. Many have considered this rundown indicative of the government's green scare. Focus, which had activists. Been arrested and threatened with life in. Prison many of the charges, including Daniels, were for crimes since statute of limitations were about to expire. Daniel was released from prison in December 2012 and was on probation for three years until June of 2016. He has worked with the New York City anarchist Black Cross, the Civil Liberties Defense Center, and the National Lawyers Guild parole Preparation project and political prisoner committees. Daniel is on the certain days, freedom for political prisoners calendar collected. This is his first. Trip to Denver.

DANIEL: Little nervous, sorry, I actually took. Notes this time but. I want to thank everyone for. Having me here and coming. Out on a Friday night. Sure, there's a lot of other things you could be doing tonight, like Stephanie said. It's my first trip to Denver and I'm really honored to share the stage. That say KU and John Tucker. And let's say cool a few months ago in New York, and it was pretty amazing. I still get a little blown away when people that I used to fold trifold copies of, say, choose Flyers like 15 years ago and then to meet them. it's really amazing to see you on. This side of the wall. As Stephanie said, my name is Daniel McGowan. I'm from New York City and I spent the last 11 years or so. Caught up in the in. The legal system. Was indicted in late 2005 and I spent around six years in prison and I just got off 3 years probation in. June my case grew out of participation in actions claimed by the Earth Liberation Fund in the year 2001 was a company that sold. Excuse me, so the old old growth would come from ancient forests and the other was a tree farm alleged by science who have been site genetic modified tree farm experiments. Not here to talk so much about my case. Some of you may have seen the documentary about my case. It's an interesting snapshot, I guess, albeit from the perspective of a liberal progressive filmmaker guy, and it's definitely interesting, but he gets a lot, you know. Of course I wasn't going to like all of it, so. But I want to talk about the continuing importance and need for political prisoners support. Obviously it would be the first to say that

at this point post imprisonment. I'm a little biased and I have an inclination towards engaging in this. Sort of work. I mean I was a beneficiary of a really outstanding support from not just my friends, my close friends, but my family and the movement which like essentially spoiled me rotten for years. With insane amounts of support on every level. I'm still to this day I have my letters. I have about 7 boxes of letters that I refused to get rid of and everyone's always laughing at because you're just sitting there in my room and you know, on tough days I pull them out and read them. I check all the emails, I've just always like stunned to see like the level of care and sort of love that was thrown my way. So obviously I'm biased. I think there should be really strong political prisoner support. I have code feminists inside, still one is in the halfway house in Portland. The other one is in a medium security prison in Louisiana and he is going to the halfway house soon. But obviously they're going to be out of the system soon, and. There's still a. Whole lot of. People I think need to come home. But I will. Say my involvement in political prisoners sport predates my incarceration in the late 90s, I got politicized, sort of animal rights and environmental movement and very early on found myself engaged and eco animal liberation prisoner sport. I started. A group called. North American Earth Liberation prisoners support their work. We did a lot of. Build on support on cases like. Jeff Lewis, who you guys? Probably know Jeff free lures and. And a whole. Lot of other cases, people that were. At the moment. Didn't you know that had not gotten any sentences like Jeff or Marius Mason in 20 plus years, but we're doing, you know, smaller 235 year sentences, all very real amount of time. But just different and, and I'll say it always made sense to me to base our support. For people in prison for what they are in there for, because I think. Not necessarily their ideological identification or their words. What people do is verifiable. It could be checked, it could be, it could be verified. It could be looked at, criticized, turned upside down. The one thing I found when I was. Inside is that people. 's words are just that they're theory. They could just people. I've got a lot of millionaires in the federal prison system. Also have a lot of anarchists that I will be looking at their tattoos and just dumbfounded. They have clearly racist tattoos so they be. Telling me that they're an anarchist. But more so it's not like I want to say who we need to support. We don't need support, obviously. I'm very strong and supportive, supporting political prisoners, but. Not, that's not obviously what. The end of my my thoughts on it. But I think supporting people from the movement would come from or. Movements that you have admiration and respect for, like for. Instance, you know? Black nationalists or or? Earlier movements, anti imperialist political prisoners. It gives the very very message to people that are coming out to be to your comrades in the movement that if you are outside, if you're struggling we. Have your back. And that has sort of been the one thing that that was the one thread of all the support that I received and was inside it was this this constant feeling of people have my back that I was 1500 miles away at most times and I would be put on a bus somewhere. And yet I knew I would get to this location and would be there for one day and there'd be, they call me. How legal is? It how the hell do you have a legal visit like you haven't been in front. Of the phone for

two weeks and then. some rain. NLG lawyer is in Oklahoma City, pulled me out of the cell and checking in on me and telling me about the representing winter felt here in the 70s, and at least the oldies. It used to be like you people have. A tracking device somebody. Because they be getting up. We know we're trying to figure out when the. BOP so-called inmate locator updated. Like what time zone it was? Because you'd. Be checking it. Out by actually telling me we check. It at 12. 01 we check it at at one. AM we're always trying to figure out. Where the computer is. Because as soon as that time, like you know. You're paying the updates in once a day, so your family and your friends are checking that damn thing and hitting refresh all the time, hoping that at that moment it's going to tell. You, you know, but I would find out like. They find out where I was and then I'd get a legal. Visit and was always it always do them. Online, but the idea that we. Have your back that you can go underground and you can do these actions that you can do the kind of things that John and. See who were. Involved in confronting Nazis. You know, suddenly becoming fashionable. Talk about all right? And all this nonsense. Obviously John's cases from years ago and people like harm and anti-racist action. Have been engaged in this. Since like since I've been involved in the activists and that's going on 20 years. I definitely remember the 90s was like a really high point in anti-racist action all over the place.

But other than that I just want to give some. Examples of support that I got at various times because I have sort. Of this For me it felt like a very long, harrowing journey. In retrospect, I look at other cases and I think. To myself I. Don't know how people survived, but I think it's just that you were surviving day. By day and week. By week So I was on pretrial release and I was I was indicted and basically snatched up from my workplace, shipped across the country and my my friends, my family. Had no idea what. Was going on, but eventually my basically three people in my family put up their houses and got me out on a essentially was a property bond. I was on house arrest, very strict house arrest and it was, you know, was like I was allowed out of the house like one hour a week and so my friends in New York basically just roasted vacation and essentially, you know, in some kind of informal way made sure that I wasn't just sitting staring at the wall, getting depressed about my case. Coming by constantly bringing movies, bringing food one of the biggest things that they did was fundraising and engaging in court support, making sure that every time I had to go to court. That courtroom was full. And not the judge. And the take prosecutors saw saw that like yeah, this person is like people are watching. You're not going to disappear. When I was inside. Like Stephanie said, I did most of my time. Probably like 70% of my time in this. These wack communication management units, which were very restrictive with my mail with my what was coming in and was going out. Visits were behind glass. There's a lot online about these places. They still exist, unfortunately. But I swear I would. I would when I got to the CMU the first couple days didn't get anything and then I get called into the I get called into the office and the and the cops like this is going to be like this all the time and I'm like what he's like. Take that and it's like, no crates of mail, and it's just books and letters and. Postcards and it was like it really

impressed. Upon me like I was just in a I was in a bad space. I was like. I'm going to this unit. I'm two years into. My bid and I'm going to spend the next. God knows how much time. Five years, six years, and maybe I'll lose good time catch. Who knows, I didn't really know what this place. Well for me, but that kind of message, that kind of it cannot be overstated. The importance of sending people now. This obviously applies to anyone inside mail letters, postcards. All these things that seem really mundane to you is not mundane. I mean to this day. I mean I I. I keep thinking. When I do. These letters scan I want. To get it intern or something. Do something with them or I'm just going to save. Them and so you know. At a certain point, Department of Justice put out their head on the platform and said we're going to ask for public comment about the CMU. The communication management units, my lawyers, my friends, they end up submitting like 1500 comments. You know, it's just like every opportunity that they had. They just hit back at these people. They allow me to. Publish a bunch of articles. Get my own voice out there, so obviously part. Of the communication management unit was. Given that the assignments and people, it's like you. Couldn't give you a shot you. Didn't do anything wrong or against the stupid rules, but we're going to just kind of throw you in this unit with a bunch of other dudes, political Muslims, political prisoners, random sovereign citizen, racist fools. And then we're just going to go to the hotspots like it was. Interesting lunchtime conversations, I'll say that. That's a whole nother talk but again, like. I mean I. My friends used to. Joke that they were going to make like one of those heavy metal T-shirts. From the 80s. Like with all the tours and, but instead of the tour it. Was going to be the different joints that. I had been. At at one point, they're like how many? Different places, and when you're in transit. In the federal system, they just got you jumping from place to place. It's ridiculous two days here. One day you wake up. You don't know. Where you are, it's. 2:00 AM like you gotta go to discharge at 2:00 AM to get on the bus at 5:00 AM, and it's completely like deprivation they have. I mean, I think the. Number is like 17 or something. And many of. These places, like I said I would I. I went to I was. Getting a rain in Eugene and like. I have friends bursting into court like looking for me. I go to Dublin, I'm in transit Dublin, CA, obviously and Wisconsin and always just random lawyers which just do favors. And show up and pull me out of the out of the shoe, because invariably I'm in solitary. Went on in transit so pull me out. Just, you know, and I got. I have no legal business with these people, but it's like a conversation with someone. It's like a break from the monotony of staring at the wall or doing pushups and burpees and in the cell or whatever you know. I'll save my final my final part and this is the part where, like I found like for lack of a better term than. Enter his movement getting. A little better at this topic. But this is it's. It's really logistical right? Like what I'm talking about is post prison support so. A lot of us. Maybe we cut our team doing support for people that have been down. You know 30-40 years. A lot of you know until recently, into 2014, fifteen a lot of those people didn't get out. We've seen a wave of them come out, which is amazing, but we also have our own folks, our own comrades going in on I'll say shorter bids 3/5. 10 not short. And all of a sudden. We're doing, you know, John.

And I were talking about like how. At one point it was like all. These people from. Illinois like you. Had the Tinley Park 5 and Jeremy Hammond NATO three really the 8:05 you had a bunch of micro defendants so it's easier because most of the snitch. So no problem. You don't have to worry about their support, but. You know there's a few of us. Well, it's. True, they're out, I guess I don't care but. But you know it. You know, I've. I've participated in some of this work. You know this like trying to figure out how to help people and a lot of it. Is very localized. You know the jobs and the housing is very localized, but the green vaccine localized and that's something where I think we've done better. And like understanding that like when people come home, they might not like I was not functional at all and I did six years and I always. Myself, that's not that long. People inside always tell me stuff, stop saying that. Down three life sentences it was just always tell me stop displaying your sentence. It's real. You're 35 years old at the time and it's a good portion of your life. And I'm like once I heard that I was like cool but yeah people are. Coming out and we're. Getting better at it. So I came. Home and I think. Like any anyone about to come home, you have big ideas about how life is going. To be, it's going to be perfect. You know everything's going to be good. In my case, I will state like. You you can't anticipate the level. Of change and so something that just getting used to the change was like shocking for me. And again I'm talking about six years. But I also live in this like ridiculous. City that is just like constantly destroying and recreating itself. New York City like just you know it, it moves out of pace that I just. Can't deal with but. I came home. I was at halfway House. For six months. During like halfway through that period, cops decided or the feds. Decided they want. To remand me into custody so. You know, I'm. At the halfway House, it's very loosey. Goosey I just dropped a corner in and. Tell my lawyer. I don't have a work pass tomorrow. Something's wrong. Next thing I know, the next you know, I tell my lawyers like I'm gonna call you every half hour tomorrow morning. We'll see what happens, and of course I missed one of my calls. My lawyers. I instantly know what's. Come on and basically they show up the next day and they're like, no. You're going home today and I was like, yeah, going home. I'm my sentence doesn't. Until you know December like no, you're going home today because we've been working. We were here last night before you even got here trying to get you out. This was total, you know. I basically got a shot for something that hadn't been against their own policy for five years. It was for writing an article they actually used to have a policy where you couldn't use they. They used this term right under a byline I. I guess they were trying to allege that I made money off writing for the Huffington Post. I mean, it's just like you hit submit. It's the open publisher, so there's no money involved. At all so. But yeah, my lawyers and my support crew was funny like I had been out for a few months, but my support crew like instantly just dusted off the dust and just went right back into. Now I got back. I mean I was back like the next day. I was like holy crap, look at all these emails and they just like we started that in in a nutshell. I was really like for. Me thinking oh I'm out. But like these people are still in my life. They're still like they got my back. And finally, I'll just say,

you know, like four months out, I had a pretty severe crisis, just like a real breakdown. And like I was really like, you know, no one wants to admit this stuff. Get down. It's really hard and I still. He's three years out, I still struggle like crazy with like anxiety. And like I mean, coming here, I flew by myself here, which we used to be not really a big deal, but I got all this stress. Yeah, like. Are they is today I get pulled out of the line. And what happens if I miss this flight and now I gotta call Denver and be like yeah I got pull out of line all this like anxiety right? So I have to kind of breakdown basically and I don't know technically if that's what it was, but I was doing really bad, like unable to go to work like all that. And like people stepped up immediately and got like a therapist, a therapist basically. Like providing me, and she's a she's a radical providing me with like. Free healthcare like? Mental health for like 3 years. You know, until recently, actually. And we just we. She moved so. And that was like one of the biggest things. That's not, that's not the easy I mean. Obviously donated money on like one of these. You carrying sites or whatever. Much easier than. That, but if you are in. A city where people are getting out. Which obviously you are. This is the kind of work that. You can do like really it's. It's very specific to the person. But like it's. Super important and this was like a friend of a friend. You know it was like somebody looking through their address book and going oh sound. So as a social worker, I'm gonna reach out and this person's in crisis and that you know that was all all that was too. But I can go on. I can go on. Forever about like my. Crew, they went by the name family and friends. And gone and. And also, you know, New York City anarchist Black Cross was essentially my political support when I was in the we did a lot of like work together, publishing and struggling about the CU but. Really their support it made all the difference. And I think. All these prisoners we're talking about, whether they identify as political prisoner or not, whether your comrades and inside prison rebels, your friends, your family, they all deserve support and we have a real responsibility to our to our comrades have their back and to let them know that there is a safety net there. And that's what I do with this. Like if you know you. Have a safety net. You might be more prepared to jump then. Obviously we don't need to jump some. Right, so I just want to thank Denver ABC for having me and everyone here for coming out. Also say, just to reiterate, I sorry about the. Flow, but I got these calendars. It's a collective I work on. It's a fundraiser for prisoners. It's actually a fundraiser for a Palestinian political prisoner. We called out of. Here you know there's like 10,000 like people in Israeli jails on like terrorism cases. It's for rap, which is a New York, NY State group release people in prison honestly is fundamentally change in the way things are going in New York right now. Issues and there's this. The third beneficiary is unit in which is a camp and indigenous blockade in Canada. That's going into, I think, their third year. On the counter. Is \$12.00. So see me if you want one. There's a lot of free information over there, but thank you. Everyone for insulting me.

Kazi Toure

STEPHANIE: So Kathy is here. I don't have an intro for cozy and probably won't do it justice, so I'll let him introduce himself and then after coffee talk, the food is here, so I'll take. A few minutes to get. Food and then come back here and answer.

KAZI: It was good to see y'all man, sorry. You know we did a. Best bunch of accidents on the road. Anyways, my name is Kasey Toy. I'm a former political president with locked up caption 19. On 1982 And I have been in Boston. I grew up in New Hampshire. You know that. Let's freestyle stick. And, you know, believe in all this stuff, you know, you know, like. Going up, believing that you know we got certain. Amounts of our rights. My pursuit of happiness and so. And then I got out of high school. I graduated high school. I went looking for that stuff, you know. I mean, you know what it did? You know, I went out. I got out to California and go to College in in Berkeley, opening area 69 and linked up with the Panther Party that was rolling. And got a good education. And the way things should really have. And what was happening? After that I went back east with some. Some just made-up stuff and. Bank robbery and stuff like that and then. And started. Around that time, you know a lot of things just happened inside the prisons, and George had written this both his books and it was 1970. Angela was on one and you know, so it's a lot of a lot of things happening inside. And consciousness just continue to grow and. So when I got out a lot of time just before I got out, I read in the newspaper about this brother, you know, Mama, who was putting a package down one of the pigs dies, you know, and it went off and pulled his fingers, got blown off and he ended up getting captured. Back in jail. But I wanted to find out who this person was, you know. So like when I got out, got in touch with some people. They have the prison organization doing work up there and. We got a hold of them. They were going. On visits. And asked them to take me on a visit to someone to talk to them and went in.

It's not so that young asked him if he was going to be detained in the same activity when he got out. And he said yes. And I said, well, I'll be. Waiting for you tonight. Yeah, that's how we like to go. From there. I don't know like I was working with this organization called in other People's Foundation and we were doing we were giving money to people organizing and I was in charge of like the New England and the New England chapters. So all the plants that will come in. Going on in London, I got to see you know what was going on and what wasn't going on and around that time maybe. I've been there maybe a year or. So and Young came out. And so we we got together. This slide already hooked up a couple of study groups. People who are serious about moving. And to my work. And I looked around, you know, this is a lot of times I like to use analogy about bicycle wheel and spokes. And you know, with like activity and stuff that's going on. He spoke might represent different part of the movement. You know, but if all the folks aren't there, that will turn this successful, you'll get out of whack and morning riding the bike with that wheel like that. And out. It's just not like not functioning like so. That movement has to have all those folks. Part of what

was missing was the Armstone part. So we had a lot of material from Black Liberation Army. And other groups that were moving. And we put together our own animals. And so I'm moving, but at the same. Time this was like late, late 70s. Same time when I was just about to leave Haymarket you go on that. It was like my last year working there. We decided to have this constant for liberation witnesses selling something around the world. They were. That was the fight that was going on. There was most crucial, you know, and chopping up to different tentacles of capitalism and imperialism around the world. You know they're not right here. Because we do see ourselves as part of that. That struggle, that overall struggle. We got the same end. And so then, you know, we we did that concert 79 put together security forces there in Boston, about 225 people trained for a year to do that, and we had like people vote. And the squads? And 20 people cells with one who gives you know. and people with consciences would start going that way too. But what happened was they a lot of demonstrations that that they wanted us. To do security. For them, you know, and we wanted. People would be. More self aligned, so we're in charge of them to do security. They have to send to other people from their organization to our workouts and training, and then they could take it back to the. And working like that so everybody is taking care of itself. I don't know. We got charged with. I went and went after the concert. And we got charged with 14 bombings and ten bank robberies. And I was captured. In 8182 Got out in 91. You know? We kept organizing, kept working, kept moving and it was about four more times and all these different camps on that break. Those you know. And they have us on an essential monitoring where me Tommy Gray and think he could be the same giants together. You know it was really. But you know? Most everybody is out now except for Ray. I mean, except for a long time. They're still there. And one of the major things that I saw in that year was, you know, 10,000 black. People killed 10,000 black people. And I see a lot of still going on. Either we got a lot of pigs killing us, you know, and we got beasts among ourselves and we. Got ourselves too.

So anyway, so let's see this place still going strong. Here for the weekend man, thanks for the light.

STEPHANIE: OK, we're going to take about 5 minutes to get food. I think most of it's vegan, right, maybe? Some bacon toast about it. And then we can come back if you came, there's a few empty seats up front. If somebody wants to fill them in, and we'll have questions.

BURSTS: This was the first half of the former prisoner panel of the 2016 N American Anarchist Black Cross Conference that took place in Denver, Co. Here during the hour. You heard words from sakyō kambui, Daniel McGowan, John Tucker and Cazadore. This audio will soon air as a radio episode. Special thanks to Denver Anarchist Black Cross for the awesome event. You can check out some of their work at denverabc.wordpress.com. The show will later be archived at the final Star Radio. At roblogs.org and you can e-mail us with questions or suggestions at the final straw radio at riseup.net.

Part 2

BURSTS: This is the final star radio numbers to goodness. This is the second-half of the former prisoner panel of the 2016 N American Anarchist Black Cross Conference. During the hour, you'll hear words from Sakuya, Kombii, Daniel McGowan, John Tucker and Kazi Toure. These will be prefaced by some introductions.

Suku Kambui is a former political prisoner who survived 47 years of incarceration through the 1960s, Sikao participated in the civil Rights movement, organizing youth for participating in demonstrations and marches across Alabama and providing security for meetings of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference or SCLC. Congress of Racial Equality Core and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee snick. Sikua became affiliated with the Black Panther Party in 1967 in Chicago and New York. While in Detroit, he became a member of the Republic of New Africa before returning to Birmingham. Back in Alabama, Sakyo coordinated community organization activity. With the Alabama Black Liberation Front, the inmates for action IFA Defense Committee and the Afro American Peoples Party in the mid 19. Suku was also a soldier in the BLA during these years before his capture in 1975, Sicko was falsely arrested and charged with the murder of two white men, KKK official from Tuscaloosa and a multimillionaire oil man from Birmingham. There was absolutely no evidence against him, only coerced testimony from individuals who subsequently recanted their statements. The judge refused to allow the recanted statements to be stricken from Sakuya's record. Sikua continued to fight through this time in prison on June 30th, 2014. Sikua was released on parole.

Daniel McGowan is an environmental and social justice activist from New York City. He was charged in federal. Court on counts. Of arson, property destruction and conspiracy, all relating to two actions in Oregon in 2001 claimed by the Earth Liberation Front or ELF. McGowan was facing a minimum of life in prison. If convicted when he accepted a non cooperation plea agreement. His arrest is part of what the US government dubbed Operation Backfire, a coordinated multi state sweep. Of over 15 activists by the federal government who have charged the individuals with practically every earth and animal liberation action in the Pacific Northwest left unsolved, many have considered this Roundup indicative of the government. Green scare focus, which has activists being arrested and threatened with life in prison? Many of the charges, including Daniels, were for crimes whose statute of limitations were about to expire. Daniel was released from prison on December 11th. 2012

John Tucker was one of five anti fascists arrested on in May of 2012 after an altercation between white supremacists and anti fascists in the Chicago suburb of Tinley Park that left 10 injured. Just three of which needed hospitalization. The case of the Tinley Park 5 received an overwhelming amount of public support, despite the fact that the meeting was organized by violent white supremacist organizations like the National Socialist Movement Council of Conservative Citizens and Ku Klux Klan, the state showed their cozy relationship with white supremacy by refusing the accused

anti-fascist activists. Jail or a plea deal comparable to any other criminal defendant in Cook County. In January 2013, the Tinley Park 5 accepted a non cooperating plea deal. John Tucker was released in February 2014. As of September 2014, all of the TP5 are released.

Kazi tore as a member of the United Freedom Front. Kazi was imprisoned for his role in 20 bombings combating apartheid in South Africa and United States imperialism in Central America. The UFF has been called quote undoubtedly the most successful of the leftist guerrilla groups of the 1970s and 80s UN quote. And struck powerful blows to South African Airways Mobile, IBM Union Carbide and various courthouses and U.S. military targets. Torrey was convicted on federal charges of possession of firearms and seditious conspiracy, conspiring to overthrow, put down, destroy by force, and violence. The US government. He is one of few if any new Africans to be charged of this act. This audio will air soon as a radio episode.

STEPHANIE: Well, let's get started, does anyone have any questions for the panel?

QUESTIONER #1: With the overall talk tonight being about the supporting political prisoners knows that. But when the time. How do we address the fact we live in a place that doesn't even acknowledge the fact that they do have political prisoners? How do we? Because it's a lot about. Support about being. Able to spread that word to grow that base of support. Yeah, having been in that position and the benefit that you got from getting that support on the outside. As those of us looking to provide that support, what is the way with the technology and things we have available to us now like we want to grow that base? Like how do you? How do you see us being able to do that like it's more or less drawing attention to the fact that we live in a place that doesn't acknowledge that they do have political prisoners that they do hold people in captivity for their political? How can we? I guess help to. Further, the people that are in those positions.

SEKUO: What was that last statement?

QUESTIONER #1: I'm just how can we? What can we do? I guess what can we do? What can we do or what do you see as our responsibility? I guess would be the would be the appropriate term. What is our responsibility and what can we do? I guess more immediately to bring more attention to this.

SEKUO: First and foremost. I'd like to point. Out something you said in the beginning. That no one acknowledges. And this government acknowledges that that that even exists prisoners. But if you and I allow them to define the reality that exists for us, we're not. Going to do nothing. We have to define for ourselves our own reality based on our own understanding based on our own experiences. We have to. Cultivate relationships with people in the community who are like mind and like spirit and who are willing to or recognize the need to pool their resources. You know, when I was in New York, with with Daniel and his comrades in NYC ABC. They were having letter. Writings and Putting together for birthday cards. Hey, I'm thinking of you and you know. So you you you. Organize letter writing campaigns in your communities. You

know you do fundraisers to raise resources to support you in your endeavors. But also to. Allow you every now and then to pick 51015. Prisoners that you're going to be communicating with and send them a few dollars. You wouldn't know it, but it may. Say they lied.

JOHN: One thing about the mail. Has been spoken of before the. The mail hasn't comes in the large packets like the that draws a lot of attention while the outside world may not view the people on the inside as important or as politically active. Being able to show the other inmates the other. People that are incarcerated. The people on the outside do care about these situations. Makes a world. Of difference on the inside and 90% of people that are incarcerated are going to go home. So the more people. You can you. Know show this is a reality to on the inside when if they go out that's people that is real to them on the. Outside of it as well.

KAZI: Also, I think just like what he was saying. You know, like in writing people to. Get in touch with the prisoners spacing. Will direct you also what you do. And what they need? We definitely have. To make them a household name. They have to be. And we have to build organization.

DANIEL: I'll just say that my goal is definitely. Not to convince that you. As government that there's political prisoners, right? Like it's just that ain't going to happen and we don't need. To waste our. Time, but I think what? Everyone said so far I totally cosign. Especially the fact. That you know, and maybe some of the. Language we I've used. I don't want to put forth this idea that this is like activity you do on behalf of someone, right? Like these are individuals with agency and autonomy and there's a lot of direction and ideas that could come from the people that. Are facing it themselves I. Although I obviously focused a. Lot on Mostly I would say elder political prisoners. Getting them free. I do all this project that the National Lawyer Guild in new. York City, New York City does. Called the parole. Preparation project and. They only work with people that have life sentences. Quoted for parole. Packets helping people get their their lives. Kind of organized before they go to the board. So we go to the showing that I got housing. I got this. I got that. I got this and you know they've. Been around like two years. They have a very good success rate like their success rate, although it's you know 60 people. It's like 50% which like. If you are. What they call A1 lifer in New York State you have. Like an 11.12% chance of getting free, so there's a lot that can be done in terms of just working with people inside till they get free, whether it's through parole, probation, whatever, any of that nonsense. Or you know. Lawsuits and such, but. I do think contacting. People that you might have a certain. Affinity with you. Know that's how. I started writing. It was like I was writing someone that had like politics similar. To myself, but was a. Little older than me. I had. A lot of respect for. It at the time and sort of. It went from there, you know, thank you.

STEPHANIE: Any other questions?

QUESTIONER #2: My question is for John specifically of the all of you up on the panel there you were the youngest when everything happened with you and the

rest of these guys had a sort of legacy of reputation that that that went along with everything they. May have been. Already known you didn't have that, you just had books like ABC in this. Like how do you feel things would have been different for you had you not had ABC? How did it go differently for other people that you saw in your situation that did not have things like these groups?

JOHN: People liking support on the inside. This is specific to the places that I was incarcerated at Cook County was the worst of them. Along with the NRC people that lack support on the outside world along with a poor political. Basically internal structures. Oftentimes they fall victim to gain predation, just being exploited by. People that are gaming the system. They're a little bit older correctional officers to turn them into all sorts of blackies people that like support with without a strong structure, tended to founder on the inside, had I? Not had that support. From the ABC and whatnot, especially the National Lawyers Guild. Things probably been a bit different for me. Probably have been a little bit more involved in the politics than I would have liked, especially with my particular place in those societies probably been much more violent status, so yes.

QUESTIONER #3: I'm just wondering with the ongoing prison strike, if there are any updates we could give us giving your contacts on the inside and also any suggestions about how we can support what's happening. How good the share?

SEKUO: I have received. Phone calls they blowing my phone up. 3 Alabama movement. That those who are participating in the strike are still engaged. What they're doing locally around Alabama is their families and friends or are putting together rallies and events and coming together and educate the community about the conditions in prison and why they are protesting and why they are demanding respect for that human rights. You know one. Of the policies of being incarcerated is that? You are not recognized as a human being. And as such, you are treated any kind of way and they feel that they can do so with impunity, and they do so with impunity. Why do they get away? With it, because people in the community. Some of us have been victims of. Some, some very. Indescribable crime. And so we're angry. We're hurt. We're frustrated. Why help him? He he abused me. He didn't expect my humanity. But you know, we're still human beings and we're still to error, but we're also able to correct ourselves. Make adjustments in our attitude, our ability to interact with other people in a more respectful understanding and courting us and. I know you know that. And the reason I know you. Know that is called. Those of us on this panel. Been incarcerated. Have not demonstrated that we are capable of being respectful, kind, understanding and courteous. And conduct ourselves in mature adult fashion. How will we have your attention? Why would you? Even be here. So you undoubtedly is able. To recognize and. Us the capacity for being a decent person. Those who were incarcerated also had that capacity. And they deserve your support. They deserve your understanding, but there cannot be a healing unless you're willing to forgive them. Their ignorance and the things that they may have done to be abusive and disrespectful of you. And they're going further. You know we. Don't like to talk about forgiveness of. Us facing the heat.

Then we want to be forgiven. We have a government in Alabama. Once he's an. Ex governor now. And he started to. He implemented the. Three strikes you. Out, kind of. Law in Alabama, and he insisted that the parole the child is implemented. Lock them up and throw away the key mentality and attitude and approach in dealing with incarcerated. People in Alabama. But some years later, he was busted. For criminal mischief. Adding color from the cloud is something else, but that's what I'm calling. And now he's in federal prison. Every day he's been there. He's been begging. To be released. And so I said to myself, this is the same. One said it. Was OK to lock us up and throw? Away the key. Put down we want to keep the home away. He wants out. He wants respect he wants to. Be treated as a human being. Someone said not long ago that. What are we going to do here? And while everybody is looking around trying to find one better solution to the problems. Let me share something. With you. You're looking in the wrong direction. Or for us to solve these conditions that exist for us in America we have to live. With them first. Cleaning my own heart and mind period. Be appreciative with our own. And you can love yourself and respect your own identity. Shouldn't be too difficult respecting those who. Have been mostly.

DANIEL: Well, I just wanted to say. About the strike that. I write a few people in prison, but. No one like in areas where the. Strikes popping, but I will say. That I, I mean. Excuse me, I visited. 4 Black Panther Attika actually on the anniversary of. On the first day. Strike and the anniversary of the. 45th the 40th anniversary of the opera and I have to say that the environment and Attica that day was just is sick. It was so like the tension in the air. Is so palpable. And I asked the person when I went there with is this the norm and he says, well, you know, sometimes they get. We get comments made to them. They didn't say anything to us this time, but it was like just it was like you can cut the tension in the air with the knife and it's like those people at Attica were on. Like on egg. Shells that day, like they didn't know what was going to happen, and you know they had like. A hot dog and hamburger sale I think to fund the Attica Museum, which is this like little shack across the street to commemorate, you, know the poor guards that got killed or whatever, so but I will say that for. Cheerleader about the. Strike I've been like reading around and trying to plug into the stuff about like retaliation against the people that are striking and I get pretty much my information comes from. It's going down. Or sites like that mask magazine. Thank you.

SEKUO: I'll feel something with you in reference to the brotherly conservative. He said, hey, stay cool, this is Terry from Montgomery I got to talk to you as soon as I can. It's urgent to get back with me Black Lives Matter. Call you when I can. We're going back on lock down a correction officer just got stabbed and Annette the tangent to the inmate being called getting back in line to eat. Black lives matter. In the afternoon, officer beat us here at Holman. Has died from the past incident involving him and they trying to get in the serving line again to eat his charges. Will now be murder. Upgraded to murder instead of the original charge of attempted murder. Will there be a capital charge we don't know? As of now case still pending. Wake up wake up. The

ride team is here changing up shipping. I'm going underground with this computer. I'll get at you folks when I can. In peace. Him and other members of the Free Alabama movement generally blow up my phone with messages of providing me with information about what they're doing, and so when we walk around the country and talk around the country, we share that information. And we encourage people to be open minded and reach out. OK, this is all about. So what? They're striking all over. So reach out and be supportive. You have done your support. How do you do that? Writing letters. Writing levels petitions. Calling your legislatures. Many changes in the prison system that provides more humane. Pull over. Now, baby. You wouldn't know everybody's phone call to the local legislature goes a long way. Put something on the line. Old people. Like all wars and. You know my. About their their way of. And refusing to release. Warehousing men for the sake of the dog. Prison is big business indeed that we can experience as an industrial complex. I'm going to give it up for the media with. The military industrial complex represents. Well, the prison industrial complex is an older one. They are making big money. You know, risking my son and daughters, mothers and fathers reach provisions you have to define our geologist really go stop being. And sacrifice my lives across the years. Sacrifice those lives for people like you. Out of love and compassion. Standing because we are part of you. We've been victim of the same injustice, the same indignity, the same publicly stricken communities, same children, and grow up and all to live right next door. Live in our own. Human trafficking mass incarceration all equal genocide. Mass incarceration already also destroys family relationships. Family lives, that's why we need. Those fathers and mothers home. So they can be. The right model for their children. So they can do their children off the street. So they can teach their children the fallacy of being ignorant and living. And on the control layer. You know when I go? To prison, my family goes to work. My friends go with me. Showing love.

QUESTIONER #4: Hey Kazi, you mentioned that your comrades gone long and Tom Manning are still, and I was wondering if you were interested in maybe giving an update about what's up with John and Tom these days.

KAZI: Well I can tell you more what's happening with John. Just you know, he's still like in non community. I mean like they're letting some of his letters in I got a letter from him yesterday and it was dated like the 29th of. And he had told me he had just received one from me, but I sound like 3 in between you know. I think they're still messing with his mail and they're still they still got him knocked off the Internet. But it's got a lawyer working on it. That's about it. And I'm not sure what's happening with Tony Grace. I haven't talked with. Wait a couple. You know he he said something. Long ago that, like that thought about a lot, like when I was inside that, the people that if everybody that was out here. What to spend anytime? In jail, right and camps? With the thought that you know that you're. Not going to get out. Like in like. 10 years. If you stayed here 2 weeks. You will come out. And be organized and mobilized, and. Shut them things down. Shut them all down. You know? If you really knew what was going on in there. I don't know, you know, it's like really. I mean, we

could talk about stories and stuff, but. I don't know. Do people really have to go and have that experience you know for their self or they can they learn from other peoples experience? You know we could sit up here and tell you. Know like what it's like and you don't. Believe it or not. And then if you believe it. Then you go out and you install it, and now you're going to. Tell your people. You know we got shut the thing down, you know because they're just torturing beating, not go. I got a brother spending 45 years since he was 18 years old. These people talking about second chances and shit second chance. You know? Any questions?

QUESTIONER #5: If I can just follow up on that. I've got 11 and guess most people here are on board about it. What can we do to start organizing? To get this thing shut down. You know, talking to the government isn't going to change things, right? Your legislature, but. Good luck Chuck on that right. What can we actually do? I mean. Sort of regional.

SEKUO: I mean, all I could say man is, you know like. You got to keep doing well. You got whatever has to be done. You know to shut them down and it's so like it's like you try. You think that don't work. Don't keep doing that. Do something else. And just take it up, hide each time you know, tell you strike the nerve you strike the chord, then you'll get a response and the ***** would be like there's. Hope what's happening. These people living on us. You know, talking right, moving on you. Let our people go.

QUESTIONER #6: So kind of in regards to that I feel like the popular message among the left right now is a political endeavors should be pursued in a very nonviolent civil methodology and. Amongst all of you up, there are surprised at how much violence there is in your histories and why you were? Incarcerated as you. Were to any of you regret the violent aspect of the history? Like do do. You think that that should not have been done like that? That was not a way to. Go about doing this.

SEKUO: Look man. You know you. Can have somebody else. I don't feel like that, you know.

[laughter and applause]

SEKUO: Already look, this country was born on by us they. Brought us here. They killed the Native Americans. They slot they, you know, like they're. Now there and it was under. A million. Right? And they put them. On the reservations you know, and they brought us in the bottle. New ships. You know, just like that ***** airplane I got off. Man, you gotta take the design on seats like this, but slave ships, you know, as packed in there like sardines. I may You know this is the America right? You know. And I mean Trump, look at what Trump is doing all all and they and they. Come in this. **** up for him. You know? Because we're getting anything but that black man getting out of it. You know, you know, it's like. Man come on. This is American land. Let's keep it real.

JOHN: It's good that we do and we should look back under the years and look at the history of slavery and slaves. Yours and. But you know, here in 2016. Conditions in America affects people young. Oh in between. Red and black and brown man being

murdered. Every day. Are those actual bounds? And I spent 4 to 7 years because I. Was accused of murder. But what is happening to the police that are going around the country, killing our mothers and fathers and sisters and brothers even grandmothers? Even very good. Getting away Scott free what Scott mean. But getting away Scott free. Now let me show me, Russell. Filing from one job and moving to another one of the same kind in another. Another fitting. But here us incarcerated. With Freeze can't get a job locally. Forever punished, we have petitions now and Obama law challenging him to abolish the 13th Amendment. Many bots, programs, and physician agenda going all around the country. People signing petitions and pushing loves demanding that the ban the box that you sign on the job application and says have you ever been convicted of being banned removed? So people can get a job. I continue to be out of prison if you don't get a job they don't work, they don't have no options open to them, but to return to a life of crime. Even commit acts of violence. If you get home. If you get hungry and. There's no food to eat. You have a friend with children. And you don't have food to eat. Do you feel like a man? And you're not able to provide them. The health crisis come up and take them. To the hospital. And none is there. How much? Can you spend? We were. Boom and about. We've been victims of violence all our life, I mean. When we came into. The world, what was the 1st? Thing they did to us as babies.

DANIEL: I guess I'll say I haven't yet seen in my years reading and studying social movements and history, I've never yet seen successful or unsuccessful. For that matter, social movement that that gains anything without some element of violence. That's just like that's neither here nor there. It's just a fact. That fact, I mean, I think I think it factors into part. Of the mosaic of you. Know diversity of tactics and I certainly. Without even arguing about. Is property destruction violence? It's so 90s. I want to talk about that. I don't even care. If it is, if it. Is and it's ultimately like was there? Coercion and force absolutely do I regret that? No.

JOHN: The acronym for the very for the specific branch of Antifa that I was part of. It's who's your anti-racist movement. It's named arm. The reason violence is often viewed as viewed as the last act is because it is the last act. It gets results faster than any other form of political coercion. If that wasn't true, the police wouldn't have guns, you know, prisons. Wouldn't ban you from leaving at the threat of gunpoint, like every aspect of American life is held by violence. If you're. Issued a speeding ticket. And you don't. Pay it, they issue a warrant for your arrest. If you resist, they will subdue you. If you resist further they will shoot you. There is no law in this country. They will not kill over like they said. Violence is just. The bread and butter crack. Yeah, it's how this particular society runs, so yes. No regrets and I respect a wide variety of tactics.

[applause]

STEPHANIE: Maybe one more.

QUESTIONER #7: So John, as you look forward and Stephanie said in the introduction, you did your time for attacking a which comes to meeting not not just a white cross meeting but a very. Specific which meeting? Where there are. A lot of

different. Specific groups that have a lot of power. Movement, now that was the other 1216. And there is a rise in white supremacist groups. I was wondering. What you see? Sort of moving forward. You know, if we've already seen. A rise in last three years and it was. In process groups and what? Sort of inspires you now as to combat that.

JOHN: As far as what? Inspires me to combat that currently. As I stated in my introduction. These people are a threat. To me and my not a not a philosophical threat, not a logistical threat. It's a legitimate threat. Living in Indiana, these white power organizations are not. They're they're more common. Some areas more so than others, but. They were rampantly just based off of American politics. Man and hero. And the incarcerated incarceration system. The tools that they have at their disposal to recruit ridiculous. But as far as the inspiration to keep fighting, it's just the fact that if we lose this particular award. My family's gone. That's just it.

QUESTIONER #7: But more specifically, like what tactics are you seeing now what sort of activity are you seeing now that that that might be inspiring to you?

JOHN: In Sacramento a few months ago. There was a an attempted rally. By a few Neo Nazis. There was roughly. I believe it's no more than 20 of them. And they were met with the counter protest force. The news claimed 400. That's fairly inspiring. Several of these Nazis were some of the counter protesters were also 400 feet stood up. To combat these people, I find that very inspiring.

QUESTIONER #8: So I want to I want to go back just one question to the buyers. And two things. Two things. One is that I think you all know that violence to get the violence and hurt people. And I know that a lot of us are hurt people and not on the hands per say all of the time. And by this system a lot of the time and. The ability for us to. To deliver that violence to. Our oppressors at this moment, specifically in the communities that I come from are. A little more. Daunting than they used to be. In the Sixties, 70s and 80s. Our that there, but more importantly to me, has always been. And and, and And more now as our comrades get older, I hear some of them saying that. They don't regret anything that they've done, but that the violence itself actually has a cyclical kind of effect, and that regardless of what our reasons goals are. We have to find some restorative justice to help our comrades get back to hold after they fight for us in that style of. Violence, or if they use violence in that way, we have a community have to know immediately that they need a certain level of restorative wholeness to come back to them. Because if we don't, then we have a person in our community that is her. We have a ton of people in our community in her, but we don't need. Our people coming home that we treasure like that not properly care for now so so I'm asking you guys what? What do you see in reference to restorative justice? For our people coming home?

SEKUO: What I see. Is a need for communications. To reach out. And understanding passion, empathy, even. To those who kind of sacrifice their lives and energy and fighting to create a better world. Follow us. If you've been incorporated 510152030 years. As has been said, I was incorporated one seven years. When you return to society. Now, as an elderly person, I'm no longer able or eligible for a job. Government

gave me a fixed income and told me I couldn't go to job, go get a job, but I did. They take the fixed income. So how do I survive? You know my bills, utilities, rent, medical expenses, other change one. Bit because of my spouse. In the society. That's the next problem. I'm not left human being. And those who make those decisions to withhold. Those your mind gestures. So what happens is that you and I and. The community have. To pool our resources and come come together with a common understanding that these brothers and sisters returning home need support. Need help, financially, physically, spiritually they need. Day's work is known as Post traumatic stress. Most people associate that with people in the military. But for some of. You who don't know. Bones ex persons also suffered post traumatic stress. So they don't have someone to give them support. Give them back up encouragement and helping hand. They get depressed and despondent and said I don't have to suffer this while I was in prison, I got three meals a day, food, clothing and shelter and was provided. I didn't pay no water bill, no light bill, no gas bill, and nowhere my transportation. So what the heck? What I need is about keep going through all this and so a lot of people become statistics on the term sometime over nothing and sometimes over committing something probably more stupid than it was before. But if the. Community shows some compassion and show some heart shows, some forgiveness. Help them get a job, provide them with jobs, give them support. Make sure they got. Something to eat? Make sure they got clothes in the world. I met teenagers in Houston, TX and that's what they do. They go around the community and get clothing donated so that that when a fellow get out of prison, they can provide them with clothes aware. They go and talk to employees. In the community. And curious, you know to be more receptive to. Allow individuals getting out of prison. To have a job. So that they can. Take care of themselves and their families. Asset to their communities. The answer is that would be enough. In your own in your own. You don't need to search around the world, although there are some very good examples of how prisoners. So-called I don't call them prisons. I call them completed. Untreated in other parts of the world while I'm on different far more demanding than anything going on in America. Those kind of conditions, those kind of situations, those kind of treatments of abuses and disrespect for humanity changes. It has to begin with you and I. It has again with you and I.

KAZI: I don't know Russell. Right, I don't know if it's really been built yet. But we're working on some things. We're working on trying to like put together like a farm, a situation where people coming out can like go there and you know, we have. They're slower pace if they are paper. You know a lot of times people will still on paper and they have and they won't get, you know they have to stay in there particular jurisdiction right? So they can't move those people that wrapped up and that's all we're trying to build. This spot home for people to go to upstate New York and we got like 100 acres right now and it's just kind of last year and we're trying to put it together. Trying to make it work, you know, make money on it. It's, you know, leasing out some parts of it. To other farmers. Until we can get our **** together, but we're doing that up there. I don't know if there's any other spots around the country where people are

doing things, but. You know, I noticed that like when I got out, but the poor winters are. Doing pretty good. You know they like pairing people up with different lawyers and doctors and whatnot when they come out, they'll pair them up with somebody, and that person will look out for them. You know, getting clothes and get them a car. Get them, you know stuff like that, but I don't know if. We got any spots. Hooked up where people can go and chill out and you know get their self back together. 40 step back in and even people doing organizing a lot of times get burnt out. Man, you know and they take a couple of weeks off a week off. Or something you. Know before they come back, but we need those spots. Little spots and. Now we're just thinking like farming and growing food. You get a different relationship with the Earth too, you know, and digging the hands in the dirt and. Working the land. So that give you you know something back. You know, after coming back from wars battles, we should but. I think we need to like start trying to. Do that and. That was other places around the country too. Good answer you.

QUESTIONER #8: Yes, that yes that answer.

QUESTIONER #9: I feel like so much of this focus is on the past advantage. The actions I wonder as individuals have two questions. Like how do you? How do you take care of yourself at home? And how do you relax? And what's your favorite flavor of ice cream?

DANIEL: Have a really hard time relaxing. Anyone knows who knows that? I just go hard and I never stopped and I just end up burning. How short term I've been trying. To slow down half half nights when I'm offline like this weekend, I'm trying to stay off. Yeah, the peanut gallery. Like this weekend, I was like telling people like y'all want to be in touch. And like keep checking my phone but. Yeah, it's a really. It's a real challenge. Because I think. what I did was what people told. Me to avoid doing. Which is thinking that this bit. Is your time out? Your life's not actually going on and then. Like you're just sitting there on the bench and you want to get into the game so bad and you just can't all this stuff. Took place when. I was gone like it does for everyone. And you just want to get in and what that did for me was as soon as I. Got out and. I just was like just running crazy and it's like 3 1/2 years later and it's. Still kind of going well. But what do? I do to relax. I'm working on that one. But I do have a pistachio. It's my favorite ice cream.

SEKUO: I like orange sherbet. What do I do to relax? I'm a community activist public speaker, travel the country advocating those things that we're talking about here today. And that relaxes me. In a sense of giving a sense of meaning in my life and giving me an understanding about myself that those years I spent incarcerated teaching other young men how to be men teaching others, how to prepare themselves, to return to society and remain. With our attorney comma statistic. Creating organizations that allow their peers to heal while they was fully covered. So that they will be more open. In their return to treat people with more respect. There's violence. They're not ready to find anything. No one wants to be about not even the one that used to be a perpetrator. Before this. These days does not want candidates with the bill. Protect us

from ourselves. Protecting the third. And they were model we need to be. Able to take it. But I get my relaxation by traveling around the country, trying to inspire people like you, appreciation for who you are and. Whatever you should be. Making homes with human beings.

JOHN: We'll go ahead and start off strawberry. That's my personal favorite. As far as relaxing. I suppose I just bury my head and news article after news article. After news article. I don't know if that really counts. As relaxing It's what I do whenever I'm not physically, so I suppose that's as close to relaxation as I come anymore.

KAZI: Oh wow. Well the only thing that really gets me these days is my kids. I got 28 year olds. I like hanging out with them. You know, and woods hopping on a split and I like relaxing like that. Ice cream roll out if you can.

STEPHANIE: OK. OK, I'm being told we have to wrap. Up as we can look through your people. Go home, thanks for. All people who put this together and to what year for hosting us. Sorry super quick. Thank you everyone that was really, really amazing.

BURSTS: This has been the second-half of the 2016 former political prisoner panel from the North American Anarchist Black Cross Conference. For more information on the political prisoners in the United States. You can check out Denver abc.wordpress.com or NYC abc.wordpress.com.

04/07/2017 - Daniel McGowan Speaks at PSU

Synopsis

Former ELF Eco-Saboteur Speaks at the UO – Eugene Weekly
<https://eugeneweekly.com/2017/04/06/former-elf-eco-saboteur-speaks-at-the-uo/>
DANIEL MCGOWAN

Brandon Jourdan

Former ELF Eco-Saboteur Speaks at the UO

Daniel McGowan will discuss his time in prison and political activism

NEWSBY CAMILLA MORTENSEN POSTED ON 04/06/2017

In June 2007 Daniel McGowan was sentenced to seven years in federal prison for his role in two environmentally motivated arsons. The feds labeled him a terrorist for his part in the Earth Liberation Front's eco-sabotage, and Judge Ann Aiken, who sentenced McGowan and his fellow participants in what the FBI called "Operation Backfire," applied a "terrorism enhancement" to his sentence in a hearing at the federal courthouse in Eugene.

McGowan, who is returning to Eugene to give a talk April 8, went on to become the subject of the Oscar-nominated documentary *If a Tree Falls*. He was released on parole in June 2013 and has been living in New York City.

The arsons and acts of sabotage committed by McGowan and 12 other people indicted by the FBI took place between 1996 and 2001 in Oregon, Wyoming, Washington, California and Colorado. They ranged from arsons at a Eugene police substation and a local meatpacking company to burning the Vail Ski Resort in Colorado that was expanding into endangered lynx habitat.

At the time of his sentencing, McGowan's lawyers argued that a terrorism label could land him in a high-security prison. They said that such a label should be reserved for "the most dangerous types of offenses that threaten the fabric of our society," not people who went out of their way to make sure animals and humans were not harmed through their actions. The government targeting of environmental activists came to be known as the Green Scare.

Several of McGowan's years in prison were in fact spent in Communications Management Units in Terre Haute, Indiana and Marion, Illinois, where his communications

were restricted and monitored and where he was not allowed to physically come in contact with his visitors.

McGowan says that while he was in the CMUs he encountered many immigrants with dashed dreams and many who were “victims of overreach” and entrapped.

“I legit did most of what I was accused of,” McGowan says. But he met Muslims whose charity work for children was seen as providing material support for terrorists and who were sentenced to 65 years, and he says his seven years and the sentences of his fellow white co-defendants paled in comparison.

At his talk, McGowan says he will address his time with the ELF and in prison. He will talk about why activists should broaden the scope of radical movements and supporting prisoners as well as discuss why leftists should fight the growing “alt-right” and defend work with marginalized communities. “I’m a white, cisgendered man,” McGowan says, and when it comes to the rise of fascists in the lead-up to Trump’s election, “I hadn’t taken things as seriously as I should have.”

He plans to address the confusion activists have between short-term tactics and long-term strategies and why it’s important to not lose sight of the end goal.

Daniel McGowan “prisoner rights activist and former political prisoner” speaks 7 pm Saturday, April 8, 115 Lawrence Hall on the University of Oregon campus, hosted by the Radical Organizing Activist Resource Center (ROAR). FREE.

TAGS: OPERATION BACKFIRE

Special Programming: Public Affairs

KBOO - <https://kboo.fm/media/57209-daniel-mcgowan-speaks-psu>

Facebook Event - <https://www.facebook.com/events/portland-state-university/daniel-mcgowan-speaks-at-psu/1640931592882690>

Listen Notes - <https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/special/daniel-mcgowan-speaks-at-psu-2hParACRMVu>

April 8, 2017 <https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/special/daniel-mcgowan-speaks-at-psu-2hParACRMVu>

ABOUT THIS EPISODE

On April 7th at PSU KBOO had the pleasure to record a presentation from former political prisoner Daniel McGowan about his experiences in the Earth Liberation Front (ELF), time in federal prison, & the necessity of broadening the scope of radical movements and supporting pri...

Hosted by: Erin Yanke

Produced by: KBOO

Program: Special Programming: Public Affairs

Air date: Fri, 04/07/2017 - 7:00pm to 8:00pm

On April 7th at PSU KBOO had the pleasure to record a presentation from former political prisoner Daniel McGowan about his experiences in the Earth Liberation Front (ELF), time in federal prison, & the necessity of broadening the scope of radical movements and supporting prisoners as we face a rising of the far right.

Daniel spoke to a full house about his activist trajectory and years spent in the Pacific Northwest as well as what the Trump administration means for people that are

part of resistance movements. He argued for a broader scope to our movements and the need for leftists to fight the rising 'alt-right' and assorted fascist groups as well as defend & work with marginalized communities.

This was Daniel's first trip back to the Northwest since the day he was sentenced in June 2007.

The presentation was followed by a question and answer period, where the questions were not recorded.

Download audio file

Topic tags: Activism, Civil Liberties, Environment/Climate, Law/Court/Crime, Prison

Transcript

ESTHER: Hi, my name is Esther. I'm an old friend of Daniel McGowans beginning in the early 90s. The Earth and Animal Liberation fronts caused millions of dollars worth of damage to corporate, private and government property in the name of environmental defense and animal liberation. It's important to note that their mission was to defend all life and that no humans or animals were ever harmed in any of their actions. Although the Alf ELF sent countless set countless animals free and claimed hundreds of acts of sabotage against environmentally destructive entities, a few high profile arsons garnered the most attention. The state portrayed them as eco terrorists. Sympathetic journalists painted them as tragically disaffected environmentalists, while some of us revered them as shadowy eco superheroes. They need to remain completely anonymous, left their messages to be interpreted through their actions communiques. In the works of the Elf Press office, a tragic aspect of this story is that the message of the Earth and animal Liberation fronts projected through the distorted lens of the mainstream media was largely misunderstood or completely missing from the dominant discourse. The more interesting aspects of the Liberation Front's thinking have been overlooked in the blazing glow of spectacular crimes. It's been hard to see through all of the smoke tonight. We are lucky enough to hear from someone who is directly involved and can now finally have a voice of his own about his actions. So I was friends with Daniel during his involvement in the LF, but I didn't know it during that time. We were both vocal with strong and deeply considered evolving opinions. We wrote zines, talked on the radio, and went to demonstrations. We were communicators with the need to discuss our ideas and challenge each other's beliefs. Daniel and I would stay up all night talking around an open fire, strategizing about, strategizing about how to protect biodiversity and patriarchy, or challenge nationalism. This intellectual openness and the need for public communication was incongruent with the life of an underground revolutionary. Yet in many ways it was a logical extension of many of our shared critiques. In the impatience of our youth, we consider direct action prop-

erty destruction, destruction. The most moral course of action. Because it was illegal, we could not talk about his decision to participate in the EOF, nor mine to not. I got involved in the direct action environmental movement because at the time I couldn't see meaningful change or honest dialogue coming from anywhere else. In my eyes, climate change was clearly a real threat to the future. Health and well-being of humanity. However, the evidence and cause of global warming was actively denied in the dominant media and between 2002 and 2010 anonymous billionaires gave 120 million to organizations working to discredit theories and research on global warming. The climate's tipping point loomed menacingly somewhere in the unknowable future and event horizon. For our planet that would affect millions of humans across the globe. Billions of humans, as well as countless plant and animal species. It was as if the fate of the world hung in the balance and drastic measures seemed reasonable. That and we were in our 20s, so. But I ask myself if laws are written to uphold the cultural values and norms of society, what do you do when these norms and values compromise the well-being of us? All, our families, communities and millions of threatened and endangered species across the planet? If necessary change cannot happen within legal bounds, then am I justified in breaking the law? I learned later that Daniel came to a more firm conclusion on this than I. This was a somewhat surprising revelation, not just because Daniel maintained a well considered open dialogue about the social and environmental issues of the day, but also because he was a complete loudmouth from New York who discussed these ideas at parties, meetings, and demos. Yelling about the very issues that the shadowy. Secretive ELF addressed. I've learned a lot from my friendship. With Daniel Specifically about integrity and loyalty. When faced with a prison sentence of life plus 135 years, he did not, like many others in his shoes, sell out his comrades or his community. Daniel has maintained a principled course throughout his trial prison sentence and here today he walks his talk. His loud mouth well researched and contentious talk. So thank you all for coming out today let's. Give a hand for Daniel McGowan.

DANIEL: It's hard to. Follow that Esther, Jesus, I saw that introduction before, but it's amazing to get it in real life. Thank you all for coming. We packed the room. Thank you for coming out. It's really amazing to be back here and I want to thank everyone that took time out of their life to come. Jimmy rants about. Stuff I see a lot of familiar faces out there which is really great and even more so some you know not familiar faces which is even better. Want to thank the people that put on this event. The Rad education group. The Student Animal Liberation Coalition here at PSU, as well as Amanda and Justin for putting it all together. And I also want to thank pooling ABC and Oregon Jericho in the back of the room with an excellent info table with information about prisoners and prisoners. Tables and thank you also kaboo for coming in and recording this. Appreciate that so.

I've been here for a few days, but this is my first time back in Oregon since June 5th 2017. I had this strange experience. Unlike most federal defendants of go into my own sentence and not being taken into custody and then go into my co-defendant sentence

in the next day, which is. You know, crazy one day I'm in a suit, getting admonished by the judge. The next day. I'm there in like jeans looking **** that I have to go to prison watching my co-defendant Jonathan get sentenced. I'm referring to Jonathan Paul. I don't know if people know who he is. He's a lifelong activist from originally from the East Coast, but he lives in Southern Oregon. And he's. I think he's been here. He spoke at resistance ecology a few times. If you have the opportunity to see him speak, I definitely recommend it. He's a great perk. So like I said, it's it is really good to be back. I spent some time in Portland throughout the years. Oregon is obviously a a very loaded place for me. It's a place I lived for a few very active years of my life, and ultimately where I was indicted, convicted and sentenced. And as a friend mentioned to me recently, I kind of spaced out. She was like you're going back to PSU and I was like going back and she reminded me of the fact that I was arrested here in 2000 at in corporate dominance. I was accused of graffiti in a cop car and I went to trial with represented by Lauren Regan here from CNBC. And we put a good effort in, but we lost and I got community service, which I did at some. You know Eugene based Forest Defense group and just. You know you know how it is the community service you just kind of like you know, people write off, you did it all and you do some of it and you know, in my case we used a bunch of the. Information we got for. Other purposes. But so it's been a long time and. You know anyone that's done. Time in prison Will will kind of tell you that time is kind of a really strange thing like you go away and you think everything's going to be different when you get out. And so my sense of. Timing I was talking to my friend and I was like how long have you guys been together like and I'm thinking in my head it's like 4 years and she's like 10 and I'm like it's just like it's crazy and so the thing about time is that I notice is like how the activist life cycle and political movements have like a very short timeline and they spin and you after a while you start to see the. The same cycles happen over and over, and you know you want to think that that's good because like, yeah, I'm learning, you know. But then you watch like people coming into the movement and you know making the same exact mistakes, saying the same exact things that you said, thinking that they came up. You know, with the idea of resistance as I did when I was. I was like an insufferable new activist that just really I just knew everything and blah blah blah so people can in this room can definitely attest to that so. I will say. Though that it's dawned on me that because this activist life cycle is so short they used to come a time where every single person I met had, you know, I they'd have some knowledge of my case and so in the last year. Kind of been interested in to see like you know, especially in the wave of Trump. Like all these people come in and people be like man. Kind of, you know your name, I just don't and it's interesting and I so I said to myself like it makes sense to like instead of launching. Into some you know, analysis to, like you know, lay a little bit of a groundwork, you know? For what happened, you know, to give people some perspective to not assume that people. You know, just because something's important in your life doesn't mean that people really know anything about it, right? Especially considering my point about the activist life cycle and we're really bad, the left or whatever you

want to consider it at institutional knowledge and passing it on. And so we do have that reinvention of the wheel thing. So I'm sorry if you've heard some of this before, but I do think it makes sense to kind of just. We have a little bit of a background. On it so. I lived in Oregon for roughly 2 years, and while I did, I participated in a number of actions with the Earth Liberation Front and our group was rather large, like 10 or more people. My focus, my personal focus at the time was stopping old growth, logging and working to stop the introduction of genetically modified organisms. Into the environment there was, you know, a lot of activism. This was like we're talking like late 90s, early 2000s. There was definitely a lot of activism on those topics. But I felt like there needed to be more radical component to it and the way I looked at it was like I'm young. I don't have a lot of you know I don't my like my like lifestyle was such that I felt like I could throw myself into into things without a lot of caution. I wasn't. I went through a period of time where I was arrested. Many times for activism. I did civil disobedience and I locked my arms into barrels and like I climbed trees and like you know, did. I did a lot of different things that are very short period of time and I kind of like burnt. Through a lot of the different tactics that are movements you use, including some of the more mainstream ones like writing letters and. Lobbying and things like that back in in New York, I thought at this point few years into my activism career made a lot more sense to maybe avoid arrest. I racked up like 12 arrests I've been in and out of court for all kinds of like protest stuff. And frankly, it was. A bit of a drag and I didn't, you know. I was using sort of a antiquated. You know, like an antiquated strategy of oh, we're gonna get arrested and we're gonna stop things by getting arrested. And obviously, when you examine that belief, you know. 10 people getting arrested at a protest. I don't know what that actually might, you know, it's not going to slow down the system, but there is that that thought process that you're going to like gum up the works or something. And you know that that idea died. So I moved out here and I decided to. You know, I was like, you know I'm done with getting arrested. I've been. I was. I was pepper sprayed in Seattle and tear gas and I was. Like I'm. I'm just I'm done with it. You know, I'm really, you know I became very impatient. You know, frankly. I think people can understand, you know as we go on in our like careers or activist life. You know how things go. So I moved to Oregon and I'm a city kid and I was kind of, you know, I've done, you know, bare bones kind of hiking, but I moved out here and I was I was seriously blown away by it and blown away by just the. What I saw at the time is like a tepid response to it, and I again like that's not exactly my perspective now, but at the time I was like I, I just was stunned. I couldn't believe. And I couldn't really deal with like the destruction and it it really fueled rage in me. You know it fueled it just contributed to it. So I spent roughly 2 years planning and researching executing these actions on issues we we did a lot of different things. Like Esther said, the government likes to talk about the arsons Only because it's the most spectacular and frankly the most dangerous. But you know, sensational and what? And not we worked on a lot of different issues and did a lot of things. We spiked trees, destroyed log and equipment, pulled survey stakes, destroyed machinery

belonging to all different kinds of corporations. Eventually, I pleaded guilty to two large arsons. One was that superior lumber in Glendale OR and one was at Jefferson Poplar Farm in Clatskanie. Which is previously owned by. It was previously owned by a large timber corporation that we suspected were engaged in. GMO research of trees. And at a certain point, our group cleaved over ideological issues involving tactics involving our relationship to the larger movement and over interpersonal behavior of some of the people in in our group. And I took my relationship with these people with my, my fellow comrades very seriously. And I pledge to them that, you know, should harm. Come our way that my lips are sealed and I would do everything I can to help them. Out, so not everyone was attached to this promise as I was, as I found out in. 2005 I'm living in New York in 2005, and I was indicted, you know, out here and search warrants and all. They planned basically a very large arrest of seven of us on the same day. I had been, you know, living in New York, living with the knowledge of what happened, but sharing it with no one. My partner at the time. Did not know which you can imagine cause issues when I was arrested. I felt helpful that you know, I felt hopeful thinking it would never come up, but watching the activity after 911, it's seeing the Department of Justice was on a path to indict people for old crimes. I saw friends of mine in Oregon with a excellent group that doesn't exist any longer called break the chains doing support work for someone named Sarah Jane Olsen who was involved in the SLA 30 years ago. Saw a man named James Kilgore. He's actually released a really excellent book called Understanding mass Incarceration a few years ago, but James Kilgore was also involved with the SLA. The Symbionese Liberation Army of Ultra Left Group from the 70s. Excuse me. So, James Kilgore. Was arrested and extradited to the United States and got a sentence. It seemed that was. It seemed at the time to me from my perspective in New York, living in living there after 911 that there was an abundance of money and for the first time really rampant coordination between agencies, which was new and a little scary. I mean, they're in this country, there are hundreds of thousands of unsolved murders. Rapes and assaults. But a 7 year old arson. Or a 35 year old bank robbery gone bad clearly was, in their opinion, worth dusting off. If you have millions of dollars to pay the agents and they suddenly have this newfound appreciation for working together to get the bad guys, which in our case you know was us, you know. And if you look at like what happened in Oregon after 911? The two, the two major cases that they netted was finally solved in the ELF case, which I say solved, but essentially someone just decided to talk. In which case it was all over, and then the Portland Seven. Which were, you know, seven people accused of attempting to get to a training facility. I believe in Pakistan or Afghanistan and so these people got material aid to support terrorism essentially for not succeeding in getting to a training camp halfway. Around the world. So this is Oregon's like you know, contribution to the War on Terror. It's pretty pathetic, but you know, I mean it. Not that it's not pathetic everywhere else because everywhere else it's just entrapment cases. And what? So ironically I was working at an organization that provided resources for women surviving domestic violence when I was arrested, I had been in New York

for three years roughly, and I participated in a bunch of collectives organizing against the Republican National Convention War against Iraq, and I worked on local projects with the New York City anarchist community I. Coordinated support for Jeffrey Lures, along with a few Oregonians, and we had a large International Day of action in 2004 with about 50 or so events worldwide. This week of action got a lot of attention, essentially because the FBI sent out an ecoterrorist alert which actually just helped us, kind of with media which was great the day I was arrested seemed like pretty much like no other. I went to work. I helped stuff envelopes with our annual holiday card and I made changes to the website. It was, you know. People always are like, oh, did you notice anything that day and I was like I didn't notice anything. I went about my day putting stickers up. You know it's like kind of rampant sticker was like. Around I don't. Even remember what the hell the stickers were. I want to say anti war but who? One of those and I got up after hearing some hubbub in like the reception area I heard, you know, arguing and sort of my name, and I kind of just, you know, you kind of know at that point like something's up like you know, I'm still sketched out on cops. And so I'm like. And so these two dudes come and they're standing in the doorway and. You know, like mustaches and beefy and. I'm just like. Oh, it's a bad sign and they're like. They were like are they asked me if I'm Daniel McGowan and I'm thinking don't lie to these ***** because you know, I mean I don't wanna get busted for lying but like next thing I know. I mean they knew, and so they're saying, I know I'm just like stretched like a contortionist. You know, getting getting handcuffed and told that I'm like their law and order moment was being like you're going back to Oregon. That was like the. That was law enforcement burn and I you know, of course, like you know, if it was on TV I would have been like damn, you know, like it was kind of. It was kind of ridiculous. They're really sneaky. They took my keys, they drove to Manhattan, where I had just been living with my partner. They let agents in there was a my neighbor who's like a. Sort of like the mayor of the block was sort of. What are you guys doing in there? Those are good kids and just gave them the business and they were like it's a terrorism investigation ma'am. And she's like, I know, Jenny and I. Know that and her boyfriends, you know it was. It was I when I heard that I was like God. Thank God for good people like just give them grief. You know they're calling the number. What is this stuff in your in your in your refrigerator? I'm like what is it in there like yogurt? And like it's probably yogurt, they're. No, it smells dangerous. I'm like, oh, it's it's wallpaper paste like why do you have that? Like to put posters up I'm like I don't you know it's really surreal. I think they thought it was like some super duper like terrorism, glue or something. Which I don't even know what that is, but. I was kept in a car parked in downtown Brooklyn right by a place called Cabin Plaza. It's where the southern Eastern District in New York federal court is. It's a really imposing building. It's the kind of building that when they're driving you into, you're just like man. Things are things are bad. They kept me there and they did bring me to court. They kind of just gave me the they gave me like the speech, you know. The US attorneys in town. You know, he's he's here. the door is going to

be open for. A brief while. You think about it, you know you know what happened with Jeff Flowers. You know, you know what happened with Chris McIntosh. He was. A an individual who got charged with the same exact charge that I was going to get charged with, which had a mandatory 30 year sentence. Use of a destructive device. If you are charged with it as a non terrorist, it has a 5 year mandatory minimum which is bad enough. But if it's a terrorism crime it's at 30 so they were like telling me giving me the ring or you know, like the whole rundown of how long I would be in prison and I had been involved in some prisoner support. It's obviously a little different to be in that seat. Myself, but I kind of knew, you know. I've gone to enough, know your rights, trainings and legal trainings and I got to like shut your mouth thing really because I'm like you only get one chance at this so just shut up you know and then they put the heat. On like so. High, you know, and I'm just sitting there just burning up and I'm like I know they you know they the crazy thing about cops is like as soon as you you can assert your rights. To a lawyer, but as soon as you open up your mouth that's over, you know, and you can say anything and talk to me about baseball and stuff. And I'm just sitting there looking out the window, thinking. like my life I told them I was represented. I picked a lawyer's name out of the air. It happened to be someone that was representing my friend who got him a very good outcome. So I was like, Yep, that's my lawyer Ng director. He's my lawyer and so they called and. I spent a few days there. I was flown to Oregon with pit stops in various prisons and jails around the country. I ended up in Lane County for. Months, my family graciously offered the houses they lived in as collateral on a bond. They released me on bond with very strict conditions. I had to live with my. You know it's it was kind of weird. I mean, I was very happy to like be out of jail, but I was like you have to live with your sister and her, your brother-in-law who you know it wasn't like really. Close to, I guess, I'll say. And I'm sure my brother-in-law didn't want, oh wait, you're moving in here and you're going to have an. Ankle bracelet On like it's not, it wasn't a tenable situation, but it was better than Lane County. Obviously, you know can eat. When I wanted it wasn't cold and have to wear a, you know I was my Co defendant. Actually, sadly took his own life when he was in county jail and when that happened all of us were taking and put in the hole and put on like I was actually put on suicide watch for 10 days because I'm a behavior of. My Co defendant. So Suicide Watch is a is someone special thing you know you wear something that doesn't actually fit your body. I mean, it basically doesn't even cover your privates. So you're. Trying to like sleep. With this smock on, it's the worst thing in the world. So I was like, you know what I'll I'll make do with my brother-in-law. I think I can. I can get by so I bonded out. I went home to New York City. Threw myself into my legal defense. I annoyed the living crap out of my lawyers with phone calls all day long. I got my discovery sent to me. I'd be like don't send me papers, send me the disk you know they were like, oh, we've had it with you and your phone calls. I had like notes on everyone. This is what we got to do. I you know at the time was foolishly thinking we were going to go to trial because I was like, you know I watched TV shows. Crime and I was, you know, I'm like an activist. I

think I know something about the system and I'm like my lawyers are like you know, going to trial with these with what these people are saying about you is like, you know life plus a couple 100 years and you know that obviously was. An eye opener. So we filed a lot of motions. We filed one on NSA surveillance. There was a lot of. Back and forth. You know they had to approve all their decisions with Washington DC, so it was kind of like we were dealing with like a. Proxy because you know the Bush White House and Alberto Gonzalez and them were their office were really the ones that were involved in. Like all the big terrorism cases which apparently. This was supposed to be a big terrorism case. I basically agreed to plead guilty to the conspiracy and the arson counts on the provision that they dropped the really serious 30 year mandatory at the point I had roughly nine people willing to cooperate and testify against me. People that sat in a room and talked to the government about hours for hours. About myself and everyone else in the case like everything every our likes or dislikes, who what we're like I mean just all kinds of stuff that's like really beyond the pale. Beyond like our criminal conduct, but really who we are and like everything about us, which was obviously heartbreaking. It wasn't just the main informant at that point. It was like well spoken, credible individuals who know knew everything about me and knew, you know, I some of my Co defendants we had committed. Like you know, 15 different actions together, so I kind of knew that you know if I lost if I went to trial with these 30 year mandatory. Part is I would be like severely playing Russian roulette and that I could be found guilty. The jury wouldn't even know that they would be, you know, convicted me of a charge that could give me life. And so I just decided that it made more sense for me to plead out. I was allowed to go to sentencing asking for five years, and they were allowed to ask for 9. And I guess the judge split the baby and I got 7 which you know is 84 months. They found me guilty of the federal crime of terrorism enhancement despite the fact that the incidence. Was involved that didn't involve the government. It actually involved private corporations and in fact some of my Co defendants were found guilty of. Targeting the government in the form of the Bureau of Land Management. But they didn't get the terrorism enhancement, which is an interest in the verbal kind of gymnastics. But on the part. Of my judge. But I don't want to sound too narrow my my case. You know this green scare case operation backfire as it was called by the federal government. This is hilarious if you know what a backfire is. You know small fire set to pull energy from the larger fire. Kind of yeah, I was actually like when I was arrested they did this like real James Bond **** where they like took their briefing book which is like this. I mean, I don't know if all the pages have anything on it. It could just be blank, but it's huge and it had a photo of me which. I was really good about like making sure people didn't take my photo when I lived in Oregon. I was like that's sketchy dude. That was like no, you know. And this is I mean, I'm dating myself, but not everyone had cell phones at the time, so it was only easier to like prevent someone come up with some flash camera, and you be like, no, I'm not really cool. I'm my picture taken, but apparently they did. Find a photo and someone like a shoe box in someone's house. And that's on as Operation Backfire, and they

leave me with the book. You know, it's just out of reach. I'm like trying desperately. To get it just to. See, you know and like I'm. Sure, they're watching, you know, like. And it's off or should backfire. And I'm just. Thinking wow, these people watch too much like. Law and order. You know? But you know, we coined the term green scare and I don't mean to use that. Term because it's. It's really not analogous to the red scare. I mean, what happened to people in the Red Scare is like no joke and no one was deported in the green scare, so it's never like a direct analogy, but it was sort of like this idea that we're in this community. We're doing this environmental activism and. People around us are like you know, I mean, the liberation collective lost their 501C3 after being busted for like I don't know, they were accused of. I guess it's a neutrality thing you're not allowed to be politically active, or maybe they supported. They were accused. Supporting criminal activity, but the you know that was something people getting like audited grand juries. Investigations legislation specifically about that. Why is use groups like Ron Arnold and the Center for Consumer Freedom and the Center for the Defensive free enterprise like these people whose jobs? Where there was one called stop eco violence, this woman named Kelly Stoner, who was just a timber industry. I mean, it was just like this organized this semi organized effort to basically create this narrative that environmental activists are the number one domestic terror threat and this you know when I say that I just I can't get over it, but it's what it's the words of Robert Mueller. It's the former FBI director got up there and said this. And when I was at lane. County and we got reindicted because they the feds like to do is they like to use the media really well? You get indicted, but then as soon as the people, the rats in your case, tell them more, they just work that into the narrative and then they do a superseding indictment, and that's usually an opportunity for them to get more media. So on the days that they were going to have NSA wiretap motions. Or NSA wiretap hearings. The first one this is priest node, and this is like 2006 when people you know first leaked the information that there were wiretaps when the NSA at the time it was like radicals were like, yeah, I figured as much, but that day is the day they announced our superseding indictment, and I'm in you. Know like. I don't know. I'm in like my cell. Lane County and someone. 's like hey hey you. Left, and I'm like, you know, resigned to the fact that that's what I'm going to be called. And I'm like I'm pleading not guilty and. You know what? You try, but people don't care because they saw you. I saw you on the TV and you're yeah and that's and but I I come out to the day. Room and I'm like. Like what is he saying and it's like of course like transcribed on the TV and I'm like. Having this moment where Alberto Gonzales, like the attorney general, is talking about my case, and that's just. Like the the. Scariest thing I'm thinking, you know, I hate Bush. I hate you. I hate all of you people and you're talking. I mean, I don't want you to pay attention to my case like I know you, but I don't like you knowing us and like that's kind of. When I knew they were, they were serious. If they were willing to actually like this is like small fry stuff. This is like vandalism like and they have names for it, it's vandalism, it's arson. It's eco sabotage. It's all this stuff to call it terrorism. Now seems kind of like, yeah, that's

what they call it. But at the time, like the idea that environmental activists would be called terrorists was just like it was ludicrous. Sorry, I'm just checking my time here. So one of the major arguments my lawyers used when we were challenging the terrorism enhancement was that if I received it, I would be prone to being housed at these two communication management units that the BOP quietly opened. Actually, I say two, there was just one open at the time. Remember my lawyer sent me this article and I you know I. Read about it and it was all these like. Really intense communication restrictions. It was a unit opened up in death row. The former death row at Terra Hut Prison in Indiana and there was really strict limitations on mail, communication, visits, communication with the outside world. I presume that wouldn't be able to get anything political sent to me. If I had been unlucky enough to get there, and so I knew that the terrorism enhancement would result in my prison jacket, my file being full of, you know highlighting and red ink and all those kind of acronyms like security threat Group or Alf ELF. All that kind. Of stuff. So I first got designated. To federal prison. This was one month. After I was last in. Again, and I turned myself in in Brooklyn at this local jail called MDC and they told me that like a week later that I would be going to sandstone and I groaned because I really don't like the heat and so I thought sandstone and that sounds like the desert. But no, it's not the desert. It's actually more like sandstone northern Minnesota. It's like Buffalo, like Lake effect snow. And like I mean we got like 5 feet of. Snow one time. Which was outrageous and 1200 miles away from my house, and there's no. When they decide that you're you have a certain case that could garner any kind of attention from the media, they really like to bury you in the Midwest. And that's why all the supermax prisons and like a lot of the high security prisons or political units that they run are like deep in the middle of the Midwest. Because so many people that are in federal. Prison are from the coast. So I spent my whole time in the Midwest. Basically, and I you know obviously was not very happy. About that it's. Like a real strain on your family to come, and it's culturally just really different. So there's not much to say about sandstone. It's your typical low security prison and was full of men who crossed imaginary border lines between the US and Mexico and got three to seven years for felony reentry. A whole lot of men who sold crack and got crazy sentences because of a 100 to one ratio on crack versus cocaine, which is like largely predicated on race. And a remarkable amount of sex offenders. I played this weird game called Pickleball which is kind of like. Kind of like playing ping pong and tennis, it's like. Bizarre worked out we had weights, which was bizarre. It was a low security prison with weights. We had guitars, karaoke, you know real Country Club as they say. What was interesting was as I was being transferred out of sandstone which happened out of the blue was like in May. And I was just told to come down to the office and pack up my. Stuff I actually drove past FCI Terre Haute and I saw a bunch of men at this this this gate this like Iron gate you couldn't really see them too well but it was. It was weird. I was like oh, they look mostly, you know brown then beards. I'm like, I wonder if this is like the CMU, the the, the so-called terrorist unit. And so we asked the bus driver which if anyone has ever done time in

the federal system in the Midwest, you should ask him about this. But the man that drives the bus in the Midwest is he has one arm which like it's cool that he works for POP that he has a job. But he drives the bus. And we would be in the. Bus chain to our ankles, chained, sometimes chained to a piece of the bus like a railing. And this man, had, you know, he had an old style hook, and so sometimes we, you mean it's a very large van, and we'd be driving in the Midwest. It's windy, and I mean he's like losing control like and I'm thinking like. I'm going to die because this man is not able to hold on to the, you know, I want to sound like. Not sensitive to it, but so I asked the one armed man I was like what is this? What is this? He's like, oh, that's terrorist unit. You know it's a. That's where the Muslims are, and I'm thinking, you know, of course. My sympathy then goes right out the window. I'm like all right, that's where the terrorists are. I'm like, OK, whatever this has to be the. CMU go right by the CMU get put in the shoe for two weeks and end up. You know at sandstone. I felt like at the time I wasn't too happy about it, but there was a sense like oh I. I think I. Dodged a bullet there, but my experience in prison was every time I felt like I things were going OK for a split second they went to **** pretty fast afterwards. So a few months later, I found myself at Marion Marion is the 2nd place that the OP had a supermax prison. The first place was Alcatraz and then Marion in the 60s to the 90s and then they opened up the supermax prison at Florence Co Super A DX. It's called. But I show up at Marion. There's about 17 other men there. It's the second CMU. I have a friend of mine from New York was there. Andy Stepanian from the Shack 7 case and a smattering of people from like different discernible groups but mostly Muslim men. There's been some stuff and about. The seeing you it. It's there hasn't been that much. I mean, it's not. It doesn't affect that many people and therefore it doesn't garner a lot of attention. The Inspector General of the federal government did a report on communications of so-called terrorist inmates in the BOP, and they came up with this conclusion. That the people. Who have terrorism cases in the BOP or were not watched very closely and there was an allegation made that some of the men involved in the 1993 World Trade Center case were in touch with the Madrid bombers in 2005 in Europe? I don't actually know whether or not that's true. I know the allegation was made and in the wake of the report. The Department of Justice. Does what they did what they normally do, which is they hastily just kind of threw together this **** eyed plan to open up these communication management units. Well, when they threw when they open the one at Terra Hut, it was like criticized really badly. For being, you know, with like 90% Muslim. So they were like you can't have. A unit with you. Know with such disparity and. The characteristics of people that were there so I ended up being this like opportunistic person for them. So when they opened up the second one you had me. You know which, like the category of like the tree hugger, the eco person you had Andy and animal rights activist. You had a right wing tax resistor sovereign citizens which are. Really awesome fun people to hang out with, by the way. They're they're really. They have really great views on like how to get out of prison and get rich at. The same time. Doesn't get tedious when you have to live around them day-to-day

and you're actually working on like your appeal or like something fairly serious and like you have to hear about like maritime law or you know I'm like so I'm a. Vessel like of the of the. Lord, like I don't. Get it, and so they were largely Muslim. Men and the men. There were mostly convicted of what's called material support of terrorism, which is the government claiming that their actions were somehow supporting you. Know al Qaeda, which you know is only al Qaida at the time. Now there's people that are accused of assisting ISIS. In the CU apparently. And then there was a whole bunch of like entrapment cases which I'll talk a little bit about. They even threw in so crazy I sometimes. Used to think. Like who the hell? Is coming up with this idea because it was the smorgasborg of different people. And sometimes the commonalities were just hilarious. Like you'd be like, oh look, the old Nazis playing with the Moorish science Temple Sovereign citizen. How does that like make sense in there? I would look at them and go. What are they thinking about the other person like who used to blow? In mind, we even had a few high profile sex offenders that would basically constantly contact their victim, like including some of these high profile like they're not Mormons, that they're like the off branch of the. They're the fundamentalist Mormons, so they're just like a different you know and like this one. Dude had, like many wives and they were very young and. It was very creepy. And he was never allowed to use the phone because he just couldn't stop calling everyone and the government was like freaking out about about that. You know, so it's it was a ***** place. And like when I got there we had no idea about any of the facts about the CU. Nothing was like transparent. We had no no idea how long we would be there, how to, how to get out. We were told different things 18 months and then you get a you know you get a transfer or 24 months and it was just really confusing. I reached out to. A lot of different organizations, ACLU. Every prison group I can think of. Only really one was interested, which is the Center for Constitutional Rights. I say interested, but I mean like have the capacity to actually file suit. And I really I had a pre-existing relationship with them and I was glad for that. But it was also kind of tragic that prison prisoners really have a hard time getting help from lawyers, and it's a structural problem. It's not like a problem on the part of the lawyers. Or say, but it's largely because of legislation that, like restricted the ability of prisoners to file suits themselves and for lawyers to actually make back any of them ***** thousands of dollars that they spend fighting these pro say cases, or these pro bono cases. So it's a real problem, but I got lucky and I had help from the Center for Constitutional rights. And we worked together for many months. I gave them all the information about the unit, like everything I possibly could get my hands on, any kind of thing they published demographic information, trying to like, make the strongest case. I wrote an article called exposing a little GITMO, which was our nickname for it. I mean, some of the people in the unit knew people at Guantanamo, so it was really interesting to you know, they. They'd be like this is like little gitmo. I'd rather be in a DX. And I was like. And people had been. Apparently the scene is on the back table. I'm being told from Justin, which is amazing. It's very old and dated now, but so we filed this lawsuit and when the lawsuit was in draft, it was a ref which

is my Co plaintiff, not my co-defendant because we're suing the government, but it was a ref V Mukasey and we filed it as a ref V. Holder, Eric Holder was the attorney general. At that time. And now it's a Rev sessions apparently, and it's seven years old. We filed it on April 1st, 2010. The BOP definitely listened to our phone calls and our visits because they essentially tried to transfer people out of the unit the day before the law. The lawsuit was filed and they like came in on the morning. The lawsuit was filed and posted these proposed regulations. Which was part of our lawsuit. We were like essentially saying you just opened up this unit without doing any of the due process without doing any of the like fact finding or public comment that you're supposed to do, and you open up when you open up a brand new communication management unit. You just can't do it. You have to. Like have this veneer of like democracy and it's all fraudulent because when they put these things out in in in their rules they always get passed anyway, but it has the veneer of like legality. It didn't work. The suit is still alive. Like I said a few months ago we got a victory from the appellate court. It reinstated the lawsuit, sent it back to the judge, but I spent 26 months in the Marion CMU. I was released to general population and I lasted there four months until they found a reason to send me back and they sent me. To the Terra Hut CMU and when I got there I got a chance to see all the dudes that I knew that had been transferred from one to the other because that's what the government did. They just switched Co defendants. Someone got in a fistfight. You know, thinking this might Get Me Out of here. It just got them sent to the other CMU, so I walked in and I got razed by a bunch of people who were like I can't. Believe you're back and I was like. What am I going to do? And so I spent the remaining 21 months at. The other CMU. And to be honest, I met a lot of really interesting. People there a lot of people who are guilty just of being Muslim and having. Opinions that were critical of the United States government or having **** *** like Israeli government talk about people like whose names you might not really know. Adam Hasun, Kifah Jayyousi, Yassin Aref. Ali Chandia, Hamid Hayat Khalid Awan. Shukri Abu Baker and the other Holy Land Foundation people. I learned a lot from these people, including how to handle a really bad situation while being or attempting to be kind and caring, which to be honest, is one of the first things to be jettisoned when you're when. You're trying to survive. Like I there were times where on visits people were like you're not laughing anymore. You're not joking and it like. Kind of hit me. I was like I'm becoming a really serious. Person and I tried. You know, kind of change that and be like you know, I'm doing time with people that have 65 year sentences. I mean and they are handling this and they're coming by. They know I had a tough visit. They know things aren't going well and they're coming by offering me like homemade baklava or whatever. You know you guys used to cook like crazy in there and make really wonderful stuff and I was always really. I was always really heartened by the people in the CMU. And this is. During the Obama administration, I mean, I know people are. Like I mean, I can't imagine anything good is going to come out of this this current situation. But you know this, this CMU. This, like these entrapment schemes. These different cases that you might have heard of or didn't hear

of this happen under Obama. And it's a. It's a really horrible part. Part of that legacy because he created. the infrastructure that will without a doubt be used by Trump and the remaining. Future fascist presidents to do things. Sorry, I'm just checking. So yeah, Speaking of Trump, I want to switch track and talk a little bit about where we find ourselves right now. So like the rise of the right wing, if you want to call it that or white supremacist is, it's a really troubling trend and I hate to say it, but I feel like it happened. Kind of under our noses like during the Obama presidency and clearly. Before, I don't want to suggest that this is a current thing, because these people are always there and like I think we have a situation where. You know we're like shocked like how is you know like people treat this like it's new and it's not new and it's just there's this courage on the part of white supremacists. Now, because they feel like they have numbers or maybe they feel like they have their homies in in. The White House or whatever. You know I had a lot of respect and appreciation for anti-racist action ARA's, the generation of punks that came before me that fought Nazis in the 80s and 90s. I remember hearing lots of stories. I know people from Lower East Side talking about like the fights that engaged there, and I mean I'm talking about literal fights. I'm talking about other kinds of fights. I mean, there's just. A bad history. Big history of that. And it's interesting. I never contributed much to this aspect of our movement. I think I like some people like I just was like, decided that ARA? I mean, I kept this to myself. I was never a hater but ARA or like guys I want to fight Nazis like you know. And there was definitely like that. Aspect, but I think. You know it's. It's not that I found like the actions bad. I always supported them, but like other than calling clubs and getting like shows cancelled, I just never really participated and it's interesting I hadn't even considered this until recently and I you know, I came into contact with white supremacists. Side and I never got into like horrible beef with them, but it was always like a tense situation that I had to consider at all times. Like who was around and stuff because they knew what my politics were. They assumed, you know, I was just mostly called the Communist which is all they really understood and they like. But I'm an anarchist like. I don't like communists and it just, you know. It's just like it's. Just like I'm. Like I, I guess that's. It should be worse to you, but you're. Not getting what I'm saying, but. But it's interesting because it's like this current moment has made me kind of look at like myself and like why like? Why didn't I take this that seriously and like it's hard? I have to, you know, I have to be honest and be like, you know it has to have some. It has to of course have something to do with my my identity like who I am like. I'm a white cisgendered man like. I don't want to. I'm not going to be a victim of a hate attack. I'm not gonna. Probably not gonna get yelled at for. I'm not gonna get targeted. I'm like there's a whole bunch of things that won't. Happen, and that's fine, but. I don't, it's like it. It wasn't personal. It wasn't real to me I can. I can hear stories about things, horrible things that happen I. Read read a lot. Of history but like. You know this it it just killed me that it took like a Trump presidency for me to like. Take this seriously and so I think. I don't think it's just me and I don't. I don't leave this as an indictment. I think this is a large part of the left, you know, I

remember. I mean, these folks didn't come out of nowhere, and I'm sure there's people in this room that have dealt with this issue for many years, despite the fact that the Nazis at some point decided that they wanted to kind of like a whole lot of them decided they wanted to be quiet. They wanted to maybe get rid of the stupid uniforms. Maybe not put the swastikas up. As much, there's no secret that they exist, they exist. Where I grew up in New York, they exist, you know. In in Oregon, obviously Oregon's history is wrought with it. I mean, we're in Portland. I'm sure people know about the horrible killing of look at the Sarah in the 90s by white supremacists. If you have. If you don't know about that, 100 little Hitlers is a really excellent book to read about that particular incident. So and I you know I was in Eugene and like we, you know there were skinheads in Eugene in the 90s and 2000s, and maybe now. But I was in prison when this case happened in the Midwest and it really made me think twice about this. It was called the Tinley Park 5 case and what this was a large group, probably 20 anti-fascist broke up a meeting that was called like a white cultural gathering it was. It was. Essentially promoted by a bunch of hammer skins. Pretty violent group of skinheads? If you don't know and they broke up this meeting and I broke up. I mean they stormed in beat the Hut of people destroyed everything and ran out. And it was. Really interesting to me like the people that I knew in prison. Kind of like that. I would talk to about different things but like yeah, that makes sense. I mean, that's what you do right? Like and some of these were people that just were politically conscious, but others were just like, well, what else are you going to do? You're going to talk to them about, like you know why. They're horrible. I mean, they're talking about genocide and stuff, and it was interesting. And I. I came out and I actually helped with a lot of their fundraising for their release funds and it was interesting because in 2013 when they got out like one after another. I don't think I've ever dealt with a situation that was harder to fundraise for, like nobody claimed them. The left was not with them. I mean I, I got into arguments with people who were really radical, radical lawyers, and otherwise they were like. Yeah, I'm not really into that. That's adventurers or that's this and. I'm like. You, you think because they call it a a cultural gathering that that. Like I mean. Two of the two of the people at that meeting actually ended up doing time because they were, like you know, it was like one person had ***** or like child **** and the other person was like a felony in possession of a firearm. But they were like known, known skinheads known Violent Dudes. I mean, they can call it cultural gathering all they want, but reality. And so I was really disappointed. I was like trying to fundraise for dudes. At home you know they were in Illinois State prison having a hard time because that place is rampant with white supremacists and it really shocked me at the time and it started making me think of like you know how important that work was but. We Fast forward to where we are right now. We have It's horrible fascist in the White House and then Steve Bannon's. Lackey also Trump immigrants are the interesting thing is, immigrants are and people that are perceived as non American. By these boneheads are being attacked really on all levels. I mean the governmental level. From, you know specific incidents. Travel bans in New York,

which they like to call a sanctuary city, which I would just say let's just retire that term because that doesn't mean anything. There's no kind of sanctuary where people get in New York City. People get arrested for jumping the turnstile, so to speak, or theft of service more than anything. And when you get arrested. Like and you go to Rikers or you don't go to Rikers. You still have to deal with the fact that these federal agents are in the courthouse. Like they're, uh, I happen. I definitely know they're in Multnomah County because I read about it online all the time. I'm faced with people like ICE agents are Monmouth County Courthouse and they're there to basically troll and just pull people. And in New York City we also have a situation where. You know people are getting called in for these interviews. Now that's the big thing. They get you once they get you at 26 Federal Plaza. The ice building? Then you're just gone, you know? And other than a few like high profile activists, that's it. Like people are just getting disappeared like right into the system. So that's the government aspect which is much to talked about. The travel ban. All those lawsuits and those lawsuits are all well and good, but we're not going to win. Because we had good lawsuits and judges vote in favor of us or whatever you know, for like you know the travel bans being smacked around by different federal judges. But that's a temporary thing. In New York we have these morons calling themselves proud boys. They're basically just like gussied up men's rights. Activists with like hints of like Islamophobia, misogyny and sort of like this fanboy thing for their leader. Their leader happens to be a former vice magazine cofounder, a Canadian immigrant mind you named Gavin McInnes. And when you see them. You pretty. Much expect I'm sorry this is such a. Bad when you see them you. Pretty much expect their moms to be yelling at. Them to do their dishes like they're like. They're like they are a step up, but they are toxic and this situation, this situation we find ourselves in is giving them like chutzpah like guts to like do stuff and I take. So I take. These people, at their word, I mean. I think a. Lot of this like. Liberal backlash this free speech defense stuff needs to be like totally destroyed like. Take them at their word. I mean like do you take yourself seriously when you say something? Do you mean it? Because these people mean it, you know. I mean, it's crazy. So I follow the situation. I was on probation for three years and I was like on egg shells and I very much horrible sports analogy. I always kind of felt like when I was in prison, like Coach was telling like I was in a very good sports. Player and like. Baseball so I like. I played really hard. At The Dirty uniform, but like I always felt like I was benched and like that's how I felt like when I was in prison. I was like a benched and so I even when I got out I'm like damn things are gonna be good and I'm like oh **** I'm on probation for three years so I've just been like very observing. Reading as much as I can following so. I follow everything with this. My little innopolis tour. I hope you all know what went down in Seattle with the young wobbly got shot in the stomach by apparently Elizabeth Hokna which is, you know the fascist individual, reactionary everyone thought. I mean, I guess it was presumed that it was. Husband that did it and now it kind of sounds like when I read this article I'm like, oh they're setting it up like a self-defense thing. They're set. Ended up that she was worried

about her husband and so had to shoot the guy at point blank range in the gut. I mean, there's a million things. If you were truly worried, which is doubtful that you could have probably done other than shooting someone in their stomach. But the truth is, they're haters, so there's no. That's not really. An issue obviously Berkeley gave Milo a really excellent welcome a few months ago and I think. You know it can't be overstated like these. I understand he got knocked off his pulpit, but and that was by the right, but it's foolish to think that we're not. We're not part of this, we're not part of this like chipping away, I think. You know, I think lately it's interesting. I have not been involved in environmental work for some time, but people will because of my past. Be like, oh, you're an environmentalist and I'm like I always feel like I'm trying to front like I don't really do environmental stuff. It's not that I don't think it's important, it's just sometimes I think we don't really get to pick always what we work on, like things end up in our. Laps I mean I have friends that like. Were on a particular path and I fell and their lives went like that. I mean, time outs on grad school and all kinds of stuff. I have like a support. My support crew is like 6 to 8 people that just devote. They're I mean like 8 years, nine years, like when we finally disbanded. It was such a like a pleasure for me to be like. Thank you. We need to like this is over, right? I'm out, I'm good but so we don't get to pick always what you know sometimes it. It literally is like what's needed. What is needed right now and who are you and what is your relationship and what could. You contribute. It's interesting, I get a lot of people always like. Recently, like last month, I know a lot of people or I know a few people that got arrested at the inauguration in DC. And so I'm sitting home and a bunch of these people got arrested and they're facing like 10 years in federal prison. Because when you're in DC, you're under federal law, and so they get. They got arrested for rioting, and the blowback has been really bad. That it appears that what happened is like one of the DC police, like gave a spreadsheet of information about the defendants to. A A compatriot of Richard Spencer, so this person at Radix magazine essentially just took the names and then found everyone on Twitter found everyone on Facebook and just started tweeting like crazy like their pictures. And with all this kind of anti-Semitic nonsense like look another Jew from New York and like all this disgusting stuff like phone numbers and employers and like a few of my friends and so. You know, I was like my friend, you know my signal was going off the hook like yo report these people and I'm just like trying to mobilize and I'm sitting sitting there like reporting people which felt weird at first. You know I was like, is this snitching and? And I'm like you know what? It's not, and so I'm reporting and blocking and calling people and like oh. And finally, you know we we get it, you know we get it done and. And yet I. Gotta say it feels gross like I don't really engage them much with the ideas cause I don't actually think that I'm going to convince them of anything. But it feels gross, and yet I. Don't think that really matters because. You know some of what we have to do, but might feel gross. I mean without. Pushback Milo and David Horowitz would have sat there and named like a bunch of undocumented pulled like a real McCarthy thing like we have a list here of undocumented students at UC Berkeley and a list if I'm

reading that, then what I'm essentially saying is I'm telling like these, like Gamergate. Dudes to like go attack them like they're cool, they're other and you should go get them. And so you know when people wring their hands. I don't think people in this room necessarily ring their hands, but I'm sure your parents do, and I'm sure, like my sister does, seeing like what happened in Berkeley, you have to like, ask yourself, well, what's the consequences of doing nothing? And without the pushback, what happens like you know we it's. It's hard to like quantify our victories, but I think we need to like understand like. Without obstruction. You know what happens? People's names get read out, people fear walking down the street or going on the subway. Little kids get told to go back home. I mean little. I don't really care where anyone's born from, so I don't care if they're from here or not, but little children being told to go back to Mexico. Go back here. Go back there hijabs getting ripped off people's. Heads like that, sort of. Stuff is is, you know, it feels like. Finger in the **** approach. But if we're not UPS, you know if we're not obstructing this. If we're not using the relative privilege that a lot of us perhaps have, then you know it's a disservice to marginalized communities. And I say this, you know, with a sense of being in it like I am like deep in this process of thought, I don't have actual answers of what we're supposed to do, but I do know that we have to like, be engaging, engaging on these topics. Like I, I'm sometimes dumbfounded by like I have all this interest in Antifa stuff in anti-fascist stuff and it's never been an issue. But like honestly, the world we're facing right now, it's messed up.

I had a really bad November I like I mean of course like the election was horrible so most people did. But I had like a really like debilitating sense of like being knocked off my feet like I just did not know what to do. I had about a week and 1/2. of this, like dread that. Just wouldn't leave me, and it was largely based on like. Things I care about. People I care about populations that I have, you know, empathy for standing rock like there's just all these, you know, horror show, parade of horrors and then like a week like a week into it it it kind of hit me like I was talking to my sister and she was like well. What does this mean for you? And I was like. Oh my God. Like I like convicted terrorists under the Trump administration like there's like 500 people convicted of so-called terrorist crimes in the US like, I mean, Trump has, like tweeted at like Occupy New York. People like at. At at the time, like he like, tweeted at my friend like some horrible insult like he's obviously a very petty person. And I I honestly you know it was. I kind of had to like what really pulled me out of it was just the fact that like all over the country people were like starting to like really pulled themselves out of this like existential dread. This like paralysis of like the first weeks and like really go for it. And I think like. You know, I I. I like most people made the mistake. I was like oh we're gonna have like this really familiar enemy for the next four years. Clinton, you know? I mean, I was an activist in the 90s and I was like, yeah, you're just like your husband and I know exactly how weak you are and how we can engage. You but Trump. You know it's a new thing and. I think for some people shutting down these like fascist events that are happening all over the country is a good focus, and for other people

it's going to be building up our power so we can effectively organize out organize them. But in terms of what we're doing, what we end up doing, I think it's important to note, you know, with any engagement with the state or against white supremacists. There's consequences. Often you know legal, but also medical. As we saw with Hex being shot in Seattle that are really seriously. I mean I already talked about that, but I mean to people. I know that in Sacramento in June, June 26th, 26 mobilization, 9 people got stabbed and sent to the hospital and these were. This was the mobilization against I believe, what they're calling themselves as the traditional Workers Party. Matthew, I believe. And you know they showed up and they were outnumbered. And when there were when there were fights, you know our side whooped them. But they stabbed 9 people and like we're not talking like slash marks, so like serious wounds in people's abdomens that required, like you know, thousands of dollars in care. And then recently I'm I don't know if people know, but the California Highway Patrol chips I guess. Just cracks me up. When I saw that I was like what? Suggested like 500 indictments for misdemeanor and felony cases for events stemming out of June 26, I mean five 473 indictments. So you know, obviously they've been talking to the right wing. The left the left has not been talking. They've been calling people. They've been calling all the people that got stabbed. Nobody's talking to them, but they've talked to the right, and so I'm sure the you know the rights got no compunction against snitching. I don't even think they care, and so you know we're looking at a situation where, like California indictments are that's essentially going to roll out, and so we need to have. People's backs I mean. I'm an individual that. Essentially benefited from a tremendous amount of support, and so I think, like when we're talking about anti-fascist stuff. Or all the resistance against Trump. We have to be there for people that fall, whether that's medically or legally. So anyhow, I'm. Going to wrap up soon, I know I've been rambling for quite some time. I'll just let you know, since like 2012 I was. I was released from prison. I was in the halfway house for six months and then went home. I got arrested for like a day for writing an article or for the Huffington Post that was really ridiculous, but my my focus. You know which is probably not going to be much of a surprise. Is building support for political prisoners in the US. To say that I was the beneficiary of like a a silly amount of support would be an understatement. I mean I was. More so than most people received like a tremendous amount of movement support, and I'm like eternally grateful for it. I mean I, it's kind of hard not to talk about it, but I had like a really amazing support crew and. They kept me with books and visits and money and paid rent. And you know, did so many things and so many like T-shirts and big sales and benefits. And like helping out my codefendants and everything I told myself. Like you know this is sort of like. That kind of like. You know it's a bit like the lifelong debt that I feel you know, not necessarily. Not only to those people, but to the movement. I mean, if the movement is there for you, you know, I think that it it gives people a sense of knowing that we're in this together, that if you fall, you're not just going to be forgotten because there's nothing like prison to make you feel that you're gone, I mean. It's like that. It's like the law and order. I can't believe I'm.

Referencing law and. Order again, I really honestly. It's so addictive I can't watch it. But I'm more of a. SU person, but I've watched it. But I try not to now because it pulls me in and once it pulls me in. But you know? the sound of the jail cell. The door. Like there's been so many times like in the early, especially in the early time where like they like you know you, you're just like cuffed and dragged. Through a a hallway a. Long hallway and they just put you in then and they love slamming the door when they, whether they slam it or they shut it like sideways boy. They love that and that sound is so jarring and it really like. I mean, my first day I was arrested that they led me down this hallway that. I thought would never end it. Was like a like a. Freaking what's the word? Not Escher, but it was like this ridiculous concentric hallway that just I was like. Where am I going like and? You know they slammed the door and you you just stink like I'm that's it and. I'm like really well aware of the good people in my life and yet you put me in that situation. I have to. Like tell myself, like they know you're here like people know it's on the computer you're not forgotten about, but that that everything about the surrounding of prison is designed to Dissociate you from that to separate you and kill it you know. I always felt I was really lucky. I had a seven-year sentence it's determinant. It wasn't like a 7 to 10 with parole with chance. So I was, you know, I didn't have an appeal so I never had that period of time of like constantly waiting for the bad news. Or the good news I was with men that had 30 year sentences for talking about doing something talking. Like I was with men that were literally pushed by informants to do something ridiculous. Told them no the whole time, but because they didn't, they were literally. This is the gymnastics because they did it then wrapped them out to the FBI. They were considered like the conspiracy. Conspiracy law is crazy, so I always felt really, you know, really lucky at it. Determinate sentence that it was finite. I could look at the calendar. I could do my calculation. When I'm going home. So when I came. Home I decided I wanted to help. You know political prisoners in my neck of the woods in New York that you know we're not doing determined sentences that have been in for basically longer than I had been in now. A lot of these men have gotten out in the last couple of years. I mean, a lot of long term prisoners have come home in the last couple years like Albert Woodfox or Herman Wallace of the angle. The three. I mean, they're yeah they were in prison longer than I have been. And so I do a lot of support for men from movements that I have a lot of respect for, like the Black Panther Party or the anti imperialist movement of the Sixties, 70s and 80s. People like Herman Bell, Angelillo, Munta Keane, David Gilbert, Robert Seth Hayes. I work in a collective called certain days which produces a calendar every year. It's like an educational thing, but it's also a fundraiser because we then take the money that we raise, which is usually, you know, thousands of dollars and we give that back basically to groups that do solid work with prisoners that that really like put prisoners at the forefront of what they're doing. And we also fund. I mean, this year we're funding release aging people in prison. We're funding an indigenous blockade in Homestead called Eunice Stouten in Canada and we're funding Ademir, which is a Palestinian group that does support for like the literally 10,000 Palestinian

political prisoners. And despite you know this horrible administration, you know I still feel that there's a lot that can. Happen in not only freeing political prisoners, but the prisoner struggles that are happening around this country, whether they're things like the industrial Workers Organizing Committee, the prison strike, I think a lot of what happens in this country and the prison level happens on the state level, and so there's no reason to think that there can't be that we shouldn't. You know, in addition to all this like reactive defensive stuff, we're doing that we should continue to push forward. You know? You know they say the bad thing about every state is that it has a prison system and federal prisons and ICE. But the good thing about every state is they have prison system, and so there's no shortage of like areas to work on. And obviously no shortage of work to be. Done, I hope. That people can check out Justin, raise your hand. Yeah Justin, back there with the Red Hat, Portland, ABC, Oregon. Jericho has stuff out there. Definitely really supportive of prisoner struggles. I was in the federal prisoner system. Prison system which is full of a lot of people that are not interested in organizing because the federal government. The second you organize, they blast you. I mean I got moved three times and I was really not engaging in much organizing, but just anything. I mean, I was. I was at Marion once and they. People did a food strike of one day food strike because they were phasing out beard trimmers because beard trimmers are used for tattoos basically. But for me it was used for my beard and so I was like really like I paid \$30.00 for this janky beard trimmer and you're going to take it away so I was like, yeah, I won't go to breakfast. They sure boy they 25 people just get jacked to another prison. The next day. I mean, that's how they handle it in the federal system because they have 120 prisons all throughout the country. So it's. Easy to take a new. Yorker and stick them in like I don't know. MCLA And which I would obviously hate. Or in my case he just stuck me in like various Midwest prisons. So I definitely am very supportive of prison struggles and I do think that you know, I'm I. I think you know we have a. In the grand scheme of things where we're talking about political prisoners, we're talking about people from our movements, but it's a small amount of people. And obviously, the prison system in the United States is like 2.3 million 1.6 in prison, 700,000 in jails, and you got all the ice and military prisons. And I mean it's a an enormous amount, and so obviously it. My idea is never that we would just engage. In this tiny group of people. Well, we find like commonality between our struggles. I want to thank everyone for coming. I feel like I've been ranting forever. I want to thank Rad Edu Amanda and Justin Esther for the wonderful introduction. I am sorry that I've been talking for so long it feels like 2 hours. I also just wanted to announce one event it was supposed to be tomorrow, but it's going to be. Held on April 16th. It's called fighting charges, strengthening movements. It's going to be put on by the tilted scale collective who just made a really excellent book about how to be a well, not how to. Be, but how to handle being a criminal defendant. It's how to handle being a criminal defendant, it's. Not the social. Justice Action Center on 400 SE 12th St. It's next Sunday, April 16th. We'll do Q. And A thank you so much for indulging me and hearing me out. Thank you.

I also just have one request, don't ask. A question that I wouldn't want to hear in court. So if that's cool. If it sounds bad in your head, then just. You know? Thank you.

And you're like, why would anyone do? They they. They do actually all. Or not, so are there any questions? Does anyone have? Any questions just raise your. Hand and like talk loud.

QUESTIONER #1: Yeah, so a little kind of. General question, but if you were. To talk to other activists, how would you describe security culture to them?

DANIEL: Go back in time because there was a really good training here like 2 days ago. Now I don't know, sorry there was, but yeah, that's not useful security. Culture I guess. You know there's no like I don't have like eight points about this topic, but I will say this. Like where I have failed its security culture has been not paying attention to feelings that I had internally. My own internal monitor about things that were creeping me out. Somebody asked me a question that I don't like and I I'm choosing social nicety rather than hey like learning boundaries. Right, I was wiretapped in New York City by a person that has never been in New York City before, and who had a crazy story about why he was in New York City. And it's interesting. I was tabling for a conference. I was extremely tired. I had to go all the way to the northern tip of Manhattan and I was exhausted and I was sitting there and I had myself in a position where I was like weak, like I wasn't like I, I didn't feed myself properly at the like that morning and when I saw this person who was someone, I committed a crime with. All the lights were going off in. My head, but I ignored them and I was just like. You know, we, you know all he had to do to that wiretap to the grand jury was acknowledge that we knew each other from the past, and to not basically to not disagree with him when he made these statements. And so I was just being quiet. And, you know, but I did disagree. I didn't say what the hell are you talking about. I don't know you. I never did that with you and therefore that was. Enough so I think trust in your gut. Security culture, it could be, it could be. It could be. You know there's a lot of opinions on the topic and sometimes I think we can make. It so that we we don't even we don't communicate. But there has to be some kind of like, yeah, you're talking people that are full and kiss and vinegar. Well, let the piston vinegar out in front of people they trust, right? Because things that people say could be used against them twisted I again have to. I feel like this is like my. Purgatory, almost like I have to admit. Like I said, some stuff on that wiretap that like out of context was outrageously, you know. But when you read the full thing you're like, oh OK, that makes sense, you know. So I think I think the big thing is trusting your gut and maybe taking your time and building relationships with people. And knowing a. Little bit more about people, I think that. Actually goes for anything. I'm not specifically talking about direct action, I'm talking about just like building movements like you know, and if someone is creeping you out like there's probably a reason why you know. So sorry, this probably isn't one great answer to that question. OK, thanks of course anyone else?

QUESTIONER #2: Restoration do you ever caught up with the mainstream environmental people? And then how did that conversation go? Big issue like how do you manage environmental organizations? Either react to somebody who engaged in property destruction? Have you had this kind of?

DANIEL: I don't really run into mainstream environmentalists too often. I usually tend to run into radical environmentalists. People that like you know I mean, maybe that's that whole thing that you avoid places in which you're going to get a bunch of grief. But I actually. During the support campaign, we really tried hard to reach out to people and not just directly because I was in no position to reach out to groups. But we have, like you know, radical friends that had, like you know, I had worked for a lot of these different organizations that I. I mean, I have friends now that work for Greenpeace. Iran and all that and I had gone to. Ruckus camps, which when they used to do that and we tried really hard like reached. To, I mean, I'll be honest, we reached out to Greenpeace and Rainforest Action Network and Ruckus Society. We reached out to Julia Hill to Julia Butterfly. I mean we reached out. To like we we actually sent at one point, like a packet about the case. So like 304 hundred groups PETA every. I mean every animal rights group and every prisoner. Work group and every eco group in the country at the time. It was like an enormous mailing and some of that was fruitful, but for the most part those groups were like. Some worse than others.

The former head of Greenpeace John Pasquino Tondo. They've had, you know, a million different eds since then, but John Pass. Contando was really cool in that he was very clear with the media that we were not part of the movement that we were troublemakers, that we weren't really environmentalist. I guess if you pursue a different strategy. You know, if you break the law, which Greenpeace breaks the law all the time, but in a very you know, chill way that he decided that we weren't part of the movement, we didn't get a lot of help from any of the others. Julie Butterfly offered to write a letter that was nice. It wasn't expecting that we didn't get a lot of help from mainstream environmentalists. I don't know if you're talking about. Like the gang of 10 or the group of 10. I mean, those groups have no interaction with the with the with the grassroots. You know? I don't want to leave out any groups, but honestly there wasn't hell a lot and I don't really interact much with mainstream environmentalists, so I don't know, but often what I find with mainstream folks in general is they're. You know my conversations with me, like if they don't know about like the background or all everything's cool until you find that out and then. It and then it's like a little. Awkward, right? Cause you're like, oh.

But yeah, I don't interact with them. I interact with like Earth firsters and like you know, climate, people and stuff and they all seem rather OK with stuff or supportive. So I would love to know. I'm sure that it's discomfort though I don't. I think you know people. I have a. I mean it's OK to have a principled like disagreement with like those tactics. I mean, I have criticisms about those things as well. I just think like as much as like sometimes like some.

Like mainstream environmentalists can annoy me with their, like near sightedness and like myopia and like very narrow and stuff. And I still don't see them as other. I still see them as like you know, like in some ways the way I see like some of my cousins, my cousins. Like conservative and like haters and trump lovers and you know they like guns and whatever like that's their thing. But it's still my cousins, right? I don't, I don't view them as like worthy of getting sent to jail because they have disagree. You know they do dumb things, so to speak, so I don't know.

I like to think that there's been more progress in the last 10 years. With like convincing people that there's a reason people do things, it's not like nihilism. It's not. Like oh, I wanna destroy. You know, like I. I'm sure there's. Some people like that, but. It's like means to an end. It wasn't. It wasn't like some like. I love to destroy things, therefore, I'm going to burn something I mean not for me I. Don't know so.

QUESTIONER #3: I'm curious. I think that's the folks who live here now. Who do organizing, particularly like climate and environmental? And direct action and stuff like these. Often, the narrative that we're living in the shadow of the green. Scare, right? And that like should. Was getting big and we were getting effective and people were really doing things in the 90s. You know. And then the green scare happened. Everything fell apart and now it's wishy washy now it's not. Big now it's. Everyone's actually really afraid of going to jail for 20 years, which is a real threat, right? And then and. And we see. It more like there's historical evidence that.

DANIEL: Sure, sure.

QUESTIONER #3: It wasn't before. But I'm just wondering like how? Knowing that you don't actively organize now what's your perspective on that narrative you know and like how much of that like we were making gains you know.

DANIEL: I think that viewpoint I don't know who. I guess that maybe you're saying that that narrative is like. Sure, sure I don't. I can't exactly say that. I mean, I would not say that things we were making progress. I've actually heard that's a bit of a trope in some ways. I've heard it used in other ways, like. What was it it was like September 11th happened, right before there was supposed to be like a really big convergence. I think it was a World Bank thing. In in DC. And it was actually looking like it was going. To be pretty big and. I mean, a lot of that was like East Coasters felt. Out from Seattle, from the WTO and they tried with a 30 or a 17, whatever it was a. And seen it just wasn't the same cause it's DC, right? And it's like I guess nothing to smash or I don't know. I but people you. Know, I mean it was a sensation. Seattle was like a sensational thing. It was like probably one of my favorite moments of like active organizing. So I get it why people might feel left out, but. What I'm saying is like people were like oh, it's only September 11th didn't happen then we. And I was. Like you know, everything looks really different in the rearview mirror. You know you don't see the wrinkles. You know you don't see like the ***** and so I can't say that I felt like. Things were really. The great on the environmental level, environmental organizing level and then the green skirt, you know, screwed it up.

The green scare is not synonymous with my case. It's sort of. I used it to describe like this increase in like these prosecutions. You know, the animal Enterprise Protection Act being turned to the animal? Terrorism Act prosecutions of things that had not been prosecuted before people getting more time. My case, Jeff lures Eric McDavid, you know, and so I just. I don't think that's true. I don't think that things are rosy and. Then it got chilled I. Do think the green scare. Now again, I wasn't in Oregon at that time, but what I do understand is. There was a. Period of of intense fear. Sometimes it it had to do. I mean you have to understand like. A lot of people. In my life like got. Freaked the **** out when I got arrested because they didn't know anything so it looked like I was just plucked out of the blue accused of doing something. I had nothing to do with and that is a really just disconcerting notion to think that like you're, you know. And of course we don't know everything that each other are doing. And so that's really what that was about, but. So in that context, like I think like people in the Northwest that knew me must have been like ****. Am I next, you know, and that could have an effect on organizing. I do think there's things that like are where deleterious to like organizing a northwest like the. Lauren help me out that a gag. No, not a gag that interfering with agricultural operations, which is, like, you know, cause a timber sale is an agricultural operation ridiculously enough and so like interfering with that operation became like a a way like I think they were like doing injunctions or keeping people out of the timber sales. I mean there to say that like. You know if what you're looking at right now is a situation where, like the movement is, like you know, not very active and stuff. And that's happened after the green scare. You know, it doesn't necessarily mean the green scare caused that you know. I think it had part to do with it. I think it. Had a chilling effect I think for animal rights like the ETA. Had a had a chilling effect although I can't speak with. Certainty about that. I mean, these things are all very relative, but I don't think things were great. And then the green scare killed it, I think. People do have legitimate fears about things. I think the fear though that like you're gonna get 20 years for doing nothing, is a very different fear than you're gonna get 20 years for doing something you know. So like when my situation, our situation, my case was we did all this stuff before September 11th and then the world changed dramatically the law and suddenly I was like. Huh, like this is a this is a different world, like the stakes are actually much higher, you know, but it's interesting. I actually had never heard that, but I. Hope that that's not. Too pervasive, because I do think it could be. It could, it could be like the the. Like an excuse almost. I think there's there. There's times that. Organizing is difficult in a lot of different contexts, and there's reasons also why organizing Flyers. I always thought that I when I moved to Oregon. I was like why the hell were there all? These this like forest activism in the mid 90s, but that there's like very specific reasons like the salvage rider had a huge amount to. Do with it. You know I was at a a club in New York City that used to sponsor like meetings. It was called wetlands so used to have like eco meetings and stuff every week. It's where I like cut my teeth and like learn about all these issues. We had like the Headwaters Forest Cascadia roadshow. They used to do roadshows.

I think they still do. I don't know the earth. First journal is on a roadshow soon. I think but. Roadshows were big like they play music, you see videos, you get amped, come out to our campaign, it's like total recruitment Dr. and they showed all these videos and I was like. Yo, there's so many timber cells and so much activists. And then when I went to Oregon and I met everyone I was kind of like what's your commonality and frankly a lot of the activists. Were all at EU of O at. That time, you know. And there was like geographical reasons like the I5 made for very easy, like NS traversing. You know from like. Well, I forget that. Sugarloaf, right that's an old one, and all the different like timber cells that took place. You know, Warner Creek, Sugarloaf, all that and. But yeah, it's. it's interesting. I'm sure the green scare had something to do with it, but I don't think it's what we should be focused on in terms of. I mean, we have to find a way to get past the fear right to find new ways of doing things and maybe not repeating ourselves. There was a time where like occupying. Member sales was the thing and there was, I mean God. An outside Eugene. At one point they were like five sets windbury and Fall Creek and Elliott stayed and you know so. Yeah, sorry, that's not like definitive, but that's a good point. I mean, I'm curious about that. I want to talk to other. People about that thank. You any other questions?

QUESTIONER #4: I super appreciate the life cycle of activists whether it. I'm seeing so many more people. Come out of the woodwork now for like Main St. Than I've ever seen in organizing. And there's a lot of reactionary impetus, producer building or reactionary actions. I'm curious if you can speak to the utility or the value for you personally in engaging in actions that took long term foresight and strategy and planning and trust building and. Yeah, just the value and.

DANIEL: Well, I'll say one thing about the this concept of new people. Is that like when I first got involved I. I find like everyone's origin stories are really interesting and I often ask people like how did? How did you get involved? Cause like I got involved as a 20. 3 year old. Not in the. Long scene like I listen to hip hop growing up like we didn't have like. I mean there were metal heads and they were. Holes and so we. Didn't mess them in in Queens. So like the idea like music and politics and the same was like if those guys had politics they were horrible. They were like racist so. So I didn't get involved that way. I like, went to school and I came home from college and I went backpacking. In in Asia and I met human rights activists actually randomly and then I came back and I was like I want to get involved in activism. And the anarchist infoshop was so standoffish, except like one person, and he's actually a friend, still. But really, you know, it's not. It wasn't a lot of entry points, but I met this woman who is. Collecting signatures for spay, neuter, and I was like alright assign your petition. I was like I'm not into something different than this and she's like you should go to wetlands since I went to wetlands and when I did and. I'm getting to my. Point, sorry like. I realize I'm just. On and on so. I got involved in this community. That was like ohh, I'm like who's Paul Watson? Why are you writing him? Why is he in jail? What's the you know? What's we're the whales at? You know, like? Like and they showed all this they showed. All this crazy. Footage and I. Was like holy. **** like I'm like clueless.

I didn't know any of this was going on after what, like you know, and but one thing they did really good is I had immense amounts of literature they had out and I would just. Give me tons of stuff and I was like one of the first books they gave me. This is not the first book to give to a new activist, they gave me like agents of repression by Ward Churchill, which is like a parade of horrors of what the FBI but it really of course imprinted on my like ideas about like who I was up against, but. I'm like they killed that. Like yeah, I mean I, you know I saw a documentary about Huey Newton and I read Malcolm X stuff like but I was like blown away and but they I was given so many like resources and under and patients and people talk to me about like why is this not vegan and this is and why is this? What's no compromise and what is that? You know what's hard line? Well, it's garbage. Don't pay any attention, you know and you know like, why aren't you all listen to really bad ***** music like why? Don't you listen? To hip hop or something like. No, but it was. They were so patient and. I was. Full of questions and I was just like I mean to the point that I was like suspected to be. A cop for like 6 months. You know, like full on like that dude asked too many. Questions I'm like cause. I'm new you. Know like I get it I'm like older than you but I it's only because I we are not in the exact same path like and I went to school. And like hearing about things and I wanted to get involved and I've been begging. To get involved like so like there's gotta be. We, there's gotta be ways to like help new people figure **** out because they're insufferable when they start, right? They don't they think they invented resistance. Like they knee jerk into really just like the mainstream like they they. Just come out of. Mainstream, like which mainstream politics is like you know, like I don't want to say liberal. They just have. A lot of bad ideas and so. They often don't even realize that they're part of a movement, or like I was talking to someone recently that was like these people are so raw that they don't even realize that shift's happening elsewhere on this issue, and I was like that's like next level, like I didn't even consider that you know. So I try really hard now to like. I'm like pretty aggressively give I give out information like it's going out of style like I try to like. Be patient with new people. Try not to be annoyed at questions or try to over like pretty much overwhelmed people books. Oh, have you read this? I read that Amanda can tell you I give her books all the time and like I'm always like you must read this and then I check check up to see if she's read it like months later. But I think and. Every man is not a new person. I just decided that I want to. Give her books but. No, not at all, but I. I know some younger folks almost. Like, have you read this, have you? Read that so. You had a good part of the second, the. Second part of yeah...

QUESTIONER #4: And I know people who. Enamored with the idea.

DANIEL: Yeah, I understand. OK yeah. I think on a movement level.

QUESTIONER #4: There were reactionary actions that you took, but forming the groups of the people you worked with, the long term visiting of having that security culture...

DANIEL: Oh, you talking about my support crew. You said eight years. That's why I'm trying to. We talk about like action stuff or. Oh OK gotcha yeah. Yeah, yeah for sure.

QUESTIONER #4: Your ELF actions, that these were more long term...

DANIEL: Well, you make. A good point, and it's one that I actually probably should consider more, which is that. You know, sometimes like things like heavy actions or criticize, you know, for being dangerous. And then the retort is always well, you should see how much preparation and you talk about the preparation. I've had these conversations with like my lawyers originally, where I've been like because they weren't. They didn't know about any of this, and I'm like, no you. Don't really understand. Like the tedium involved, and actually what I think is relevant. Not we should all kind of like thank you. We should did she? Oh you dropped something. She's like a hair, a hair tie so disruptive. I'm just joking ohhhh man. Always always the black clad messengers. That's a. Reference to a. Super old zine, by the way. Only Esther got it though. Thank you Wedge got it, which knows. One thing that I haven't. Done and this is hilarious because you make a great point is...

Oh I'm talking about the preparation. OK, so like. All this preparation into doing these actions, and you do it that way because it's dangerous. You don't want to hurt yourself. You don't want to hurt. I didn't want to hurt. Myself, I don't want to hurt others. The point was not the sensationalist thing. You're like trying to achieve a point. So you do all this preparation, you make sure everything safe and cool safe harm reduction like safe as possible. And I would say to people that. Were like really critical of like. These actions like if. Only you spent half the time that we spent doing your campaign. We would probably be much better off, but it's not a lesson that I can fully say I've actualized and I never even thought about that. Until you just said it, which is that. We should approach like the work we do. it's not like just about like whether we're breaking the law or destroying something. But like we should approach the work we do in terms of like long term building with people we trust. I mean, how do we do that is harder? But long term with trust and like seriousness and like so I do definitely.

There's a part of me that's like when I when I'm interested in the topic, I tend to try to exhaust the topic and sometimes it's hard. Because like it's topics I'm ignorant about, like the anti-fascist history. I'm really ignorant about. I mean I have like little bits of knowledge like oh the White Rose or this, but it's all scattered right? So I'm in this like long term like. Learning process right? But I do think that the reaction it's so easy to be reactionary, and while it was happening a few months ago, I remember going like. Like my partner and I had a weekend planned and then the airport stuff like broke out and I was like oh and I was having these pangs. And like I gotta go there. I got to go there and I kept telling myself dude it's a marathon. It's not a Sprint. You've been involved 20 years, you know better than to like, don't rush headlong into stuff. There's 5000 people at JFK right now. Are you serving the movement and yourself best by being there?

Because although I'm not on probation and although you? So I have no technically no like legal prohibitions different than the average person. The perception that a judge or prosecutor or you as attorney will have on me will be a little different in terms of my ability to get bail for instance, I would probably not get bail if I was arrested. They'd be like, oh, you're you have a history, you know. All they have to do is say terrorism and that that **** kills everything. So I've had to like you know, step back and remind myself. Like you know, long. Term like it's really easy to like get just to throw ourselves at it. But there's Scott whether it's. Intended or not, there's a certain part of this strategy, and it's Bannon's strategy, and it's pretty naked and obvious, but there's a certain part that is about burning us out. You know, like I remember I was very active during the Bush years and people always used to say like does he even care because his public relations was? I don't pay attention, but like it all has been confirmed that he definitely paid attention. I mean, it's the same with Nixon, you know. They pay attention like if you're loud. Enough if you push them. If you force them, they will change their horrible behavior. They all act like they don't care.

So the Banon strategy, is I think exhaustion. It's like throw as much at you know, and we are like knocking away somethings and there's some **** that's sticking behind us and it's going to become our new reality. The reality where you have to give a ***** password to a customs agent. You know, like we. Flew out here. This is our first time and I'm always concerned about flying and so we get there really early and all that and I'm always ready and we power down our phones because we're like you're not going to. You know, I don't have my thumbprint thing active because you're not going to take my damn thumb and stick it on the phone and all that ****, but. It's all new and we were just like, you know. I think. I think that there's a lot of danger in reactionary in reactionary stances towards what's going on. And a lot. Of what could happen is that all the new people can get burnt out. Like I realized that there was a period of time where I went to like four or five different events a week. Like a few months ago and I was. Like oh, this ain't this ain't. Sustainable, like on a mental level. I was like stressed out, I was like you have to be smarter. You have a particular like everyone. We all have our particular strengths and gifts, and I'm like you have something to offer, but it's not just being a body in a. And I say stupid protest because the one I'm talking about was stupid where it was. Just like we're standing there. Like really, wedged in. Nothing was gonna get rowdy and I wanna say rowdy. I mean enough that like the people in the building would be like yo what's going on out there? I mean, it was just real like a tame protest is like such an oxymoron, like why have it? Why why, you know anyhow? So yeah, I do think like I don't know how do we convince new people to like cool down because you know? If they're young, cool down from an older person, is like it's like kerosene. I remember I remember like. I'd be like don't tell me. To cool down the reason things are bad. Is because of. You like? Your generation, I mean. There was a actually a period of time where. Like I mean it's crazy new left people in Oregon, Portland and Eugene were pretty actively trying to put the word out. You know we want us like old. You know with. Our heads we're trying to talk

like. We want to. Get communicate what we have to say to you know with people, but you know there was no venue for that right? But it was obvious that. You know, and I was like, well, I would love to hear what you have to say but ****, I don't know who you work for like you know I mean write, write an article or something. I can read it, you know, but like you know what it is like. Young people, full of **** and vinegar don't always really listen to people that have been around, and that's that messed up generation gap that exists. We're like when we're young we're like screw you and then like when you have something like I struggle with the like what venue do I share any perspective with? That's not, I don't know. **** or like I never want to be that person, you know. And so I like, are you suggesting otherwise? With friends it's. Different but with strangers. I never want to tell. Anyone what to do? Yeah anyhow, I adore. My case, I always said like I. I don't know if people know. About there was like a certain amount of comedy to this case and not comedy like it was very serious, but **** would happen in court. That was just to me, was irregular and one of the things was the judge fixated on some of the defendants she. So back it up. I'm sorry I don't even know where to start. They the prosecution said kind of correctly that we would have we had these meetings which were jokingly called book club meetings. You know, like a book club like we're all going to get together and talk about a book, you know. Fair enough, it's. It's vaguely accurate. The judge. Must have just come up with like this, pun or this funny idea where she was now during her statement where she gives the sentence to all the code of to all the defendants said she was going to have a theme to each one. But what I realized is that each theme was like a book. You know so and so. I was really worried because I. Was like I don't know what book she's going to pick, but I hope I read it at least so I know and I can at least. Be mad about like. She's getting it wrong. But I was really scared that. She was going to. Like she she gave my co-defendant a. Book report To read 3 cups of tea which is written by a plagiarizer. By the way, Greg Mortenson, he I created situations that actually never happened about coming under fire from the Taliban. And stuff, and I was really scared that the judge was going to make me do some kind of arsonist, scared straight thing. Where like I was. Going to like have to talk. I know it's irrational now, but like at the. Time she was coming up with. These like, oh you got to write a book report and I was. Like, OK, that's unprecedented. I never heard. Of that like and I'm like. What if I have to do like this like? Dare, kind of. And I was like and it really, but it's I actually have a point other than the bad joke, which is like I don't want to be prescriptive and I didn't want to ever have to like. I'm like screw you like I've been through this you got your pound of flesh. I'm not interested in talking to people about what they shouldn't do or what they should do. I'm like so I'm kind of telling both sides like. You know, screw you, I'm not telling people what to do, they need to think for themselves. And I'm also telling like people that are supportive. Like Oh yeah, you want to know what to do because you want to be lazy and not think about it yourself. You have to go through that process yourself. I'm very deep. I mean I'm in the process of figuring out like I don't have like conclusions on. I have like a lot of like what the **** are we supposed to do

now, you know, but I do think like your point is well raised and I want to consider it. In terms of my own, like. Process of like I should be working seriously with people I trust and care about online campaigns that, like you know that are serious. Like you know that require trust and. Like you know, a lot of thought and analysis because God knows we did it. Then like in terms of like really taking it seriously and we should take the work we do. Seriously, we're regardless of tactical stuff. I mean, think about strategy and tactics, and you know strategy first you know so. Long answer, sorry any other questions. I'm sorry. It was really weird. I've only read the transcript once, but it was vaguely it wasn't doctor Jekyll and Mr. It wasn't that book, it was a. Book about Justice Harry Blackmun, a former Supreme Court Justice who I did not get the relevance. But there was a doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde mask analogy, so it was we took a break. She went, I think on the computer. Looked on the support site came back annoyed. And said Yeah, because I think the way it. Works is that the defendant Allocutions makes the sentencing. Statement as it was. And then there's a break. And then she goes through a rigamarole reading the whole thing. So what happened was she essentially said that I was pulling a doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde on her because. What I said was so different than what like I literally had no access to the website. It was run by my support crew and it was very chill. It wasn't like I mean it was. It was like a defendant website not knowing like hey, these actions are great. It was like we support Daniel. He's from Rockaway. I mean it was like very like so I was like you're mad about the site because. And I'm ohh she was upset about fundraising. So that was fundraising to pay lawyers. That was a problem. So yeah, it was Doctor Jekyll, Mr. I wish you would have just picked that book because it's a good book at least, but I guess I was pulling like a she thought the website was so different than what she saw in court there for who are. You you know. And then I pronounced 84 months. And here's why and so.

QUESTIONER #5: On how like young or like newer actors that are like definitely feel like I don't like to. Feel that reactive. And just like how? To build like longer term communities or like Rd. trusting communities and also like. Ways in which. Like in kinds of. Involvement that are like attaching like can always watching, like attaching cells to the larger community and not just like staying in a bubble.

DANIEL: A little yeah.

QUESTIONER #5: And the second question, any good tips for letter writing?

DANIEL: Ohh yeah yeah, that's a good one. Yeah, sure, absolutely yeah it is intimidating. Well, I'll get to your first question first.

I think there's no quick approach to that. I think it's time I think what happens is at a certain point I was like a brand new activist and like. You know I was talking about like being insufferable and know it all and stuff and then overtime like. Yeah, there is no fast way to build relationships with people. Trust takes time and. I think being real with people and like having sorry. I think understandings like I, I have people I'm close to that like I do political work with and they're not always synonymous with my friends, and I think it's cool to have, like friends that are don't are not exactly

like political clones of yourself, and I think it's better for self development anyway, to engage with like different people. People that like because we all have like different sides and so I don't think it's bad to like have like different aspects of yourself that are like. Complemented by certain people and it doesn't mean that you have to organize politically with your best friends or that the people you organize with need to be your best friends. There's some people I work with really well that, like you know, like we probably would not go to a show together or something. But like I really like them, you know that's not a really great answer, but that's the first thing that came to mind. But yeah, it takes time. And the other thing you you said about the there's a lot to say about the. Bubble, I mean most activist scenes. I know that people like to refer to certain cities as bubbles. You know, Oakland now is the one to rag on. It used to be Eugene and I mean it's been Lawrence or whatever, but I think activist scenes in general are incredibly like. Inward focused, destructive in terms of like. Sometimes I feel like there's a tremendous amount of like cleaning the deck of like a sinking ship that goes on like it's much easier to turn inward and frankly turn our guns inward than it is to face outward. It's not to say that we we we shouldn't be dealing with the way we're treating each other, because that's really important, but sometimes that it can be really intense and destructive in terms of like it's not building, it's destroying. I find 1 interesting thing is the use of jargon, and I try really hard. It's easy for me to dork out. I mean, I like this weekend. I've seen old friends and it's been really easy to like just. Go there, you know, with like old stories and self referential **** and I yet I feel like it's like when you go into an activist space and people are speaking in code and you're just like, I mean, that's what it's. That's what I actually think it feels like to anyone that's new, and I think as real as you can be, and relatable as you can be, it's not like a task to do that. I just think it's. For me, like eschewing like some aspects of our our subculture that I think are just really off, not even off putting, but like at a certain point, I feel. Like in my case when I was younger, like the way I dress or the way I act, or even this like, there was like almost a persona you know and like you put it on and it's supposed to communicate something. And yet, if you're in political movements like a persona, it's kind of like a. You know how, like a lot of times in info shops. People are like super unfriendly and you think to yourself you're in info shop. People are coming in. It's like the bad version of like really data reference. A record store got like that record store person was. I'm sure in Portland they're still here, but like they're horrible people like I went to like. Yeah, what is it now wouldn't you Lucy Parsons Wouldn't wouldn't shoe. Wouldn't shoe person was seriously shy and like shyness is cool like I get it like I get shy sometimes, but if I'm behind a counter at an anarchist info shop, shyness is like that. I mean, you got to look up and say hi, you know like just hi or can I get? I think they have coffee or something. I don't know like and so. I think like it's OK to be like. Like talk to ***** strangers or talk to people like I think the less jargon the better. I think the more relatable I think like people Trump or otherwise like people are not like in indifferent or clueless about like the fact that like this world we live in is like face with really serious problems. I think people

turn away. From it because it's painful, right? And so. So obviously, like I think that that is destructive, but I think like just talking to ourselves like subcultural, with our little jargon is really tedious and as much as that could be like jettisoned, the better you know, and I'm not suggesting that it's not a time out place for that, but like it's really like movement, it's deleterious to like attracting anyone other than. What ends up being carbon copies of ourselves.

Writing letters to prisoners? Nobody writes letters anymore. I don't even know how like the post office works. I think it's like I mean I used to say it was like Netflix and letters for prisoners, but nobody gets DVD's. So like we're it's really just. It's like I don't know how it even operates, but. I'll say that, like. Letter writing's A lost art like I when I was a kid like I had pen pals like, which is bizarre to think I know someone actually that has their best friend is a pen pal from the back page of like maximum rock'n'roll and they're still friends like they grew up rurally. They were punks. They like writing their American friend from Canada, is like really intense, but nobody does that anymore, and So what I tell people at these letter writing nights in New York is you don't have to write like this epic like thing. I think writing a letter in which you share a little bit about yourself. It's kind of like a conversation like you wouldn't walk up to. Someone and ask them like 5 questions in a row without offering anything. But like they're they were trying. I know it's, but that's exactly what a letter is like I have gone and letters you know and then. Like damn like this is vampyric like I you. You asking a lot for me like like. I'm very a. I got a letter so I'm very appreciative. I got a letter that's like the baseline. But then I'm like. Wow, like you asking about my case like it's kind of like going up and like hey, what's your momma's name? How old is she? It's like, you know. I think it's just random so. I always. Say like it's a give and take a letter should you give and take? It's like you offer a little bit you maybe tell them what's up. Details I think tell them like people. If you're asking about you know writing people in prison, I think it's really good to offer some stuff about yourself to it's OK to ask some questions, but maybe not a million of them. I think it's OK to understand that the person probably suffering from like some like underwhelming amount of stimuli and so describing maybe some stuff that's interesting or compelling. You would think that maybe. Like, especially once you get to know someone you would think. Ohh, I don't want to tell them about good things that are. Happening because you know they can't experience that. But for me the experience was otherwise I would ask people to tell me what the hell. Is going on in their life because it was like somewhat of a vicarious thing where I was like, OK, well, you know, I'm really glad like. You know that so and so got married or that someone so floated the Grand Canyon and sent me a postcard on a mule. Which is true story people in this room so. And you know. So I was really like excited about hearing about people's lives, so I think it's good to tell people like and, and I think it's cool to share political stuff. I think like you know, it's again like understanding that people are reading that letter. Depending on the facility somebody is like definitely open in it. Depending if you're writing someone that has like politics or like is organizing, they're reading it. They're probably copy. In

it, it's not going to get you in trouble, but if I mean if you wrote a letter and you said some crazy **** about whatever fill in the blank, then yeah, that could. You know they could be like, well, this person's not going to get approved to visit because they just made some joke about you know prison break or whatever you know, like the show's not the concept of. Breaking right so. Yeah, I think like start slow. I think it's cool to like send someone. Like if you're if you're like. You know, like they. Have like these materials on the back. You know you can read a little bit like people's BIOS. You're like, oh, this is cool Marius Mason's a good artist and it's from like Detroit I'm from. Detroit or I hate. Detroit or I don't know whatever but I got. Oh oh, you? Know here's a perfect example. Marius Mason's cat is like cats, passed away I believe, or very sick. So obviously everyone here probably likes cats or dogs, or I don't know, maybe. Not maybe, I'm. Being really assumptive, but I love cats. So I would write if I was able to write marriage without getting married in trouble. I would write and be like your cat is mad cute like I saw the picture. I'm sorry. That they're not doing. Well, if it killed me that I wasn't able to like. You know, I mean, and realistically like it did kill me, that I wasn't able to interact with animals in prison. I mean we. Fed feral, you know, cats and raccoons because we were like so happy like Oh my God, we're interacting with something different. Like in prison, you know? So I think sharing stuff, keeping it short and sweet, you know, never promise and stuff that you don't intend to you. Which that doesn't come up in the first letter, but you know, sometimes people are like they're. Well meaning they're. Like oh, I want to help you. I want to help you, but like don't put yourself out there too much. Be really clear about what's going on like you know and if you're out of political prison or letter writing night, don't say the first. They'll get 20 letters that say hey, I'm out this letter writing now. Writing, you know? It's just like I understand it's inescapable, right? Because you want to tell them like where you are, but it's always so funny you're like, oh, I got all these letters on the same day and they're oh, oh, you were at the base. Oh, you were at you know the info. You have like cool, you're at you know social Justice Center. It's really funny. Like it's like we used to laugh like I used to say to Andy like Andy did you get the letters from like from the from the New York City ABC? Site because I got 20. Five of them, and we're like, wow, it's like so amazing. It's like great, you know, but. And I would write people back. And be like yo, seriously, you didn't tell me anything about yourself like you know. But the other thing you should remember is you know sometimes people don't write back and you shouldn't take that personally. There's a million reasons why they didn't get it. They're depressed, they literally can't write a letter because they can barely function. They don't have stamps. They have a limited amount of people to put to print labels out in the federal system you have to like, revolve people around it got lost. I mean, there's like the post office lost it. The prison censor lost it. I mean my now. Is to. Go haywire and I would always be like, I wonder why I didn't get that one. You know, then I would get like a rejection. Letter like a month later so. But I think Penn Power relationships with prisoners are really fruitful, and I think that they're really good. First step towards like learning more about the prison system and

like how. You know, and you know. It's not just a one way thing. I think like I used to write a lot of elders because like I felt like they had a lot to offer. I used to write Marilyn Buck back in the day. She's a prisoner. She actually got out of prison and died like 3 weeks later. She was very sick and then she got her. They got her out on like basically medical parole. She's a. White anti imperialist. She actually took part in. Freeing Assata Shakur from prison in like 1979, she's a really interesting person. Excellent politics, and you know my parents age. So it was like kind of interesting to engage someone politically at that age. You know that's that much older than me and we had we. I wrote her for years and I always found like really good back and forth like a peer, not a peer like more like an elder elder mentor kind of deal. You know she had really. I remember I was at the Earth First journal once and she wrote. A really good letter. About like Israel, because there was something got into the journal that was like not. It was just like talking about environmental stuff in Israel with like no real mentioning of like the situation, like the context, and so she was kind of like, you know so anyhow. Any other questions? I can go on all. Night you do my comedy no no other questions none OK go on once all right thank you everyone.

05/19/2017 - Former political prisoner Daniel McGowan

Synopsis

<https://kboo.fm/media/57987-former-political-prisoner-daniel-mcgowan>

Produced by: KBOO

Program::

Special Programming: Public Affairs

Air date: Fri, 05/19/2017 - 2:00pm to 3:00pm

Daniel McGowan is a former member of the Earth Liberation Front, who was convicted of the arsons of two Oregon-based lumber companies in 2001.

The FBI eventually closed the loop on McGowan's case during "Operation Backfire," an investigation that the bureau described as a crackdown on "eco-terrorism," which critics cast as a green version of the Red Scare.

McGowan insists that he had renounced his affiliation with the group long before authorities arrested him at work, but his later disavowal of their methods did not provide him with any mercy at his criminal prosecution.

Download audio file

Topic tags: Environment/Climate, Prison

Transcript

AMY: And back in World War Two, where Pacifica began and but here in Germany, with a brother and sister named Hans and Sophie Scholl, they weren't Jewish. They were German Christians and they, together with their professor and other students and workers. Decided to form the white walls collective and they thought the best they could do was put out pamphlets so that the Germans would never be able to say we didn't know and one of those pamphlets were written were words we will not be silent. They had these pamphlets distributed everywhere. Under cover of darkness. In schoolyards marketplaces, alleyways anywhere they could and then Hans and Sophie and their professor were. Captured, they were charged. They were tried. They were convicted and they were beheaded. But that philosophy that motto should be the Hippocratic Oath of the media today. Should be the Hippocratic Oath of us all today. We will not be silent. Democracy now.

INTRO: We are listening to 90.7 KBO Portland coming up next. We'll hear from former political prisoner Daniel McGowan. Daniel McGowan is a former member of the Earth Liberation Front who was convicted of the arsons of two Oregon based lumber companies in 2001.

ADVERT: Cable Community Radio is proud to host Chris Hedges Friday, May 26th at 7:00 PM at the Aladdin Theater in Portland. Hedges takes a provocative look at the current state of revolt in the United States and will recount the US's continuing history of domestic terrorism while outlining ways for communities to resist. Before it's too late again, that's Chris Hedges Friday, May 26th at 7:00 PM at the Aladdin Theater, 3017 SE Milwaukee Ave. in Portland. More information can be found at cable dot FM on the right side of the home page. Under community events.

HOST: Daniel McGowan spoke at Portland State University. Smith Student Union to a packed room on April 7th, 2017. McGowan is an environmental and social justice activist who was arrested. And convicted of arson and conspiracy. Relating to actions that took place in 2001. This was his first trip back to the Pacific Northwest since his Sentencing in June 2007. Here's Daniel.

DANIEL: Thank you for coming out. It's really amazing to be back here and I want to thank everyone that took time out of their life to come see. Me rant about stuff. I want to thank. The people that put on this event the. And Education Group and the Student Animal Liberation Coalition here at PSU as well as Amanda and Justin for putting it all together, I also want to thank. Inc Portland, ABC and Oregon Jericho in the back of the room with an excellent info table with information about prisoners and prisoner struggles. Thank you. Also kaboo for coming in and recording this appreciate that. It is really good to be back. I spent some time in Portland throughout the years. Oregon is obviously a a very loaded place for me place. I lived for a few very active years of my life, and ultimately where I was indicted, convicted and sentenced. It's been a long time and you know anyone that's done time in prison will kind of tell you that time is kind of a really strange thing. Like you go away and you think everything's going to be different when you get out, and so my sense of timing. I was talking to my friend and I was like how long have you guys been together like and I'm thinking in. My head, it's like 4 years and she's like 10. The thing about time. Is that I notice is like how the activist. Life cycle and political movements have like. A very short timeline and they spin and you after a while you start to see the same cycles happening over and over and you know you want to think that that's good because like yeah, I'm learning, you know. But then you watch like people coming into the movement and you're making the same exact mistakes, same, same exact things that you said, thinking that they came up with the idea of resistance as I did when I was. Now I was like an insufferable new activists that just really I just knew everything and blah blah so people can in this room can. Definitely attest that. I will say, though, that it's dawned on me. That because this activist life cycle is so short. Word, they used to come a time where every single person I met had some knowledge of my case and so in the last year it's kind of been interesting to see like, especially in the wave of Trump. All these people come

in and people. Be like man. Kind of and I know your name, I just don't. So I said to myself like it makes sense to like lay a little. Bit of a groundwork. You know for what happened to. Gives people some perspective. You know, just because something's important in your life doesn't mean that people really know anything about it, right? Especially considering my point about the activist life cycle. And we're really bad. The left or whatever you want to consider it at institutional knowledge and passing it on. And so we do have that reinvention of the wheel. Thing so I'm sorry. If you've heard some of this before, but I do think it makes sense to kind of just. Give a little bit of a background on it. I lived in Oregon for roughly 2 years, and while I did, I participated in a number of actions with the Earth Liberation Front and our group was rather large, like 10 or more people. My personal focus at the time was stopping old growth, logging and working to stop the introduction of genetically modified organisms. Into the. Environment there was. You know a lot of activism. This is like we're talking like late 90s, early 2000s. There was definitely a lot of activism on those topics, but I felt like there needed to be more radical components to it. And the way I looked at it was like I'm young, my like lifestyle was such that I felt like I could throw myself into into things without. A lot of caution, I went through a period of time where I was arrested many times for activism. I did civil disobedience and I locked my arms into bowls and like I climbed trees and like you know, did. I did a lot of different things at a very short period of time and. And I kind of like burnt through a lot. Of the. Different tactics that our movements used, including some of the more mainstream ones like writing letters. And lobbying and things like that. Back in in New York at this point few years into my activism career made a lot more sense to maybe avoid arrest I had racked up like 12 arrests. Frankly it. Was a bit. Of a drag and I didn't you know? I was using. Sort of a antiquated. Strategy of oh, we're gonna get arrested and we're gonna stop things by getting arrested. And obviously when you examine that belief, you know. 10 people getting arrested. You know it's not going to slow down the system, but there is that thought process that you're going to like gum up the works or something, and that idea died. So, so I moved to Oregon and. I'm a city. Kid and I was seriously blown away by it and blown away by just what I saw at the time is like a tepid response to it and I again. Like that's not exactly my perspective now, but at the time I was like I, I just was stunned. I couldn't believe and I. Couldn't really deal with like. The destruction, and it it really. Ruled rage in me, you know, fueled that just contributed to it. So I spent roughly 2 years planning and researching executing these actions on issues we we did a lot of different things. The government likes to talk about the arsons only because it's the most spectacular and frankly the most dangerous. But you know, sensational. We worked on a lot of different issues and did a lot of things. We spiked trees, destroyed logging equipment, pulled survey stakes, destroyed machinery belonging to all different kinds of corporations.

Eventually, I pleaded guilty to two large arsons one was at superior lumber in Glendale OR and one was at Jefferson Poplar Farm in Clatskanie which is. It was previously owned by a large timber corporation that we suspected were engaged in.

GMO research of trees and at a certain point, our group cleaved. Over ideological issues. Involving tactics involving our relationship to the. Larger movement and. And over interpersonal behavior of some of the people in in our group. And I took my relationship with these people with my, my fellow comrades very seriously, and I pledge to them that, you know, should harm come our way, that my lips are sealed and I would do everything I can to help them out. So not everyone was attached to this. Promise as I was as I found out in 2000. So I'm living in New York in 2005, and I was indicted, you know, out here, and they planned basically a very large arrest of seven of us on the same. Day I had been, you know, living in New York, living with the knowledge of what happened, but sharing it with no one. My partner at the time. Did not know which you can imagine cause issues when I. Was arrested. You know, I felt hopeful thinking it would never come up, but watching the activity after 9. 11 It's seeing the Department of Justice was on a path to indict people for old crimes. I saw friends of mine in Oregon with a excellent group that doesn't exist. Any longer called break? Trains doing support work for someone named Sarah Jane Olson, who was involved in the SLA 30 years ago. I saw a man named James Kilgore. He's actually released a really excellent book called Understanding mass incarceration. A few years ago, but James Cogdell was also involved with the SLA. The Symbionese Liberation Army. Ultra left group From the 70s. So James Kilgore was arrested and extradited to the United States and got a sentence. It seemed at the time to me from my perspective in New York, living in living there after 911 that there was an abundance of money and for the first time really rampant coordination between agencies, which was new and a little scary. In this country there are hundreds of thousands of unsolved murders, rapes, and assaults. But a 7 year old arson. Or a 35 year old bank robbery gone bad clearly was, in their opinion, worth us enough. If you have millions of dollars to pay the agents and they suddenly have this newfound appreciation for working together to get the bad guys, which in our case you. Know was. Yes, if you look at like what happened in Oregon after 911, the two. The two major cases that they netted was finally solving the EOF case, which I say solved, but essentially someone just decided to talk. And then the Portland Seven, which were, you know, seven people accused of attempting to get to a training facility. I believe in. Pakistan or Afghanistan. And so these people got material aid to support terrorism essentially for not succeeding in getting to a training camp halfway around the world. So this is Oregon's like, you know, contribute. Into the War on Terror, it's pretty pathetic. I mean, it's not that it's not pathetic everywhere else because everywhere else it's just entrapping cases and whatnot.

JENNA: Good afternoon, you're listening to KBO Community radio. Join your friends and neighbors and become a member of this powerful radio community. Today I'm Jenna and I am here with Ruben and you're listening. During our spring membership drive on news and Public Affairs Day, my favorite day here at cable.

RUBEN: It sure is.

JENNA: And if you tune in cable, you know that. We are our volunteers. Here at cable and we. Just don't know this every day because. All ever above.

JENNA: It's about us, it's about. The Newsroom so give us. A call if you if you support this. You do support, you're listening, right? Now so give us. A call 877-500-5266. Become a member today to support this the time program you're listening to. Right now again, that's 877-500-5266.

RUBEN: Cable's public Affairs and talk programs emphasize controversial and neglected perspectives on important local, national and international issues, such as what we're playing right now. About Daniel McGowan. So these kind of stories are so important to bring to the public, and these are the types of things that cable is all about. Would you?

JENNA: The kind of stories that people want to just kind of forget about too, right? They want to bury this kind of story and look at the cable cables bringing this to you.

RUBEN: Yeah, and we bring it to you as directly as we as we can, so that's why it's important for you to call 877-500-5266. That's 8775 Hundred K Boo. Or you can go online at kboo dot FM and click the donate button.

JENNA: Think about. Then at around, say \$10.00, a month is about \$120.00 a year, and if maybe that's you know about like we'll say about an hours wage, if you can, you know if you're employed right now and you can afford that right now, you can get the wonderful caboo shirts. That's also full of controversy because it has aliens.

RUBEN: It's awesome.

JENNA: On it but. It just so reflective of our cable culture here where we we try to bring you not not the average story. We try to bring you a deeper discussion. We try to bring you the controversial. We try to bring you. The unique we try. To bring you the thought provoking types of conversations and. That we we. Need to be having in a time right now you know, like when you think about Daniel McGowan. His story, you know, if you're new to Portland, is something that people don't really talk about, but is something that you know when. When it happened here it was if people remember about a decade ago when I wasn't even here. But I do remember hearing about oh, oh, here's environmental terrorism, you know, but he doesn't want to have that discussion about what is this. What is this? And what are these people saying about the environment, so you know, if you remember that discussion and you're enjoying that we're continuing this because you are, you're listening right now. Give us a call 877-500-5266 again again, just what about that smartphone? It only takes a minute to become a member 877. 5005266 consider coming at that \$10.00 a month support the type programming you're listening to or go online at KBODOT FM and become a member today.

HOST: We return to a speech by Daniel McClellan, recorded April 7th. Now he's speaking about being arrested for the actions in 2001.

DANIEL: So ironically, I was working on an organization that provided resources for women surviving domestic violence when I was arrested and I had been in New York

for three years roughly, and I participated in a bunch of collectives organizing against the Republican National Convention. War against Iraq and I worked on local projects with the New York City anarchist community. I coordinated support for Jeffrey Rulers along with a few Oregonians, and we had a large International Day of action in 2004 with about 50 or so events worldwide. This week of action got a lot of attention, essentially because the FBI sent out an ecoterrorist alert, which actually just helped us, kind of with media, which was great. The day I was arrested seemed like pretty much like no other. I went to work. I helped stuff envelopes. With our annual. Holiday card and I made changes to the website.

It was, you know, people always are like oh, did you notice anything that day? And I was like I didn't notice anything I. Went about my. Day and I got up after hearing some hubbub in like the reception area I. Heard, arguing and. My name and I kind of just, you know, you kind of know at that point like something's up. And so these two dudes come and they're standing in the doorway and you know, like mustaches and beefy. And I'm just like, oh, it's a bad sign. And they're like. They asked me if I'm Daniel McGowan and I'm. Thinking don't because you know I don't want to. Get busted for. Lying, but like the next thing I know. I mean they knew and so next thing I know I'm just like. Stretched like a contortionist, their. Law and order moment was being like you're. Going back to Oregon, that was like the. How is law enforcement burned? And I you know of course like you know if it was. On TV I Would have been like dang.

It was kind of ridiculous they're. Really sneaky, they took my keys. They drove to Manhattan. Where I had just been living with. My partner, my neighbor. Who's like? A the mayor of the block was sort of. Like what are you guys doing in there? Those are good kids and just gave them the business and. They were like that's a terrorism. Investigation ma'am, and she's like I know, Jenny and I. Know them and when I. Heard that I was like God. Thank God for good people like give them grief. You know I was kept in a car parked in downtown Brooklyn. Right by a place called Cabin Plaza. It's where the Eastern District in New York federal court is. It's a really imposing building. It's the kind of building that when they're driving you into, you're just like things are bad. They kept me there and they didn't get a court. They gave me. Like the speech you know. The US attorneys in town. The door is. Going to be open for a brief. While think about it, you know you know what happened with Jeff Lewis. You know, you know what happened. Chris McIntosh. He was a an individual. Who got charged with the same exact charge that I was going to get charged with, which had a mandatory 30 year sentence? Called use of a destructive device if you are charged with it as a non terrorist it. Has a 5 year mandatory minimum which. Is bad enough? But if it's a terrorism crime, it's a 30, so they were like telling me, giving me the whole rundown of how long I would be in prison.

And I have been involved in some prisoner sport. It's obviously a little different to be in that seat myself, but I kind of knew I've gone to enough. Know your rights, trainings and legal trainings and I got to like shut your mouth thing really because

I'm like you only get one chance at this. So just shut up. They put the heat. On like so. High, you know, and I'm just sitting there just burning up. The crazy thing about cops is like as soon as you you can assert your right to a lawyer, but as soon as you open up your mouth, that's over. You can say anything and talk to me about baseball and stuff, and I'm just sitting there looking out the. Window thinking about like my life. I told them I was represented. I picked the lawyer's name out of the air. It happened to be someone that was representing my friend who got him a very good outcome. I spent a few days there. I was flown to Oregon with pit stops in various prisons and jails around the country. I ended up in Lane County for two months.

My family graciously offered the houses they lived in as collateral on a bond. My Co defendant actually sadly took his own life when he was in county jail and when that happened. All of us were taking and put in the hole and put on like I was actually put on suicide watch for 10 days because I'm a behavior my Co defendant.

So bonded out. I went home to New York City. Threw myself into my legal defense. I annoyed my lawyers with phone calls all day long. I got my discovery sent to me, you know, at the time was foolishly thinking we. Were going to. Go to trial because I was like. You know I watched TV shows about. Crime and I was, you know, I'm like an activist. I think I know something about the system, and I'm like my lawyers are, like you know, going to trial. With these, with what these people are saying about you is like. You know life plus a couple 100 years and you know that obviously was an eye opener.

So we filed a lot of motions. We filed one on NSA surveillance. They had to approve all their decisions with Washington DC, so it was kind of like we were dealing with like a proxy. The Bush White House and Alberto Gonzalez, and then with their office were really the ones that were involved in. Like all the big terrorism. Cases which apparently ours was. Supposed to be a big terrorism case. I basically agreed to plead guilty to the conspiracy and the arson counts on the provision that they dropped the really serious 30 year mandatory that had roughly nine people willing to cooperate and testify against me. People that sat in a room and talked to the government. About hours for hours. About myself and everyone else in the case like everything every our likes or dislikes, who what we're like I mean just all kinds of stuff that's like. Really beyond the pale. Beyond like our criminal conduct, but really who we are and like everything about us, which was obviously hard. It wasn't just the main informant at that. Point it was. Like well spoken, credible individuals who knew everything about me and knew some of my Co defendants. We had committed 15 different actions together, so I kind of knew that if I lost if I went to trial with these 30 year mandatory charges. I would be like. Severely playing Russian roulette and so I just decided that it made more sense. For me to. Plead out, I was allowed to go. To sentencing asking for five years and they were allowed to ask for 9 and I guess the judge split the baby and I got 7. They found me guilty. Of the federal crime of terrorism enhancement. Despite the fact that the incidents I was involved with didn't involve the government, it actually involved private corporations and in fact, some of my Co. Defendants were found guilty

of. Targeting the government in the form of the Bureau of Land Management. But they didn't get the terrorism enhancement, which is an interest in the verbal gymnastics there. But on the part. Of my judge.

RUBEN: Good afternoon, you're listening to cable community radio. Join your friends and neighbors and become a member of this powerful radio community. I'm Ruben Lawrence and I'm here with Jenna Yokoyama. Yes, this is our spring membership drive and we're asking you to become a member today and help us make our goal of, I think. It's \$800.00 yeah.

JENNA: \$800.00 Out we got 700 to go so give us a call.

RUBEN: I'm going to give you a number right now. It's you can call 18. Excuse me, call 877-500-5266 or you want to remember easily. 8775 Hundred K Boo. Or you can go online at kboo dot FM and click the donate button.

JENNA: So this interview. This is super interesting. I'm really, really glad that this is being featured today on cable news and Public Affairs Day. You know Cable decided to have this days. In order to highlight all. Of the amazing covers that we bring you here on cable where you know we're bringing you this local issue here. Well Daniel McGowan you know what? We think of it as local, but it was actually quite a national issue and one thing I've always found really interesting about, you know what the government likes to label as like environmental terrorism, you know, is what they decide, how they decide to throw that word around terrorism, right?

RUBEN: Sometimes it seems kind of arbitrary.

JENNA: Right you know, and so it's interesting to get a chance. To listen to this activist who has been at the heart of this government targeting and where this manipulative language is coming in and really shaping what are our environmental, you know, discussions that we're having and look at what we're living in today as those consequences where people are shutting down those conversations and they say oh, wait, no this is. That's just terrorism blah blah, you know. And now what? What these people are trying to highlight is not important and you know, I know that this activist you know Dan McGowan is a controversial activist. for many. People, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't have the discussion, and that's what's so amazing about Kalou, and that's what I really appreciate you. And if you're tuned in right now, which you are because you're listening to us, what's up? You know you find this important. You find this discussion, and it's not just about environmentalism, it's not just about, oh, look, at this is what it's doing. It's about taking it. Look at what it is, what it is to try to tackle an issue with a sense of passion and urgency. Because I. Don't know about. You and about your new environmental news. It's terrifying, so yeah.

RUBEN: It's yeah, it's messy.

JENNA: Let's give it that phone number again, because these. Are the discussions that we need to have. In order to. Continue, Oh my gosh. Saving our environment so it's at 8. 775005266 again that's 8775005266 or go online at KBO dot FM. It only takes

a. Couple minutes to sign up and. We have some people who sign up really. Want you let us know who just joined us?

RUBEN: We've got a couple of new members who've joined via the web. We have Rebecca in Salem and Elizabeth in Saint Helens. And I'm going to ring the. Mark Calvin, but I'm bringing it far away. From the. Because I know some people find it a little bit loud.

JENNA: Thank you for joining us. So Joe. Join Rebecca and join Elizabeth, you know online you know people who are outside the Portland area. You know, because you have to remember that people are listening all across the state. They're listening across the nation. We get donations from everywhere because people really appreciate the type of programming and the depth of the programming. That we hear bringing you here at cable Community radio.

RUBEN: Yeah, and Jenna. What you were talking about earlier about controversial stories. I love that. True, I think it's important to talk about controversial stories a lot of times things that make us a little bit uncomfortable, or things that we're unsure about. Those are the areas that we need to have the discussions in. So if you want to help us continue bringing these kind of stories and ideas and discussions to you, call us at 877.5.00526 68775 hundred Cable Right now or go online at cable dot FM and click the donate button.

JENNA: You know we would love to bring you all of our programming for free. You know we have 500 volunteers that make cable run on a day-to-day basis. But it, Oh yeah, yeah yeah.

RUBEN: The girl that costs money.

JENNA: It does because let me tell you there's lights on 24 hours a day. Here we have our transmitter, we we just we have computers with Internet. We have, you know, an air conditioning system. We have staff members that somehow manage all 500 of us to put up with us. You know these are all the things that allow when you turn on your radio and. All you're oh. You're, Oh well, this is a really. Nice interview with Daniel McGowan. You know, it's all these little elements that make it possible, and it's our members. It's our sustaining Members, especially that make it possible. Consider coming in at \$25. Month that's \$300.00 a year and for \$25.00 a month you can get the amazing cable hoodies that you walk around Portland and show what you support, what you believe in that you say, you know I want the difficult discussions. I want. The controversial discussions give us a. Because we need to have a.

JENNA: Call yes, 877-5005. 266877. 5005266 we still have \$700.00 to go left in this hour here on cable news and Public Affairs Day.

RUBEN: Yeah, call us donate online so that we can ring the cowbell.

JENNA: Dot FM.

RUBEN: We can alternate between the cowbell and the desk bell.

JENNA: And the bell you know you want some cowbell behind your name. Give us a call 877-500-5266 again, 877-500-5266, and now back to the interview with Daniel McGowan.

HOST: We returned to a speech by Daniel McGowan, recorded April 7th at Portland State University.

DANIEL: Really coined the term green scare and I don't need to use that. Term because it's. It's really not analogous to the red scare. I mean, what happened to people in the Red Scare was like no joke and no one was deported in the green scare, so it's never like a direct analogy, but it was sort of like this idea that we're in this community. We're doing this environmental activism. And people around us are like you. Know the liberation collective lost their 501C3 people getting like audited grand juries? Investigations legislation specifically about that. Why is use groups like Ron Arnold and the Center for Consumer Freedom and the Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise like where there was one called Stop Eco violence? This woman named Kelly Stoner, who was just. A timber industry. Lobbyist was just like this. Organized this semi org. Effort to basically create this narrative that environmental activists are the number one domestic terror threat. When I say that I just I can't get over it, but it's what it's the words of. Robert Mueller. It's the former FBI director got up there and said this, and when I was at Lane County and we got reindicted the feds like to do is they like to use the media really well? You get indicted. But then as soon as the people, the rats in your case tell them more, they just work that into the narrative and then they do a superseding indictment, and that's usually an opportunity. For them to get more media. So on the days that they were going to have NSA wiretap motions or NSA wiretap hearings, the first one, this is Priest noted. And this is. Like 2006 when people you know first leaked the information that there were wiretaps from the NSA that day is the day they announced our superseding indictment, like my cell at Lane County, and someone's. Like hey, hey you left? And like you know, resign to the fact that that's what I'm going to be called. People don't care because they saw you. I saw you on the TV and you're yeah and. That's a but I come out to the day room. I'm like what is. He saying and it's like of course like transcribed on. The TV and. I'm like having this moment where Alberto Gonzales, like the attorney general, is talking about my case. That's kind of when I knew they were, they were serious. If this is like small. Fries so this. Is like vandalism and. They have names for it, it's vandalism, it's ours, and it's eco sabotage. And all this stuff to call it terrorism? Yeah, that's what they call it. But at the time, like the idea that environmental activists would be called terrorists was. Just like it was ludicrous. When they decide that. You're you have a certain case that could garner any kind of attention from the media they really like to bury you in the Midwest, and that's why all the supermax. Prisons and like a lot of the high security prisons or political units that they run are like deep. In the middle of. The Midwest because so many people that are in federal. Prison are from the coast. So I spent my whole time in the Midwest basically. So there's not much to say about Sansone. It's your typical low security. Prison was full of men who crossed imaginary border lines between the US and Mexico and got three to seven years for felony reentry. The whole lot of men who sold crack and got crazy sentences because of a 100 to one ratio on crack versus cocaine, which is like largely predicated on race and remarkable amount of sex

offenders. I played this weird game called Pickleball, which is kind of like ping pong and tennis. It's like bizarre. It was a low security. Prison with weights we had. Guitars karaoke you know real. Country Club, as they say. What was interesting was as I was being transferred out of sandstone, which happened out of the blue was like in May and I was just told to come down to the. Office and pack up my stuff. My experience in prison was every time I felt like I things were going OK for a split second they went to pretty fast afterwards, so a few months later I found myself at Marion. Marion is the 2nd place that the BOP had a supermax prison. The 1st place was Alcatraz. And then Marion. In the 60s to the 90s, and then they opened up the supermax prison at Florence, Co. But I show up at Marion. There's about 17 other men there. I have a friend of mine from New York was there? Andy Stepanian from the shack. In case and a smattering of people from, like different discernable groups but mostly Muslim men, the men there were mostly convicted of what's. Called material support of. Terrorism which is the government claiming that their actions were somehow supporting you know? Al Qaeda, which? Is you know it? Was only al Qaida at the time? Now there's people that are accused of. And ISIS. In the CU apparently. And then there was a whole bunch of like entrapment cases. They even threw in so crazy. Oh, like the old Nazis playing with the Moorish science Temple sovereign citizen? How does that like make sense in there? I would look at. Them and go. What are they thinking? About the other person. Like who used to blow my mind. When I got there, we had no idea about any of the facts about the CU. Nothing was like transparent. We had no idea how long we would be there, how to, how to get out. We were told different things 18 months and then you get a you know you get a transfer or 24 months and it was just really confusing. I reached. Out to a lot of different organizations, ACLU. Through every prison group I can think of, only really one was interested, which is the Center for Constitutional Rights. I see interested, but I mean like have the capacity to actually file suit. Really, I had a pre-existing relationship with them and I was glad for that, but it was also kind of tragic that prisoners really have a hard time getting help from lawyers, and it's. It's a structural problem. It's not like a problem. On the part of the lawyers. Per say, but it's. Largely because of legislation that like restricted the ability of prisoners to file suits themselves and for lawyers to actually make back any of them thousands of dollars that they spend fighting. These pro say cases, or these pro. Some cases, so it's. A real problem, but I got lucky and. I had to help from the. Center for constitutional rights. And we worked together. For many months I gave them all the information about the unit, like everything I possibly could get my hands on, any kind of thing they published demographic information, trying to like, make the strongest case. I wrote an article called Exposing Little Gitmo, which was our nickname for it, and so we filed this lawsuit. And when the lawsuit was filed. It was in draft. It was a ref which is my Co plaintiff not my Co defendant because we're suing the government but it was a ref view Casey and we filed it as a ref V holder. Sarah Holder was the attorney general at that time. And now it's the Rev sessions apparently, and it's seven years old. Who filed it on April 1st, 2000? 10 The BOP definitely listened

to our phone calls and our visits because they essentially tried to transfer people out of the unit. The day before the law. The lawsuit was. Filed and they like came in on. The morning the lawsuit. Was filed and posted. These proposed regulations. Which was part of our lawsuit. We were like essentially saying you just opened up this unit without doing any of the due process without doing any of the like fact finding or public comment that you're supposed to do when you open up. When you open up a brand new communication management unit, you just can't do it. You have to. Like have this. Veneer of like democracy and it's all fraudulent. A few months ago we got a victory from the appellate court. It reinstated the lawsuit, sent it back to the judge, but I spent 26 months in the marrying. Seeing you, I was released to general population and I lasted there four months until they found a reason to send me back and they sent me back to the Terra Hut. Seeing you and. When I got there I got a chance to see all the dudes that I knew that. And transferred from one to the other, because that's what the government did. They just switched Co defendants. Someone got in a fist fight thinking this might get. Me out of. Here it just got them sent to the other. Seeing you so, I walked in and I got razed by a bunch of people who were like I can't believe you're back and I was like what am I going to do? And so I spent the remaining 20. One months to. Be honest, I met a lot of really interesting people there. A lot of people who were guilty just of being Muslim and having opinions that were critical. Of the United. States government were having passed off like Israeli government. Adam Hassoun, Kifah Jayyousi, Yassin Aref. Ali chandia. Hamid Hayat Khalid Awan Shukri Abu Baker, and the other Holy Land Foundation people. I learned a. Lot from these people, including how to handle a really bad situation while being or attempting to be kind and caring, which to be honest, is one of the first things to be jettisoned when you're when you're. Trying to survive. Like there were times you're gone, visits, people were. Like you're not laughing anymore. You're not joking and it like kind of hit me. I was like I'm becoming a really serious person. I'm doing time with people that have 65 years. Instances I mean. And they are handling this and they are coming by. They know I had a tough visit. They know things aren't going well, and they're coming by offering. Me like homemade baklava or whatever. I mean guys used to. Cook like crazy in there. And make really wonderful stuff and. I was always really heartened by. The people in the CMU.

And this is during the Obama administration. I mean I. Know people are like. I mean, I can't imagine anything good is going to come out of this this current situation. But this seeing you, this, like these entrapment schemes, these different cases, that you might have heard of or didn't hear of this happen under Obama. And it's a. It's a really horrible. Part part of that legacy because he created the. The infrastructure that will without a doubt be used by Trump and the remaining future fastest presidents to do things. I want to switch track and talk a little bit about where we find ourselves right now. So like the rise of the right wing, if you want to call it that or white supremacist is, it's a really troubling trend and I hate to say, but I feel like it happened. Kind of under our noses, like during the Obama presidency and clearly before. I don't want to

suggest that this is the. Current thing because these people are always there. Like I think we have a situation where. People treat this like it's new and it's not new and it's just there's this courage on the part of white supremacists. Now, because they feel like they have numbers or maybe they feel like they have their homes in in the White House or whatever. And I have a lot of respect and appreciation for anti-racist action. ARA, the generation of punks that came before me that fought Nazis. In the 80s and 90s, I remember hearing lots of stories talk about literal fights. I'm talking about other kinds of fights. I mean, there's just a a bad history, big history of that. I never contributed much to this aspect of our movement. I think I like decide. That ARA, I mean, I kept this to myself. I was never a hater but ARA or like guys I want to fight Nazis. It's not that I found like the actions bad. I always supported them, but like other than calling clubs and getting like sure was cancelled. I just never really participated. I came into contact with white supremacists inside and I never got into like horrible beef with them, but it was always like a tense situation that I had to consider. At all times, like who was around and stuff, this current moment has made me kind of look at like myself. Why didn't I take this that seriously? And, you know, I have to be honest and be like. It has to of course have something. To do with my my identity like who? I am like I'm a. White cisgendered man like I'm not going to be a victim of a hate attack. I'm not gonna get targeted and like there's a whole bunch of things that won't happen. I can hear stories about the horrible things that happen. Read read a lot. Of history, but like it just killed me.

That it took a Trump presidency for me to. Like take this seriously. And so I don't think it's just me and I don't leave this as. An indictment. I think this is a large part. To the left. I mean these folks didn't come out of nowhere, and I'm sure there's people in this room that have dealt with this issue for many years. There's no secret that they exist. They exist where I grew up in New York, they exist in Oregon. Obviously Oregon's history is wrought with it. I mean, we're in Portland. I'm sure people know about the horrible killing of we look at those raw by white supremacists. If you don't know about that, 100 little Hitlers is a really excellent book to read about that particular incident.

So and I. You know I was in Eugene and like you know they were skinheads in Eugene in the 90s and 2000s and. Maybe now. But I was in prison when this case happened in the Midwest and it really made me think twice about this. It was called the Tinley Park 5 case, probably 20 anti-fascists broke up a meeting that was called like a white cultural gathering. It was essentially promoted by a bunch of hammer skins. A pretty violent. Group of skinheads? If you don't know. They broke up this meeting and. They broke up. I mean they stormed in petal, had people destroyed everything and ran out and the people that I knew in prison that I would talk to about different things. But like. Yeah, that makes sense. I mean that that's what you. Do right well. What else are you going to do? You're going to talk to them about like you know, why they're horrible. I mean, they're talking about genocide and stuff, and in 2013 when they got out like. One after another. I don't think I've ever dealt with the situation

that was harder to fundraise. For nobody claimed them the left was not with them. I mean, I, I got some arguments with. Radical lawyers and otherwise I would like. Yeah, I'm not really into that. That's in venture. Ristic, but they were. Like known known skinheads known Violent Dude? So I was really disappointed. I was like trying to fundraise for dudes coming home. You know they were in Illinois State prison having a hard time because that place is rampant with white supremacy. And it really shocked me at the time and it started making me think of like how important that. Work was. Very Fast forward to where? We are right now we have. People that are perceived as non American by these boneheads are being attacked really on all levels. I mean the governmental level from you know, specific incidents, travel bans. In New York, which they like to call a sanctuary city, which I would just say, let's just retire that term because that doesn't mean anything. There's no kind of sanctuary. And New York City people get arrested for jumping the turnstile more than anything. And when you get arrested like and you go to Rikers or you don't go to Rikers, you still have to deal with the fact that these federal agents are in the courthouse. I definitely know they're in Multnomah County because I read about it online all the time. On the face with people like ICE agents, I. Mean Normal County Courthouse and they're there. To basically troll. And just pull people in New York we have these morons calling themselves proud boys. They're basically just like gussied up men's rights active. Just with like hints of like, Islamophobia, misogyny and sort of like this fanboy thing for their leader, their leader happens to be a former Vice Magazine co-founder, a Canadian immigrant mind you named Gavin McGinnis. They are toxic and this situation this situation we find ourselves in is giving them like chutzpah like. Guts, so I take these people out their word. I think a lot of this liberal backlash. This free speech defense stuff needs to be like totally destroyed like. Take them out. Word do you? Take yourself seriously when you say something. Do you mean it? Because these? People mean it. So I follow this situation. I was on probation. For three years and I was. Like on egg shells, so I've just. Been like very observing. Reading as much as I can fall. But I think lately it was interesting I. Have not been involved in environmental work for some time, but people will because of my past be like, oh, you're. An environmentalist, and I'm like I always. So like I'm trying to front like I don't really do environmental stuff. It's not that I don't think it's important, it's just sometimes I think we don't really get to pick always what we work on, like things end up in our laps. I mean I have friends that like we're on a particular path and I fell and their lives went like that. I mean timeouts on grad school and all kinds of stuff. I have like a support. My support crew was like 6 to 8 people that just devoted their eight years. Nine years, like when we finally disbanded it was such. Like a pleasure. For me to be like thank you. This is over right? I'm out, I'm good, but so we don't get to pick always what you know sometimes it. It literally is like what's needed. What is needed right now and who are you and what is your? Relationship and what could you contribute?

JENNA: You're listening to Cabo Community radio during our Spring membership drive. I am Jen and I am here with Ruben and why don't you give us a call right

now? 8775005266, that's 87. 75005266 you're listening to a speech from activist Daniel McGowan and we want to just give a quick thank you to mark from Northwest Portland. Woohoo, listing some cowbell you promised him cowbell and Mark is a returning member.

RUBEN: Yeah mark OK. Hold on hold on. There we go.

JENNA: We love that people used to be members of cable. And her and you know, he literally. Called in because of this speech that he is listening to right now because he said, you know, this is the type of stuff I want to hear on cable. Who said play more of this kind of stuff? So thank you very much to Mark. Join Mark and showing where do you want your dollars to go to? Because let's let's face it, you could keep your money in a bank. Which is good, you know. If you have.

RUBEN: Or you could give.

JENNA: But you it? To us, or you give it to us. If you have said like \$5 a month, \$5 a month, you can come in at the \$5 a month. You know you could. Either keep that in. The bank and give it the bank money and make that money. Or you can invest. It into something like cable. You're going to be investing that \$5 one way. That it's only. Or another why? Not invest it into to this radio station to this. Program you're listening to.

RUBEN: It totally is an investment absolutely. In addition to the amazing programming we have, it's completely volunteer, run and the training that we offer our volunteers is excellence. Very high caliber, very high quality and it's as I've just been volunteering for KB for about a month and 1/2. I'm relatively new, but I absolutely love it. It's been such a such a great thing that I've. That's my life. So call us and maybe start off with just doing 5 bucks a month. You can call us at 8775005266877, five, 100K Boo or go online at KBOO dot FM and click the donate button. \$5 five dollars.

JENNA: A month comes up to \$60.00 a year when I think of 5 bucks. 5 bucks is like a. Really fancy 3000 calorie Frappuccino? Or it's a decently sized burrito? Or it's not even a movie ticket anymore. It's not even a matinee, it's not even a matinee. Oh, it's so sad, but you know, so if you think, OK, if I can, if I could do one burrito month for caboo I could do that. I have to admit that. You know if to me this type of program. Is worth the one burrito months if you. Can come at. \$5 a month. Consider it. Give us a call. 8775005266, that's 8775005266. Become a sustaining member of K Woo so you can sustain the type of program you're listening to. Where else are you literally? Going to hear an interview that makes you go. Wow, this is really fascinating and also makes me kind of uncomfortable. That's Katie like everyday, and if you're like me, you love that so 87.

RUBEN: Yeah, absolutely, that's what we do here.

JENNA: 5005266 or go online to KBO dot FM. We have volunteers waiting to take your call. We still have about \$600 to go in this hour. Take advantage and just show where you want your dollars to go. Become a member today.

HOST: We returned with speech. By Daniel McGowan.

DANIEL: Few people that got arrested at the inauguration in DC. And so I'm sitting home and a bunch of these people got arrested and they're facing like 10 years in federal prison. Because when you're in DC, you're under federal law. And so they get. They got arrested for rioting, and the blowback has been really bad. It appears that what happened is that when the DC police gave a spreadsheet of information about the defendants to a compatriot of Richard Spencer, so this person that Radix magazine essentially just took the names and then found everyone on Twitter. Found everyone on Facebook and just started tweeting like crazy like their pictures and with all this kind of anti-Semitic nonsense like look another Jew from New York. And like all this disgusting stuff like phone numbers and employers and like a few of my friends and so. My signal was going off the hook like yo. We report these people and I'm just like trying to mobilize and I'm soon sitting there like reporting people which felt weird at first. You know I was like is this? You know it's not and so. I'm reporting and blocking and calling people. And like you know, and finally you know we we get it done and yet. I got to say it feels gross. I don't really engage that much with the ideas. 'cause I don't actually think that I'm going to convince them of anything, but it feels gross. And yet I don't think that really matters. Some of what we have to do, but might feel gross, I mean. Without pushback my. Role and David Horowitz would have sat there and named like a bunch of undocumented to pull like a real McCarthy thing. Like we have a list here of undocumented students at UC Berkeley. A list if I'm reading that, then what I'm essentially saying is I'm telling like these, like Gamergate. And it's to like go attack them. They're other and you should go get them. And so you know when people wring their hands. I don't think people in this room necessarily ring their hands, but I'm sure your parents do and I'm sure like my so. Does seeing like what happened in Berkeley you have to like, ask yourself well, what's the consequences of doing nothing and without the pushback? What happens so it's hard to like quantify our victories, but I think we need to like understand like without obstruction. What happens people's names get read out. People fear walking down the street or going on the subway. Little kids get told to go back home. I don't really care where anyone's born from, so I don't care if they're from here or not, but little children being told to go back to Mexico go back here. Go back there hijabs. Getting ripped off people. It's like that sort of stuff is is, you know, it feels like finger in the **** approach. But if we're not up, you know if we're not obstructing this. If we're not using the relative privilege. That a lot of. Us perhaps have then. You know it's a disservice to marginalized communities. And I say this, you know, with a sense of being in that like I'm. Like deep in this. Process of thought. I don't have actual answers of what we're supposed to do, but I do know that we have to like, be engaging, engaging on these. Topics I'm sometimes dumbfounded by, like I have the least interest in Antifa stuff and anti-fascist stuff, and it's never been an issue. But like honestly, the world we're facing right now is messed up. I had a really bad November I. The election was horrible, so most people did. I had like. A really debilitating sense of like being knocked off my feet like I just did not know what to do. I had. About a week and a. Half of this.

Like dread, that just wouldn't leave me, and it was largely based on like things I care about people I care about populations that I have, you know, empathy for standing rock like there's just all these you know. Horror show parade of horror. Like a week into it, it it kind of hit me like I was talking to my sister and she was like. Well, what does this mean for you? Oh my God. Like I like convicted terrorists under the Trump administration like there's like 500 people convicted of so-called terrorist crimes. In the US, who would really pull me? Out of it was just the fact that all over the country people were like. Stardust, like really? Pull themselves out of this like existential dread. This like paralysis of like the first weeks and like really go for it. And I, like most people, made the mistake. I was like, oh, we're going to have like this really familiar enemy for the. Next four years. Clinton Trump, you know it's a new thing. I think for some people shutting down these like fascist events that are happening all over the country is a good focus, and for other people it's going to be building up our power so we can effectively organize out organize them. But in terms of what we're doing, what we end up doing, I think it's important. To note, you know. With any engagement with the state or against white supremacists, there's consequences. Often you know legal, but also medical as we saw with Hex being shot in Seattle that are really, seriously to people know that in Sacramento. June, June 26th. 26th Mobilization 9 people got stabbed and sent. To the hospital and. These were this was the mobilization against I believe what they're calling themselves as the traditional Workers Party. Matthew, I believe, and you know they showed up and they were outnumbered and when they were when there were fights. You know our side whipped. Them, but they stabbed 9 people and like. I'm not talking like slash marks like serious wounds in people's abdomens that required like thousands of dollars. In care and then recently I'm I. Don't know if people know. But the California Highway Patrol chips, I guess. Just cracks me up. And I saw that I was like what? Suggested like 500 indictments for misdemeanor and felony cases for events stemming out of June 26 and five 473 indictments. So, and you know, obviously they've. Been talking to the right wing, the left the left has not been talking. They've been calling people they've been calling. All the people that got. Stabbed nobody's talking to them, but they've talked to the right. And so I'm sure the you know the rights got no compunction against snitching. I don't even think they care, and so you know we're looking at a situation where, like California indictments are essentially going to roll out, and so we need to have people's backs. I mean, I'm an individual that essentially benefited from a tremendous amount of support, and so I think, like when we're talking about anti-fascist stuff, we were all the resistance against Trump. We have to be there for people that fall, whether that's medically or legally.

RUBEN: You're listening to cable community radio. Join your friends neighbors and become a member of our powerful radio community. I'm Ruben Lawrence and I'm here with Jenna Yokoyama and this is our Spring membership drive. We're asking you to become a member today and help us make our goal of 800 dollars \$800.00.

JENNA: \$10 out, we still have \$540 left to go. Give us a call.

RUBEN: So 300 down. 8775005266877, five 100K. Boo or go? Online at Kboo dot FM and click the donate button.

JENNA: So we can. Kind of like I'm gonna break written like heart of this lecture being done by Daniel McGowan. And you know, if you're if you're new to the Portland area in the kind of last few years because you know that you know Portland had an explosion of people moving here, you might not be too familiar with it. and it's, you know, cable is bringing you. This interview or what we would call it a speech in order to educate you. And to show you what your vocal issues are and also how our local issues actually make the national stage. You know it's so important to constantly bring these conversations back up to re educate ourselves to remind ourselves how these stories evolve over time. You know, because when all this was happening with Daniel McAllister, he's talking about, you know all of his. Quote UN quote terrorism started way back in the early 2000s and you know he was only released from prison just a few years ago and how? How much he's grown? How much has he learned and you know, just getting this perspective that you weren't? You're not going to get this anywhere on the mainstream media, right? Because you appreciate this level of perspective because you want this level of coverage from someone who you know, understands organians issues, give us a call, become a member, shows how this is what's important to you. 877 5005266 consider. Coming in at around our \$20.00 a month. And you know if that comes out to what is it? It's math. That's 240. Wow, \$240 a year. If you can, you can come up to \$20.00 a month. You can take the thank you gift with you. We have Chris speech by Chris Hedge. Is on Friday, May 26th, the door is open at 6:00 o'clock. There at the Aladdin and you know if you drive by there right now. I drove by there today and I love it on the Billboard. It just says stop Fascism May 26th and 27th. So you can get tickets for Chris Hedges or on Saturday, May 27th. There's a Chris Hedges and Joe Sacco conversation. Where they're literally going to talk about stopping fascism. Because we're Portland, and unfortunately we have to have that.

RUBEN: Conversation, so yeah, give us a call at 87750052668775 hundred cable or go online at cable dot FM and click the donate button. And actually Speaking of Chris Hedges so. The two shows next Friday and Saturday. If you can get those for a \$20.00 a month donation. There yeah, the whole theme is stop fascism and I actually did not know that much about Chris Hedges. And yesterday I just learned that he is a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist and Princeton professor and Joe Sacco is a excuse me. He is a political cartoonist and journalists, so two very interesting. Thoughtful people with a lot to say and. This one. I actually just. Got handed a little note from 1. Bones we want to thank Jessica from Southwest Portland. Jessica listens to Cabo every day and loves the diversity. Programming we offer here.

JENNA: Thank you Jessica.

RUBEN: Be like Jessica by calling 8775005266877 five 100K Boo or go online at kboo dot. And click the donate button.

JENNA: In addition to being a volunteer here at cable, I'm also a listener of cable. I will say that my my dial doesn't move much and the reason that I'm able to tune

into cable all time is because I love the, you know, I was just saying the diversity. Of programming, you know when you tuned in today, it's amazing. Everything to hear on this news. And Public affairs day. All the different perspectives, all the different stories you know that are local and national, international. And there's. There's never a shortage, shortage of interesting stories being told here on cable perspectives.

RUBEN: There's always something.

JENNA: Yeah, and I mean, there's. I have to admit there are some shows that I want to hear at, but then it's because it's making me think and that's what I want and that's what you appreciate. That's what I'm listening exactly. So 8775005266 consider coming. And the diversity of our programming. And at that \$20.00 a month, you can pick up this Chris Hedges tickets 8775005266 or just about \$500.00 away from our goal for the hour. And so last pitch break here. So give us a call. Become a member today. Show everybody where you want your media, where you want your democracy to be here. In Portland and your Oregon. Wherever you. Are maybe you're. Listening to KUDOT FM. Become a member today 877-500-5266.

HOST: Daniel McGowan now speaks about his current focus.

DANIEL: Since like 2012 I was I was released from prison. I was in half the House for six months and then went. Home I got arrested for like a. Day for writing an. Article or for the Huffington Post. That was really ridiculous. My focus is building support for political prisoners in the US to say it, and I was the beneficiary of like a. A silly amount of. Support would be an understatement. I mean I. More so than most people received like a tremendous amount of movement support, I'm like eternally grateful for it. It's kind of hard not to talk about it, but I had like a really amazing support crew. They kept me with books and visits and money and paid rent. And you know, did. So many things and so. Many like T-shirts and. Fake sales and benefits and like helping out my Co defendants and everything. It's a bit like the lifelong debt that I feel you know, not necessarily. Not only to those people, but to the movement. I mean, if the movement is there for you, you know, I think that it it gives people a sense of knowing that we're in this together, that if you fall, you're not just going to be forgotten because there's nothing like prison to make. You feel that you're gone. I mean, my first day I was arrested that they led me down this hallway that I thought would never end and you know they slammed the door. And you you just stink like I'm that's it. And I'm like, really. Well aware of the good people. In my life. And yet you pulled me in that situation. I have to like. Tell myself like they know you're here like people know it's on the computer you're not forgotten about, but that that everything about the surrounding of prison is designed to dissociate you from that to separate you and kill it. Always felt I was really lucky. I have a seven-year sentence it's determinant. It wasn't like a 7 to 10 with parole with chance, so I was, you know, I didn't have an appeal so I never had that period of time with like constantly. Waiting for the bad news or the good news? So when I came home, I decided. I wanted to help. And so I do a lot of support for men from movements that I have a lot of respect for, like the Black Panther Party or the anti imperialist movement of the Sixties, 70s and

80s. People like Herman Bell, Angela 19, David Gilbert, Robert Seth Hayes. I work in a collective called certain days which produces a calendar every year. It's like an educational thing, but it's also a fundraiser because we then take the money that we raise, which is usually, you know, thousands of dollars and we give that back basically to groups that do solid work with prisoners that. That really like put prisoners at the forefront of what they're doing. I think a lot of what happens in this country and the prison level happens on the state level, and so there's no reason to think that in addition to all this like reactive defensive stuff, we're doing that we should continue to push forward. You know they say the bad thing about every state is that it has a prison system and federal prisons. There's no shortage of like areas to work on, and obviously no shortage of work to be done. In the grand scheme of things where we're talking about political prisoners, we're talking about people from our movements, but it's a small amount of people. And obviously, the prison system in the United States is like 2.3 million 1.6 in prison, 700,000 in jails, and you got all the ICE and military prisons. And I mean it's an enormous amount and so. Obviously it my. Idea is never that we would just engage in this tiny. People that, but we find like commonality between our struggles.

I want to thank everyone for coming. I want to thank Rad Edu Amanda and Justin Esther. Thank you.

HOST: It was reported April 7th, 2017 at Portland State University, Smith Center. The unedited speech can be heard on the cable website KB dot FM. This was recorded, edited and produced by Aaron Yankee for KB OO, Portland. Thanks for listening.

ADVERT: This is KBOO Portland. The time is 259 coming up next on cable. A talk by Hank Willis Thomas, an African American visual artist, photographer and arts educator, and we'd like to take this opportunity to again thank cable members for your generous support. If you're not a current member, you can become one by going to KB. O dot FM and clicking on donate or by calling 877-500-5266.

ADVERT: Between various proud to host Chris Hedges and Joe Sacco, on Saturday, May 27th at 2:00 PM at the Aladdin Theatre in Portland, journalist Chris Hedges and award-winning cartoonist Joe Sacco wrote the best selling book days of destruction days of revolt together. Their talk includes a discussion about sacrifice. Zones areas in America that have been offered up for exploitation in the name of profit, progress and technological advancement. Again, that Chris Hedges and Joe Sacco Saturday, May 27th at 2:00 PM at the Aladdin Theatre, 3017 SE Milwaukee Ave. in Portland, and. More information can be found at KBOO dot FM, on the right side of the home page under community events.

ADVERT: Hank Willis Thomas is a photo conceptual artist who creates work focused on themes of identity, race, media and popular culture. He recently spoke at Oregon State University and Cable was there and now. Here's Hank Willis Thomas.

ADVERT: Thank you so much, I'm going to. Start with a. Just a clip from A5 channel video installation that I did and the work of James Baldwin. It's called the person who's more important than anything else.

ADVERT: It seems to me that the honest struggle...

Conversations

01/16/2017 - Communication Management Units & Political Prisoners in the Age of Trump

Synopsis

<https://kboo.fm/media/55168-communication-management-units-political-prisoners-age-trump>

Hosted by: acarpinelli

Produced by: KBOO

Program:: Prison Pipeline

Air date: Mon, 01/16/2017 - 6:30pm to 7:00pm

Adam Carpinelli will interview **Daniel McGowan**. Daniel is an environmental and social justice activist from Queens, NY. He was charged in 2005 with 15 counts of arson, property destruction and conspiracy, all related to two actions in Oregon in 2000, claimed by the Earth Liberation Front (ELF). Daniel was facing a minimum of life in prison if convicted when he accepted a non-cooperation plea agreement. He received a 7 year sentence and did most of it in two Communications Management Units. His arrest was part of what the US government dubbed Operation Backfire; a coordinated, multi-state sweep of over 15 activists by the federal government who charged the individuals with practically every earth and animal liberation action in the Pacific Northwest left unsolved. Many have considered this round up indicative of the government's 'Green Scare' focus which had activists being arrested and threatened with life in prison. Many of the charges, including Daniel's, were for crimes whose statute of limitations were about to expire. Daniel was released from prison in December 2012 and was on probation for three years until June 2016. He has worked with NYC Anarchist Black Cross, the Civil Liberties Defense Center and the National Lawyer Guild's Parole Preparation Project and PP Committees. Daniel is on the Certain Days: Freedom for political prisoners calendar collective.

For more information:

www.nycabc.wordpress.org

www.cldc.org

www.certaindays.org

Download audio file

Topic tags: Activism, Civil Rights/Human Rights, Government/Politics, Law/Court/Crime, Prison

Transcript

Labor Radio 3 Minute Call In

BEN: Hello, are you there?

APRIL: My name is April.

BEN: Hi April.

APRIL: Hi, I just got home from work and I find it very.

HOST #2: Safely, I hope.

APRIL: Ironic and very horrible that somehow our leaders are misleader have. Kind of turned. MLK day around. For one thing, they always celebrated on the Monday following so that a lot of people aren't even aware of the real date of his birthday. January 15th every year. And you see closures and you see Martin Luther King Day activities split between the two days. And it's also pretty horrible that Martin Luther King was about helping everyone the, you know, the last people he was working with were the garbage workers and he was starting a poor people's campaign, which is why he was killed. And now the only people that get to celebrate the actual holiday, not his actual birthday, because I did celebrate on Sunday going to two different things. But the only people that actually get to celebrate his holiday with the day off. Are not the. People he was helping. They're the people with you know, better jobs that actually get holidays off.

BEN: Right the bankers? Yeah, exactly mm-hmm.

APRIL: And what Martin Luther King means to me is not just celebrating. One day a year. But celebrating every day that you know by working together, it may be, you know, our causes may be really unpopular, but by working together we can keep struggling and we can have vision. And someday we'll get there.

BEN: Absolutely I I, I agree. and I think I think from how I feel, at least in in our area in Portland, I feel like our our mission is super popular, at least among the crowds and people that I meet and shake hands with. You know, it just seems like the people with the money, the people. People that are supposed to be elected to represent us. It seems like they don't, they just represent the people that that pay their campaign financing.

APRIL: Yeah, well, I think that's true to a very large extent. But one thing I did notice is, you know, cabu always advertises the big Martin Luther King celebration at Highland Church, and that's great. But that's on the 16th. They don't say they don't say anything about. His birthday on the 15th and I don't know. I may have missed it.

But did Keibu even cover the take back Martin Luther King Day event that I believe was in Peninsula Park? You know?

BEN: I'm not sure I can't answer that question because I've been I've been busy at work. We're actually volunteers that do this show.

APRIL: Right right I understand, but I mean, I guess my point is that even caboo seems to be buying into that a little bit.

BEN: The third Monday month.

APRIL: And that's not you know, any one person and I know we all have a responsibility to because it is volunteer run to be on the board or something. Try to change things like that and you know I've really been thinking about that a lot this year, however. You know, I think it is a paradigm and just to say that it's only the people in power that are feeding into it is not.

BEN: Accurate, no, that's true. There's a lot of people that are misinformed and I feel like. But I feel like the people in power send that message out to them and a lot of people are buying it.

APRIL: Right, right definitely.

HOST #2: We don't buy it and I think it does have to do a little bit of what we were talking about earlier, which is that if we aren't educated, if our if our system of education doesn't provide that to us then we are misinformed from the get go and therefore we get to this. Point in our lives and we still don't have the ability to oh, sorry.

APRIL: Right, right? I think that's true. I mean, a lot of people that I talk to, especially people who are younger, but a lot of people my age too don't even know when Martin Luther King's birthday is anymore.

HOST #2: Exactly what?

APRIL: My birthday happens to be on. The 15th and I told, but I told a.

BEN: So you remember every year, you know.

APRIL: Coworker that you know.

BEN: I'm getting the look from prison pipeline time.

APRIL: Martin Luther King and I shared the same birthday and she said, oh is it on the 16th?

HOST #2: You know, unfortunately, our time is up.

BEN: We're out I'm getting the luck we're 3 minutes over went by so fast.

HOST #2: Here, but thank you for calling.

APRIL: No, OK, that's awesome.

BEN: Thank you so much for. Calling in April. Hope you have a wonderful.

HOST #2: Evening yeah happy post birthday.

APRIL: Thank you.

BEN: For everyone else out there that's listening, this is Ben Labor hour radio. Thanks for spending 1/2 hour of your time with us or 33 minutes. Actually, just and we'll see you next time. Have a great night.

HOST #2: To you, the 9 do you waiting for lunch as the minutes drag so slow, take a lunch, turn the volume up. Just making your way home to you the all night driving in your car. It's labor radio. You understand me now.

Prison Pipeline Show Begins

ADAM: Good evening greetings and welcome to prison pipeline. I'm your host Adam Carpinelli prison pipeline presents a unique perspective of the criminal justice system. Addressing the root causes of crime and broadening understanding of the institution of incarceration. This evening we're here with Daniel McGowan. How you doing?

DANIEL: Hey, how's it going Adams?

ADAM: Hey pretty good. Thanks for being on. Daniel is a former political prisoner and Daniel based on your experience as somebody who's politically been politically incarcerated and last week, a few weeks ago we had some folks from Project Censor who were working on stories. You know, the news that didn't make the news. Talking about CMU's and, you were somebody who is directly experienced that. You've written on it. Can you can you talk about the experience? Can you say a little bit about CMU's for anybody who who might not know what that is in the first place?

DANIEL: Yeah, sure, well, cmus are communication management units. There are these units run by the Bureau of Prisons, established in I believe 2006 and 2008 at USP Marion and USP or FCI Terre Haute in Indiana. They were started. Underneath the Bush White House. As sort of this place to put people with so-called terrorism cases. People that perhaps couldn't be put at the supermax prison in Florence. But people that they wanted to kind of bury sort of prevent access to the media, prevent access to supporters as a lot of the a lot of the folks that are in the sea view were East Coast and West Coast folks. The communication management units were essentially restriction units. Punishment units in a way, and they were definitely experimental. The idea was essentially, you know, you're at a low. You know I was at a low security prison. Getting visits playing softball. You know, I don't want to make it sound too great, but it was. You know, it's prison. You're away from your family and friends, you're restricted, but I was able to kind of do an academic program at Antioch University. I was able to walk around and do my time, so to speak the CMU. It's remarkably different when I got there, they only had one phone call a week and you had to schedule that phone call about a week and 1/2 in advance. You know, obviously calling people with busy lives, they can't always predict when someone's gonna be home, so you know you went from having. Essentially, 300 minutes on the phone per month to happen like 60, which was shocking. Kind of cut out your support base by making it so you can't talk to anyone. Then they also what they really did that was those harmful was in essentially squashing our contact visits, and so when you're in a in a regular federal prison, you're able to, you know, have contact visits you can hug, hug your wife or partner, you know, play Uno, eat ice cream. You know, have like a 7 hour visit. People come all this way to

see you. It's it. Kind of makes sense that they would. They would stay for 6-7. Hours 3 days in a row, whatever, and the CMU. What they did is essentially they gave us one visit a month and the. Visit was four hours. And the visit was in this tiny booth that you know, essentially fit like one person with a camera overhead. With people live monitoring the phone call or live monitoring the visit from Washington DC from the so-called counterterrorist unit. So that those were two of the worst aspects of the CMU. The other aspect was there was no real idea of how long we would be there. We were told various things by different staff members when we finally got around to suing the Department of Justice, in this case, called arrestee holder. Or now I guess a rusty lynch. We it became pretty apparent through discovery that they actually had no real policy. They were just putting people there and not really devising a way to like that. People would actually get their way out. You know there was no due process essentially, and there was pretty severe retaliation for expressing political beliefs, so I had when I was at the low security prison. I had written a bunch. Of articles about current events. The drug. War life in prison. You know some like mundane stuff and then also pertinent stuff. Those specific words I use as like blog posts that I made were used to essentially put me in. The CMU and keep me there. And I did a total of 48 months at CMU, 26 at 1/26 at Marion and 22 at Terre Haute.

ADAM: So, Daniel, the first question simply is why when we talk about the cmus, why such extraneous conditions compared to other other prisons? You know when we disambiguate the. Types of prisons that are out there. You know they're Super Max and there's so on and so forth. So what what's so unique or special? About these CMU's what's going on.

DANIEL: Well, I you know it's hard for me to like represent the opinion of the BOP like why they went, but it seemed like everything was rushed, was very fast and just they opened the units and they kind of just shoved this in there and then they worried about making the units like habitable and you know they literally were like I mean the turrah. That CMU was essentially the old death row, so the death row had been closed. It had been, you know they had killed Timothy McVeigh. They had moved it, and then they had just shuttered the. Shoot it and so for 3 1/2 four years it was just empty so they get criticism. I believe the Bureau of Prisons got criticism by the Inspector General about how they deal with so-called terrorist inmates and they quickly just very fast ramped up the unit, opened it up and just shoved. You know, 18 men in there, sixteen of whom were Muslim. And just kind of like, you know, put the cart before the before the horse, so some of the conditions I think were was a result of them just moving so damn fast to comply with. You know, the attorney general or whatever. But and then somebody it was just like. You know animosity that they had for. The people who. Were in the unit. Like I said, largely most people were Muslim people like myself who had, you know. On paper terrorist cases that you know clearly are at odds with the people that in like. Work these units and people that work for the Bureau of Prisons, so there's always a lot of like animosity and nastiness directed towards us.

ADAM: Right? So it sounds like on some level that one of one of the MOS with the cmus perhaps has a lot to do with not only political or incarcerations, but things that are fitting under. You know the title you know of of terrorism, which which, which in your case it it it did according to the US government. Right, so can you say.

DANIEL: Yeah, exactly well.

ADAM: More about that please.

DANIEL: I think I fit the perfect storm of, you know, when the first team you was open it. Like I said, it was 16 of 18 people were there were Muslim so when they opened up the second one they petitioned, you know the various prisons and said do you have any good candidates that you know that have terrorism cases that are troublemakers and you know at the prison? I was that I actually never got in any any. Trouble, but I know I received an A lot of mail. I know that I was on what the what they call the SIS list, which is the internal. At the prison like read your mail so all my mail would get there late and then like a huge bundle. And I know. That they were well aware that I was. Doing this academic program. In the library it was totally above board. It was actually is sociology masters, but the stuff I was writing about clear they could not have made them too happy is writing writing critically about.

ADAM: Right, right?

DANIEL: Activism and about stuff that I was involved in. So and the fact is I was not Muslim so it's very easy to put me to take me and just stick me in there because I just fulfilled a lot of their. A lot of their. Little quotas because they put me in there and they say, hey see he's not Muslim, the. Whole unit's. Not Muslim, we got. You know we got. We got an animal rights activist. We have an environmental activist. We have a. You know a sovereign citizen, one of. The right wing dudes. But you know, it's always. It's always been 66% Muslim so.

ADAM: Right, can you say more about those relationships? Because that's very interesting as far as which which I always refer to. That kind of segregation is of course the form of, you know, colonialism in itself, right? Divide and conquer. You know, so how did how did that play out over those years between you and other prisoners? and then between each other with you know different groups and. Of course having these. Very, I mean everybody. It sounds like including yourself having these very precarious kind of cases and charges.

DANIEL: Well, it's interesting. You know the unit had a lot of published authors. It had a lot of people that had college degrees, which is very rare in my experience. In in prison to meet someone that has been to college or whatever. It was, I think they thought that we were all going to be at each other's throats, but. I just, you know, to me it was a. It was a much quieter unit. People were like less. Get quiet in terms of just how like loud and yelling at the TV and stuff, and so I actually really liked most of the people that I was in prison with. You know, at the CMU I found them to be really interesting people, and I learned a lot about Islam and about other parts of the world, so I generally just treated people with respect and I you know, expected it my own way. I definitely felt. You know, other than a A6 month, five month period

where I had a friend and it's Andy's the panda and from the shack case actually not just a friend but a homie like from Long Island. I was, you know, felt pretty alone I would say. You know there's. You know, you know it's like I said it's largely Muslim, but the Muslim population is extremely diverse in terms of like. Ethnic backgrounds or. Where they're from in the world who's American? Who's born in. Pakistan or you know Yemen or whatever. But you know, so that was interesting. There was definitely periods of time where I just felt really lonely. Like I if I walk in the TV room I, I think I saw like same sex marriage became legal in New York. And I walked in and I just kind of, you know, a little obnoxiously gave like a kind of slow clap, you know, and you know which passed off like some of the people were who were definitely not of that of that belief. That was a good thing, right? So there were moments where like things happen where I was. Just like damn, I don't have. Anyone to celebrate this with? or sit in there and like. Sitting next to someone and say hey man, you're on TV and I look up and there's something about the film that was made about my case and kind of just laughing about like there was a lot of moments like that where you would be. You'd be sitting there. And people you know like their case would be discussed on TV on CNN. And you're just sitting there like this is. This is truly bizarre, you know.

ADAM: And that that's the case for some of the Muslim prisoners as well or OK.

DANIEL: Absolutely yeah, I was, you know, I was in with the funny story. I always tell is I was oh I was because at Marion and they showed it was Obama had just gotten in and he had just. You know murdered who gave? The kill order to kill those Somali pirates like on television. And the seals you know shot up the Somali pirates. You know about a month. Later there was the surviving pirate, and they show him they for whatever reason on how they're. Able to do. This they they. They extradited him from Somalia, Somalia to New York City on piracy laws from like the 1700s and I remember when they showed him get off the helicopter or whatever. I said, oh man, this kid, he's going to end up in the seeing you. And I kind of forgot about it. And then when I was at Terra Hut like 20 months later when they were all locked in ourselves and we come out for dinner, there's the kid that was on TV, you know.

ADAM: Wow, wow.

DANIEL: And that was a pretty common, those kind of things happen. You know you. There was a Supreme Court case at one point called Humanitarian law project versus holder. It was about the material aid statute that basically says that you're not allowed to help any group that the US government considers a terrorist group, even if what you're doing is essentially like buying. Like literally soccer balls for children in Gaza, or blankets. And so I would did time with almost all those men. The Holy Land Foundation people that were given 65 year sentences for like I said buying sporting goods and like because essentially the governments. Coca theory is that you know if you're buying soccer balls, that that means that Hamas could go and buy more guns, but. Never, never mind. The fact you're talking about like a democratically elected you know group, and that's supposed to mean something to the US, I suppose. But it doesn't, and so it's pretty interesting to. To meet such. Well traveled interesting folks

people. Well, that you know a lot of the people that had entrapment cases were where they were on no kind of path that they were about to blow something up. You know, it's all about the US government manufacturing these cases.

ADAM: Right? Yeah, well, you know you come from a background before going inside of doing some aspects of, you know, good prisoner support or political prisoner support jail support, what have you then going inside and then having somewhat of a base? I mean not inside but outside for your support? And what did that landscape look like? In the sense of. How these other folks were getting supported? or not and. Or legal good legal support. Good legal advice. And things of that nature.

DANIEL: Well, I mean I would say yeah, like you said, my support was really strong and I was really lucky to have that as a really dedicated group of people in New York and beyond they made my life a lot easier. You know, with lawyers and money for commissary, and I mean it's embarrassing, but I, I mean, I never wanted I had. Books you know sent to me like enormous amounts of books and subscriptions and stuff, and I. So it was always kind of shocking to see the difference between myself like a newer prisoner or someone that just come in and other folks. And it was really, you know, for me it was about I had to like remind myself of it. If it feels very bad right now, but basically you know I have it so much better than other folks and anything I can do turn it down to help people out, either through better access to organizations or pen pals or lawyers I would do. I would say that people in the CMU had more access to the courts. A lot of people had fresh cases. They had new cases, they still had lawyers that were willing to help them out, but. But you know, I saw a lot of people's families disintegrate while I was there. You know the lack of contact visits is really tough for people that have a partner or children. And I would see friends of mine would go to visits and then just come back. Pretty crushed because they you know they sell their children and who drove up 13 hours from Dallas and then. You know they couldn't, actually. You know, hold their children on their. Lap or whatever. And so a lot of people I saw a lot of divorce papers get filed and I saw a lot of people just mentally spiral downward. It was really tough.

ADAM: For folks just tuning in. You're listening to prison pipeline on KBO, Portland 90.7 FM. And we're here with Daniel McGowan, who's a former political prisoner and we've been talking about. Communication management units and many of the individuals, including Daniel. Had political incarcerations and very extraneous cases complicated cases, to say the least. Daniel, you're also somebody who is very familiar and very active on many different levels, with the general cause for long term US held political prisoners. So we we've talked a lot about these these different. Places in the cmus and then also in you're in New York, back in New York and in upstate, there are so many of these particular prisoners can can you talk about them in their cases? Some, maybe some updates landscape. What are some of the organizations and what have you sure?

DANIEL: Well, I think you know we're lucky in New York to have a lot of organizations that work on mass incarceration. You know groups like rap release, ancient

people in prison. And Correctional Association and just different groups like that anarchist Black Cross. So in New York State we have a situation. With some former members of the Black Panther Party Black Liberation Army that are still in prison specifically to Leo Mustaqeem and Herman Bell and Robert Seth Hayes and then also there's. David Gilbert, who is a former member of the Weather Underground, that's two and 75 to life. For his participation in the Brinks robbery in 1981, so the situation we have right now is that the first three people I mentioned the Panther, then went to the parole board in 2016. They all were denied they all given what's called 2 year hits, so they get to go back in 2018. All of them are in the stage of appeal, appealing that that denial.

Currently Jaleel is at Attica and Attica has been messing with him a lot and the most recent thing was Julio is in the Secure housing unit. The shoe right now because he was teaching class on black history and they were. They got to the 60s and Julio gave a presentation on Black Panther Party and of course the prison. Like records at all, Chris got mad about some stuff Julio said and so now he is in the shoe for what seems to be like four to six months. I was unable to figure that out. He's in the shoe. He is also like I said, appealing his parole. Denial from 2016. Robert Seth Hayes has been in prison since 1973. He's at. Sullivan Correctional, which is also upstate. He has a medical campaign that's been going on trying to get him an insulin pump, something that you know for people on the outside would be pretty easy to get even through. You know Obamacare or whatever and that would help him regulate his insulin. the government, the. Docs as they call it the Department of Corrections has been pretty, you know, gnarly about keeping him this even after the doctors say that he requires it. So there's been a call in campaign and he recently released a big open letter online talking about his various legal efforts. The third person that I referenced as Herman Bell. That's Julio's Co. Defendant. He is at Great Meadow, had sort of a tough year. I think the government uses used this law called the son of Sam Law to freeze his commissary account. And presumably to then give some of that. Money or whatever. To the so-called victims of the of the crime. So it's been kind of a tough year for most of the most of those men haven't all been tonight parole recently, Maliki Shakur, the teen who is a former Black Panther, was released from prison after 35 years. He has a. Release fund online at I think it's rally.org/maliki it's NALIKI. And like I said, David Gilbert, the situation is he he is on originally a 75 to life charge. This last week his Co defendant Judith Clark. Received clemency, which now allows her to go to the parole board in the first quarter of 2017, which is amazing, and I'm ambivalent about it because of the fact that Judith does not identify as political prisoner which. Is ultimately of no consequence to me, but there's been a series of articles in the New York Times where to its lawyer and a racist reporter named Tim Dwyer, have a sort of in promoting Judy as the ideal person to receive clemency. They've also then thrown Judith's Co. Defendants under the bus specifically.

The two Shakur who was supposed to be released in the early part of 2016, but this article ran and then it appears that Matulane's date was pulled back and then he was

given a parole hearing in which he was denied parole. Matula Shakur has been in prison for 35 years. Tupac Shakur, stepfather and a well known political prisoner. So that's sort of the deal right now. Jalil has a lot of writings that go up on his website. It's free Jalil. Dot com and I believe Hermans is free Herman bell.org. But you know most of this stuff could be found like the New York City ABC website, itsnycabc.wordpress.com, and we're basically, you know, continue to push for, you know. Clinton see parole whatever it takes to get these guys out and they you know they've been in so damn long and I have a lot of respect for the for them and. They should be out by now so.

ADAM: Sure, Daniel. When Bill Clinton was leaving office had. Pardoned just a. Few people. Couple of them from the Puerto Rican independence movement, which which now there's one remaining. Oscar Lopez Rivera. And there's a few other people that that Clinton pardoned and then. Of course in. The last couple of years, right? Everybody had their wheels spinning around. Obama was gonna do something right? And clearly that's not happening now. Now we're in the the official age of Trumpism or whatever you want to. Call it right maybe. Other some other anecdotes she'd like to offer on that but, but again, moving forward and talking about this work, because again, in this case it's changing the landscape of activism changes the society is changing. The perspective is changing. The leadership will quote UN quote leadership is changing right the lives of the prisoners are changing as far as the. Conditions their own health and what have you? So I mean kind of on the ground right now. What do you see? Maybe happening? I mean as as far as maybe just the grassroots activism. Them and or maybe you know larger national endeavors that might be happening or that might be going to happen for you. Know 2017 on.

DANIEL: Well, I think you know, yeah, the age of Trump, fascism, whatever we're gonna call it. I think things are gonna get a lot worse for. The federal prison system. I think that you know, like you said, Obama is out of office since Obama. For these students, things are not totally different. People will be imprisoned and then. That is hoping for the. Instead, I don't feel like it is on the in the issue of the old. Events or trends in order to not feel hopeless right now? Obviously things feel pretty gnarly. You got two weeks before the inauguration and I'm happy that people are going to D. The to challenge the spectacle that is this inauguration. I don't think we all have to go to DC. I think we could do do our work where we are necessarily. But yeah, I mean it's gonna be, you know, I know the whole like all 2016 sucked and whatever but I. I just think that's it's not. That doesn't mean that 2017 is going to be much better or. Worse, I just think that. You know, we've we've been here before. Maybe maybe, maybe not. Maybe this is a whole new thing, but we're gonna have to learn to new ways of fighting back, I guess.

ADAM: Well, you know, as as we're kind of wrapping things up tonight. And some of the things that that are ongoing or that can be, you know. You're very. Which, what's the word I want to use? You're you're it seems like your social media guy, and so there's that piece. There's the on the ground organizing the prisoner writing events. Maybe people are doing speaking tours. There's other resources that are produced and

available that inform people about about political prisoners, such as the calendar. So you wanna maybe wrap up talking about a few. View those things. What that looks like on the ground and maybe and again, maybe just mentioning some of the links again before we're closing.

DANIEL: Yeah, absolutely my go to link for most political prisoner news is the New York City anarchist Black Cross website. They have a really wonderful illustrated guide to political prisoners. It's at NYC abc.wordpress.com and they're on all those different social media apps as well. I work for a project called certain days. It's a freedom for political prisoners calendar. You can find it at certaindays.org. We actually just sold out and our online orders are not going through, but apparently the and our as info shop in Portland still has some copies, which is great as well as there's a bunch of info shops and stores throughout America that still has it, but you can check out the website for that and that is a calendar that is started by Herman. Well and. David Gilbert and Robert Seth Hayes and it's a benefit for a bunch of different. Prisoner organizations, but yeah, that's I think those are. Those are my top two links, but definitely you could find those two ABC and certain days on social media as well.

ADAM: Yeah, how is the calendar organized? Can you just talk about that briefly?

DANIEL: Yeah, sure. Well the calendar is like I said, it's a project with the three of the political prisoners I mentioned and then we have two individuals in Canada and myself and we have like that sort of a network of people that are editors and helpers and readers and. Plus we distribute the calendar through AK Press and Chris Lebedev in Canada. But essentially it's you know as soon as we wrap up one year, we're already on the next year. So like we're wrapping up 2017 distribution and we are like already having a conversation next week about the theme is going to be for 2018 and it's a benefit and all the proceeds go to three different programs, that's. Release aging people in prison in New York. A group called Ademir in Palestine that does political prisoner work and then the UNISTO in.

06/08/17 - June 11th: Interview With Daniel McGowan

It's Going Down (itsgoingdown.org)

Jun 8, 17

Filed Under: Analysis, Anarchist Movement, Critique, Environment, Incarceration, Interviews, Political Prisoners, Radio/Podcast, Repression, The State, US

— June 11th

Podcast: [Play in new window](#) | [Download](#)

Subscribe: [RSS](#)

[\[LISTEN HERE\]](#)

In our latest interview for the June 11th International Day of Solidarity with Marius Mason & All Long-Term Anarchist Prisoners, we spoke with Daniel McGowan.

Daniel is a former eco-prisoner who did seven years in prison for actions he took part in with the Earth Liberation Front. Prior to and since his time in prison, Daniel has been active in prisoner solidarity projects, including the Certain Days: Freedom for Political Prisoners calendar.

We talk about Daniel's experiences with solidarity on both sides of the walls, the particular importance of long-term prisoner support, which forms of solidarity felt most important during his time in prison, post-release support, Communication Management Units, inter-movement prisoner support, mutual aid, supporting New York state prisoners and younger anarchist prisoners, and the origins of June 11th.

Transcription

JUNE 11TH: Can you start by telling us about yourself and your experiences with prison and prisoner support?

DANIEL MCGOWAN: Sure, my name is Daniel McGowan, and I'm a former political prisoner. I've done seven years in prison for actions I took with the Earth Liberation Front, or the ELF, in the late '90s and early 2000s. My experience with prisoner support, for most of my activist life I've been involved in prisoner support, and then I found myself being on the receiving end of tremendous amount of support and solidarity from friends and comrades on the outside.

J11: Can you speak to the importance of prisoner support as part of the anarchist project and other liberatory struggles? And specifically to the necessity of supporting long-term prisoners?

D: Well I think prisoner support is really something that's needed for anyone that goes to prison. Unfortunately the networks that exist are largely built around our comrades or people that we know in prison. I think long-term is a thing that means different things to different people. I tend to think that a person who has a two year sentence feels like it's long-term, so it's sort of relative. But I would say that obviously the longer the sentence, the more solidarity and support is needed. I think any movement that takes itself seriously, anarchist or otherwise, needs to provide for the consequences of state repression or interactions between our movements and the right-wing, in terms of incidents between antifa and right-wing fascists. I think that without having that safety net, not only are people less inclined to take actions they feel like are part of a movement, they realize that it almost feels like a martyr situation where people are willing to confront state power or fascists and then there's literally no one to help them or work with them when they're in prison.

I think as a person is in prison longer, the needs often change. Prison degrades and haunts individuals, so I think the longer you're in, the more it's necessary. And understanding that statistically most people that go to prison come out, but we also obviously have situations where we have people with intense cases, political cases, where they potentially have life sentences, or they technically have access to parole but it's meaningless because they get rejected all the time. I think the needs of long-term prisoners are slightly different than short-term. A short-term prisoner might have their eye on their out date, and so they don't want to basically catch a new case, or catch new time. I think we see situations like Jared Chase where his release date has been pushed back, so he is already supposed to be out of prison, but due to interactions with the cops inside, his sentence has been extended to I believe 2019, which is obviously problematic in a lot of ways.

J11: What forms of solidarity were most important to you while you were in prison, and what could have been done better or different?

D: I think having access to people I could call and e-mail (when they finally instituted that) was really important. The fact that I knew I had a crew of people that I could rely on, that when I was bundled up and put in transit I knew that people were looking where I was, that they would reflect on the fact that they didn't hear from me, and would be looking out for me. I liked feeling that there were these people, my family, my friends, even people I didn't know around the country and the world, that were willing to make a phone call, to e-mail the BOP or bother them to have lawyers that were willing to come and visit me while I was in transit. I remember there's this one time I was at Oklahoma City and my partner at the time, I found out later, paid a lawyer to come in and visit me just to get me out of the segregation unit, and for me to let the lawyer know what was going on, and that lawyer was able to relay it to my long-term lawyers and let them know. So knowing that people gave a crap about

me, that I had an outlet, that I had friends that I could ask for things that made my time a little easier, that people were willing to basically pressure those in power on my behalf, that was really affirming and supportive.

As far as how things could've been done different, I think we learned the hard way. Because my communications were monitored, it was really hard for me to make specific requests and so of course people want to do right by you so they don't want to do something that puts you in harm's way. I remember for instance when I first got to the CMU, I remember thinking how awesome it'd be for people to have a support demo outside, and how that would've probably flustered the Bureau of Prisons, like "this dude's from New York and he's somehow able to mobilize people to be in the parking lot banging on pots and pans and making noise." It's not something the prison gets a lot of, in the Midwest and often in rural areas. But I always thought that would be something I would love, but it was pretty much impossible for me to ask, since my phone calls, even my legal visits were all monitored on some level. They're obviously not supposed to monitor legal visits but I think it's imperative that people with cases that are scary to the prisons understand that more than likely their phone calls and legal visits are potentially going to be recorded. So we just realized along the way that there's basically just going to be a whole bunch of things they can't communicate to me, and I can't communicate to them.

J11: Can you speak more about your time in the CMUs and other tactics that the state used to try to silence and isolate you?

D: I was in the Communication Management Unit at both prisons, both CMUs. I was at the Marion one for twenty-six months, I got moved into general population at Marion and then the government concocted some fake reason to throw me back in the CMU, and I spent the remaining twenty-one months of my sentence at Terre Haute, Indiana. I think a lot of what it had to do with is that I was put there because I was in a sort of vulnerable position. I had a terrorism case, I had a violence case, since they consider arson violence, and it came with what they call a public safety factor for what they consider a greatest severity offense. So it's the kind of case that has a lot of highlighting and asterisks on my file. I'm not a Muslim and I have a terrorism case, so when they opened up the second CMU at Marion, they put a few people in there that could basically make some point to just say, "oh no, it's not a Muslim unit."

They put myself and Andrew Stepanian from the Stop Huntington Animal Cruelty case, they had sovereign citizens which are from all different races and nationalities, they put an old neo-nazi from "The Order," a group that engaged in targeting people and armored car robberies. So they put a few of us in there as their "proof" that these CMUs were not just Muslim terrorist units. I was doing academic work with a university in the Midwest, Antioch University, I was doing a Sociology Degree so I was writing a lot about my case, and I think they found those documents and saw the amount of mail I was getting, and essentially when the place I was at was asked for nominations, it was pretty easy for them to send me there because I was vulnerable

because of my case. I was at a low-security prison, but it was very easy for them to put me there.

I think part of it was I wasn't breaking any of their so-called rules, but I was writing a lot of political stuff, I was writing about the drug war, about fellow people in prison that I had met, as well as how basically fraudulent and bogus prison is and what prison does to people. I had met a ton of people when I was at FCI Sandstone that were there basically for crossing the border and who had five to seven year sentences. I met a bunch of people who were being put away for crazy thirty and forty year sentences for meth. It just opened up my eyes to a whole other element of the prison world. So I wrote a lot and I put it online through my friends and family. They were unable to give me incident reports, they were unable to stick me with that. So they just put me in a place where I think they thought I would just roll over and do quiet time.

It didn't really work that way, I felt like I was doing quiet time and I got sent to the CMU, and that really lit a fire in me again, and I decided I was gonna go to war with them over the next five years, which is pretty much what I did. The other thing they did in terms of isolating me and silencing me was – there are particular aspects about the CMU that were pretty onerous in terms of communication, so they did things like limit the communication in CMUs to (when I first got there) one phone call a week, which you had to sign in a week in advance and you could only call one person. They made the visitation so bad it was like four hours a month. It was really kinda hard for me to ask people to come 2,000 miles to essentially come for this horrible, non-contact visit.

They monitored all the communications, I think they had people in the units that were rats, who were willing to help the government out, and they did an immense amount of rejections of my mail. So my mail going out was monitored obviously and recorded and all that, but really my mail coming in, if it was political. They were very broad in their use of rejections. I had something like 100 magazines and newspapers rejected over the time I was in prison. I pretty much gave grievances for all of them, which was my way of being a bit of an asshole and a stubborn bastard. I basically grieved every single time they rejected anything from the prison level up to DC, which is crazy. It takes like nine months, and at that point you're allowed to sue. Obviously I didn't sue on any of my magazine rejections, but I basically pissed them off. I wasn't able to get *Earth First! Journal* or *Rolling Thunder* or a lot of the magazines that to this day really don't publish anymore.

J11: A topic that has come up for us a number of times is continuing support for people as they're released from prison. How was your transition, and what was helpful for you? What would you want other people to know about post-release support?

D: It's interesting, I think the release thing is getting a lot more attention these days from our community because I think we're getting better. We have a lot more people going to prison, a lot more people come out back into the movement, and we're

sort of learning the hard way how rough re-entry is. Most of the programs that exist for re-entry don't work so well for politicized individuals for a lot of different reasons. For instance, maybe people come out and they already have good housing, maybe they have a college degree or something like that, maybe they even have job prospects, but usually people are coming out of prison with some struggles? And sometimes it's everything: it's housing, it's legal difficulties, it's 'stay-away' orders from felons or co-defendants.

My situation was such that I was married, I had a place I could go to live, and I got six months in the half-way house. I also had a crew of people that were really amazing in their dedication and fundraising. So when I got out I had a couple thousand dollars, actually more than a couple thousand, to buy some clothes, to buy a computer, to buy shoes. It had been six years, so I needed to replace some things. I was really good at that level. I had my material needs met, I was at the half-way house and came home on the weekends, we'd order takeout food because I wasn't really allowed to leave. I also did very well, like I was remanded back into custody for writing an article basically about the CMU, and I had lawyers so they were able to get me out of prison the next day, which is really amazing.

But I struggled psychologically, they say you leave prison but prison doesn't leave you. When I first came home I just had a lot going on and I had a hard time. I was at the half-way house, and it was kinda hard for me, they wouldn't let me see a shrink or a social worker. I had some contacts from the movement that were willing to get me some access to mental health care. The half-way house, which is essentially a contractor of the government, would not accommodate that. Essentially what happened was I had a lot of two-steps forward, one-step back. And then I had a bit of crisis based on some stuff that went down in my personal life, and at that point it was kinda essential that I see someone. A friend of a friend who was a social worker offered. Because I wasn't actually even able to go to her office, she came down and met me every week in a coffee shop near my job on my lunch hour. That's the kind of thing not everyone has access to, and I felt really supported and spoiled by the whole thing.

<https://itsgoingdown.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2b-2.jpg> [

And then when I was able to get out of the half-way house I saw this person in a professional capacity for three or four years. My problem was more feeling lots of anxiety, having a real hard time with crowds, and that's the sort of stuff that everyone's struggle when they leave prison is going to be different. I used to tell myself, "oh you only did six years," and I was living with men that did thirty, forty years, or life. I thought I was going to get out and everything was going to be peachy keen and fine, but when I got out it was really tough, I got out and I felt like I was still in. I was really sensitive to any kind of offense, everything hurt my feelings and I wanted to fight all the time. I sort of stayed out of trouble, but inside my head it was just rolling emotions.

So I think when people come out we need to reach them where they're at. Some people are going to get out and they're going to have amazingly hard times with every

aspect. They've been in a long time, they might be like, "I've never seen a smartphone, I've never seen a computer." I taught computers in CMU and I dealt with men that had pretty much never even seen a computer or used the internet, so it can be really challenging. My situation, I was in for six years, and I had never seen an iPhone, but I certainly understood what a phone was and how to use it. So my ability to get back into things was good on that level. But everyone is going to have different situations. In New York in the last year there was a political prisoner that was in for thirty-seven years. His name is Maliki Shakur, and he came home and he took like a fish to water with phones, I mean he's good on the smartphone, he texts, he sends photos, he knows how to use it. His housing situation was aided. But I can't imagine he has a lot of great job prospects, hasn't been out in the job market for thirty-seven years.

Then you have people like Zolo Azania who gets out and has a crew in the Midwest that have been helping him. Everyone's going to have a different time, a different struggle. I don't know if we need to have an organization, but I try to help people when they get out, and I try to help their support crews in getting through some of these issues around housing, legal support, health care especially for older folks, mental health care, all that kind of stuff. I think it's something that we're just starting to deal with, I know there was a wave of people that had shorter sentences like the Tinley Park Five, Jason Hammond, and the other people in the NATO Three case, they all got out.

My co-defendants and myself, a ton of us got out after serving anywhere between two and seven years. And we're all out there in the world as felons trying to get some work, trying to deal with the issues that work presents when you're a felon. So I think we just have to reach people where they're at, to start sharing more information. People that are out, who are on probation and are felons, need to talk to each other more, and kinda prepare for when we know people are getting out to help them: materially, but also just as a sounding board. I talk to people when they get out if they're able to talk to me, and just try to hear them out and see them through the tough times.

J11: How has serving years in prison changed your perspective and your practices around prisoner solidarity?

D: Well, like I said, I did a lot of prisoner support before I went to prison. Maybe something like eight years. I started doing prisoner support in the late Nineties. I did prisoner support for Rod Coronado and a number of other animal rights and eco-people. I did support for Jeff Luers. One thing, probably the main thing, is that I realized that charity-based prisoner support that is like a group doing stuff on behalf of people on the inside can be really problematic. I think regardless of whatever people on the outside think, people that are doing time know what prison is like, and are better able to decide how they need to do their time.

I know a lot of times you have political prisoners or people, political cases or politicized individuals that are very vocal, they decide to buck, so to speak. They do hard-time, they are bucking within the administration, and that's definitely one way to do time. It's sort of the way I did my time. I felt like what I was doing was really minor,

but the way the government responded to it was so insane. But everyone needs to do their time the way they need to, and I think that when groups on the outside put expectations onto people, I think that's problematic. I have some good co-defendants, they reported to prison, they kept their heads down and they did their time. I think at the same time that we understand that people need to do their time the way they need to, we also need to recognize that part of the time they use things like the CMU or the special management unit or supermaxes is to scare people.

So I think we do need people that are willing to struggle in prison, and not just put their head down. I'm cool with my co-defendants doing their time, a lot of them kept their head down and had their eye on the clock, and were trying to perhaps lessen the impact on their families. But I also thought that in my situation I felt like I was faced with an intolerable situation, and I thought, "who better to fight back than myself?" I mean – I'm in prison, I'm someone that doesn't want to look askance when there's horrible stuff going on, so I thought I was in the right position. So I think the model of working with prisoners, not for them, getting rid of that charity mindset.

I think a lot of that is happening with work that people do on the prison labor front, understanding that it's a mutualistic relationship. A lot of old-time prisoners, long-term political prisoners or whatnot, have a lot to offer. I have some really interesting relationships with people in prison from both when I was in prison and when I got out. I definitely do support for prisoners, but they're certainly not limited to the anarchist movement. I feel like my rapport with older leftists is very good and it's not sectarian, and there's no belief that I support everything they think: I'm definitely not interested in the tenets of Marxism or state-building. But I engage people on things that we have in common.

So getting away from the charity mindset, working with prisoners and helping them get their voice out there when they can't do it themselves. But always understanding it in a context of mutual aid and solidarity and not in the context of thinking of them as just a poor person that needs help. I'm sure there are a lot of innocent people in prison – whatever innocence means – but we got to also recognize that our comrades have agency and they made choices, and we're supporting them through the consequences of that stuff and the repression. But we don't have to think of people as victims.

J11: So you mentioned that you were doing prisoner solidarity both before and after you went in. Do you want to tell us more about the prisoners that you're actively supporting?

D: I got politicized through this organization that was run out of the basement of a bar in New York City called Wetlands, and it used to have these monthly or weekly meetings. So a large part of the first meeting I went to was an animal rights thing. There was someone there speaking on behalf of Rod Coronado. I got very involved in writing him. I did support for people in the Santa Cruz Two case, and a bunch of different environmental saboteurs or animal rights prisoners. That was definitely my politics at the time, limited to that, and so I wasn't really interested in interactions with people.

I lived in Eugene, Oregon and I was friends with Jeff Leurs (“Free”), and was part of his support committee. When he got sentenced to twenty-two years and eight months, I had actually written a bunch of long-term political prisoners, almost out of desperation, and asked them for help. I realize now, and laugh at myself for having the nerve to write all these prisoners and ask them for help when they’re doing all this time, but I got a lot of really great answers from people like Marilyn Buck, and I think Leonard Peltier. There were a bunch of people that were willing to give me some advice on that. So being exposed to that out of a need, I sort of started to pay more attention to the political prisoner world.

I’d been involved for a while, doing stuff kinda related to Anarchist Black Cross political prisoner support. Since I’ve gotten out, I’ve mostly been focused on two different things: support for long-term New York State political prisoners, and then also mostly younger and newer cases from the anarchist movement. So I help out a little bit on the Cleveland 4 and NATO 3 case, I’ve made myself available to talk through legal issues that people are dealing with, helping people get lawyers for different situations. I also have been heavily involved in trying to get some of the long-term Black Panthers in New York out. It’s like Herman Bell, Jalil Muntaqim, Robert Seth Hayes, and also (not a Black Panther but a long-term New York person) David Gilbert. So I write most of those individuals, and I work with them on basically trying to raise their profile and fight back attempts from the Policemen’s Benevolence Association (basically the pig union) and the Fraternal Order of the Police, who are very actively campaigning against the Black Panthers that are going up.

So I try to do a little mix of both. My ideas about prisoner support are rooted in that we have to definitely support our comrades that we struggle with, that we fight with. I think it’s disingenuous to be part of a movement that, if your movement is effective, you are definitely coming into contact with law enforcement, and so to not see through that situation where you have comrades that are getting popped for various things, I think it’s kinda fraudulent. It’s just cheerleading if we’re not willing to support our comrades, so that’s my mindset for why I do political prisoner support, or prisoner support for Cleveland 4, or NATO 3, or Eric King, people like that. And like I said, the rest of my time I mostly spend working on the long-term New York political prisoners, but I tend to be one of these people that finds myself drawn to different campaigns if friends are asking for help.

J11: So you’ve been doing this for a long time. What are your hopes and visions for prisoner solidarity in the years to come, and how can June 11th as a project fit in to that?

D: That’s a good question. I think June 11th is a great thing. I’m not sure if people know, but I was involved in the beginnings of June 11th in 2004. June 11th is the day Jeff Luers was sentenced to twenty-two years, eight months in 2001. And he got that for burning three pickup trucks at Joe Romania Chevrolet. There was actually a very spirited rally and march, and cops got a little crazy in 2003, people in Eugene sorta pulled off this act. But in 2004 we decided we wanted to do a worldwide thing. So we

did this International Day of Solidarity and Action for Jeff Luers and the FBI sort of aided our efforts by releasing what they called “an eco-terrorist bulletin,” and so there were all different events around the world, there were 57 of them, and all the domestic ones were messed with by the FBI. There was a tremendous amount of law enforcement attention paid to it, to even a film screening in Worcester, Massachusetts.

I was actually in New York at the time, and we went around ticketing SUVs with these fake tickets, and in Eugene they had a bunch of very large events. And so we did it in 2004, we did it in 2005, and then I got indicted and the people that were part of Jeff’s crew extended it to a day of action for eco-prisoners. I think it’s a good thing, and I think that things change, and days of action morph. I understand going from the Eco-Prisoners, to Marius and Eric, and now Marius and Long-term Anarchist Prisoners. I think these sort of days are good in terms of rallying support, and reminding everyone that we have people inside. I hope that there’s material gain that can be made for people in terms of raising funds and raising awareness.

From my own personal perspective, I think it’s important for anarchists to not just do prisoner support for anarchists. I think that there’s a broader world out there, and that when we limit ourselves just to people that share our ideology or our identity, we’re really limiting ourselves in some ways from mutualistic work, as well as lessons we can learn from elders that are inside. I think also when we consider when we’re doing work that’s limited to anarchist prisoners, but then we’re asking other people to care about anarchist prisoners, it seems a little empty if we’re not engaging in some sort of mutualistic prisoner solidarity with other movements.

I know it’s probably not something that many people want to hear, but I do think that when we focus on just anarchist prisoners invariably, we end up focusing on a lot of white people, which when we’re considering the racial identities or racial makeup of the prison system in the United States, it is largely a black and brown and red thing. And I just think we need to be addressing in our work the white supremacist culture that we are in. That said, I think June 11th is something to support, and I think it’s a good opportunity to rally support for anarchist prisoners, and I think it should continue. In terms of my hopes for prisoner solidarity movements or whatnot, I think we have a situation in the next couple of years where we have an opportunity to get a lot of the old-timers out on parole. I think we have a limited time to do so.

Campaigns that are not specifically focused on political prisoners but sort of are focused on the prison system as a whole are important, I think not only on their own accord, but also that those kind of campaigns could end up helping the political prisoners, whether they’re the old-timers or the new folks. I’m thinking about groups like RAPP (Release Aging People in Prison). That’s a group that exists in New York and a few other places, and they’re addressing the fact that people have been put in prison for insane sentences, these 25 to life sentences. And they’re beating back this punishment idea that America has, where if someone does something wrong according to the system, they have to be punished, and it’s just this lifelong thing. What groups

like RAPP and others have done has done more to change the narratives around prison than sometimes the somewhat narrow focus of the political prisoner groups.

So I hope in the next five years we get a significant amount of the old-timers out, and I think we have a lot to do in terms of the current anarchist prisoners. From my understanding a lot of them do not have access to adequate funds, and in situations like Jared Chase where it's been very difficult to maneuver through the complexity of having someone that's suffering from a terminal illness that affects his cognition and his judgment, at the same time that he's being kept in the SHU in segregation, that is rapidly contributing to that situation. So I think the anarchist movement can really gain a lot and get a lot better at supporting its prisoners. That said, I think June 11th can be part of that, and I think it should.

J11: Are there any other projects you're involved with or things you have interest in that you'd like to share with us?

D: Yeah sure. I'll just tell you about one project I work on: it's this calendar called Certain Days: Freedom for Political Prisoners. We are currently collecting submissions until June 7th, from people that are incarcerated. It is a calendar that is in its seventeenth year. It exists as an educational thing about prison and prisoners, but also exists as a fundraiser. So last year we raised a bunch of money, we gave it away to different groups, like that group I mentioned, RAPP, a group called Addameer which works with Palestinian prisoners, and a group called the Unist'ot'en Camp, which is an indigenous homestead in Canada made up of Unist'ot'en people that are basically resisting development in their territory.

We're right between calendars right now. We're working on the 2018 calendar, but if you check out certaindays.org online, you can find it on Facebook and Twitter too. You can see our call for submissions, as well as bookmark it for later because our calendars come out in August. We also usually get organizations to sponsor prisoner calendars. The prisoner calendars are a lot cheaper, so groups will give us like \$100 and you can send us prisoners' names and we will send them virtually free of charge. That's pretty much what's got my attention right now. Like I said, I'm working on supporting a number of different anarchist prisoners. Trying to help them increase their capacity to raise money, get books, get birthday cards, stuff that makes their days a little more passable, and support them in whatever they're working on.

01/10/2020 - Certain Days Collective

Synopsis

Source

Beyond Prisons

<https://shadowproof.com/2020/01/10/beyond-prisons-certain-days-collective/>

Jan. 10, 2020

On this episode of the Beyond Prisons Podcast, hosts Brian Sonenstein and Kim Wilson catch up with Certain Days Collective members Daniel McGowan, Josh Davidson, and Sara Falconer.

The group publishes the Certain Days: Freedom For Political Prisoners calendar, now in its 19th year of publication and filled with radical historical dates, 12 thought-provoking articles and beautiful artwork for each month throughout the year. All proceeds support prisoners and grassroots organizations, and we urge you to visit certaindays.org to obtain copies of their beautiful 2020 edition, the theme of which is “Knitting Together The Struggles.”

The five of us discuss the artwork and articles that make up the calendar, as well as the difficult-but-extensive and necessary collaboration with incarcerated people throughout the year to produce it. We also touch on subjects such as the importance of charting radical history, prisoners’ relationship to time, and the value of having such a beautiful and thought-provoking calendar available to people on the inside.

Daniel McGowan is a former political prisoner and former member of the Earth Liberation Front (ELF). He has been involved with political prisoner support for most of his activist life and is currently a member of the Certain Days collective.

Josh Davidson has been an activist for two decades now, focusing on prisoner support and the abolition of the carceral state. He is actively working to start a Books Through Bars program in Baltimore, MD, where he also works on community organizing and against police brutality.

Sara Falconer has been working to raise the voices of prisoners for over 18 years, collaborating on projects such as 4strugglemag.org, a zine by and for prisoners, and the Certain Days: Freedom for Political Prisoners Calendar. She is a member of the Barton Prisoner Solidarity Project in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

Buy the Certain Days calendar and learn more about the collective at certain-days.org

Certain Days on Facebook @certaindays on Twitter @certaindayscalendar on Instagram

Support our show and join us on Patreon.

Please listen, subscribe, and rate/review our podcast on iTunes, Spotify, and on Google Play

Join our mailing list for updates on new episodes, events, and more

Send tips, comments, and questions to beyondprisonspodcast@gmail.com

Kim Wilson is available for speaking engagements and to facilitate workshops. Please contact beyondprisonspodcast@gmail.com for more information

Twitter: @Beyond_Prison

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/beyondprisonspodcast/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/beyondprisons/>

Hosts: Kim Wilson and Brian Sonenstein

Music: Jared Ware

Transcript

BRIAN: Hello everyone, it's your host Brian Sonstein back with another episode of Beyond Prisons.

At the end of last year, Kim and I had the chance to catch up with three members of the certain Days Collective. Daniel McGowan, Josh Davidson and Sarah Falconer. The group publishes the certain days freedom for political prisoners calendar. Now in its 19th year of publication. And filled with radical historical dates. 12 thought provoking articles and beautiful artwork for each month through. Of the year, all proceeds from the calendar support prisoners and grassroots organizations, and I urge you to visit certaindays.org to obtain copies of their beautiful 2020 edition, the theme of which is knitting together the struggles the five of us discussed. The artwork and articles that make up the calendar, as well as the difficult but extensive. Unnecessary collaboration with incarcerated people throughout the year to produce it. We also touched on subjects such as the importance of charting, radical history, prisoners relationship time and the value of having such beautiful and thought provoking calendars available to people on the inside.

Daniel McGowan is a former political prisoner and former member of the Earth Liberation Front. He has been involved with political prisoner support for most of his activist life and is currently a member of the Certain Days Collective. Josh has been an activist for two decades now, focusing on prisoner support and the abolition of the carceral state. He is actively working to start up books through bars. Program in Baltimore, MD where he also works on community organizing against police brutality. And Sarah Falconer has been working to raise the voices of prisoners for over 18 years.

Collaborating on projects such as force struggle, mag.org, a zine by and for prisoners. In addition to the certain days collective, she's also a member of the Barton Prisoner Solidarity Project in Hamilton ON Canada.

We'll have all the information you need to follow these folks by the calendar and more in. The episode now. If you enjoy beyond prisons, please rate review and subscribe to our show on iTunes, Stitcher, Spotify or wherever you listen to podcasts. You can also find us on Facebook and on Twitter at beyond under score prisons. And please tell your friends, family and comrades about the show. And last but not least, this show is funded entirely by listeners like you. So if you have a few bucks to spare, please join us on [patreon@patreon.com/beyond prisons](https://patreon.com/beyondprisons) and we'll send you a gift featuring Kim's beautiful artwork for the show of our appreciation.

All right, here's our interview with Daniel, Josh, and Sarah of this certain days, collective. Thanks for listening and for supporting. The show.

All right, so thank you all for joining us today. I'm really looking forward to talking to you. I was wondering, you know, there's probably some people who are listening who maybe are not familiar with the certain days calendar the certain days collective. So I was wondering if you could just if we could start out by just having one of you talk about what the calendar is and how and when it the project began.

SARAH: So the certain days freedom for political prisoners calendar is a project that we've been doing for almost 20 years now. It's a joint project between outside participants in New York, Baltimore, Montreal and Hamilton ON as well as prisoners in the United States. We do different themes every year that are focused on social justice issues and prison related issues. We have 12 pieces of art and 12 articles that are submitted by people both inside and outside, and it's a fundraiser for different grassroots groups. So we get support from all around the world every year for. For the work that the calendar is doing and then people can also use it. As a fundraiser for their own work.

KIM: Fantastic thank you for that. So why? Is charting radical history on a calendar important to you and to the movement at large?

SARAH: I mean, one of the things that I love about it is that it makes it visible for you every day, every single day in the calendar has different struggles, different dates to be remembered, and you know just a reason to be inspired. It might be a quote from a prisoner, it might be. A piece of art from somebody who has been impacted by prison. It might be something from the civil rights movement, or from environmental struggles you know across North America and around the world. And so you just have. That physical presence up on your wall every day. And I just find it. So impactful, and it's a way for people to bring those voices not just into. You know, the kind of soul siloed work that can happen around prison organizing, but into their everyday work and.

DANIEL: I think it's really important to have this historical perspective like Sarah was saying. I'm always fascinated by, you know, as a person that joined the collective about six years ago. I wasn't around for a lot of the creation of the different dates, and

so like today, for instance, was a really good one, and Josh. Does a lot of. For dates for social media, today is the 50th anniversary of the occupation of Alcatraz Island, which I think is a really a great one. And then also it's the one year anniversary of the death of Comrade who's farim, who's the founder of the release 18 people in prison, program in in New York. And so I was looking at that today, and I saw that that rap sent. Out a. Rap sent out an e-mail, you know, just detailing their current working, connecting it to free stuff last year and it was really. I just thought really it it helps me reflect and also I think for someone you know I'm a I'm a in my mid 40s and I think one of the things. That used to hit me when I was younger was this idea that I'm like really, you know, inventing the wheel, and I think we all you know, sometimes run into to newer political folks. You know you, you sometimes. Hear things where people are are, you know, putting forth that belief you know that belief of like you know they're they're feeling it for the first time. They're the first people that ever dealt with. Please let's struggle, so to speak, and I think that the inclusion of these radical dates is a really good reminder that the struggle against oppression is, you know, hundreds of years long or longer and that it it kind of situates our action and our you know the repression that comes from action and into a continuum. That feels like, you know, for me, it promotes a sense of belonging. Like Sarah said, I'm not involved in, you know all movements. I don't think anyone is, but at least find it really fascinating to read about about these dates in the calendar and then the other thing is that they. These calendars are often bright spots in people's prison cells. We've definitely hear a lot of feedback from people where they talk about like the only thing they had was the calendar and between the you know the beautiful art and the dates. The inspirational you know, radical dates. It's you know, is it color and an otherwise bleak world.

KIM: Yeah, yeah, I know that's something both of my sons received calendars from from you all and they were so excited when they got them. I mean, they were absolutely thrilled. They're like. No, did you send me? The calendar I'm like I should have, but I didn't. They were so excited to get them and open them up and you know, started reading through them. So I very much appreciate that. And I know that they do too. And yeah, so thank you for that.

SARAH: That is amazing. I'm so happy to hear that.

JOSH: Yeah, that's great, yeah.

BRIAN: Yeah I love mine. I have I got one from last year I. I think the theme is healthcare right? And I what I really like about the calendar in addition to the way that it sort of makes you know these dates in history and sort of this like. This this long line of history come alive because you can sort of like feel. You know the time in which these things are happening, the time of year and things like that. It is like pretty much the only calendar that I've come across that's also accompanied by articles and writing. And in the calendar sort of bookended in the front and the back by articles that have themes you know by month and so on. And so forth. So I was wondering if you could talk a little bit more about sort of the literature. The literature that's

attached in there and sort of. You know where you come up with the ideas for it and how you execute that.

JOSH: Well, it it's a long process and it begins even before the you know the New year takes place we we initially try to think of a theme and we get the input of not only you know our core outside collective but especially our inside political prisoner members. And once we come up with a theme, we usually send out a. I'm sorry we send out a call out to prisoners and worldwide seeking essays seeking artwork on that scene. And it's always our goal to get work by political prisoners by prisoners in general. But we're blessed to get amazing artwork from different movements from different people across the globe every year.

SARAH: I would say it's a very collaborative process as well. It's wonderful the way that you know the themes develop over time. We will sometimes be talking about a topic for a few years before it turns out that the healthcare one, for example, is a a great a great one that we talked about off and on, and probably had some related topics for a while. And then we realized. You know that was something we really wanted to focus on that brought together a whole bunch of different things that we were passionate about. And so. You know it's from the visits that we do with our prison editors and with others. It's from suggestions we get from supporters. You know, like you that have picked up the calendar and have. Ideas from things that are happening in the world. We sometimes have had a. Theme and then changed it because. You know there were things that seemed quite urgent at the time, so it's really just this this wonderful online process and Josh's right? It is a. Pretty constant process we start. Working on our themes already. Basically at this time of year and then by early in the new Year we're working on the next one we we always joke that like everybody always says, it takes them a while to catch up on writing the proper calendar date down. You know, if you're moving into 2020, we've been writing 2020 for the past eight months.

DANIEL: That is, that is definitely something that's exhausted. I had here my notes that were on a 9 month cycle, but I think it's really more like it feels more like 11. There is like a a lull at one point in the deep winter where we like take a breath for, you know we're not like constantly on top of. Everything and it is so short it is. It is like a moment before we are even like hey, is anyone gonna make the. The wiki the wiki page. For next year and we're like and I'm always like next year. You know, I'm like constantly thinking and screaming cause I do a lot of distribution so I'm like, but we have X number of calendars left. How can we be talking? About next year, but of course, that's that's.

SARAH: Reality, you know this from your your loved ones in prison too. You know that communication takes a long time. We're doing it across international borders. On top of everything else so you know, it's you know all the regular things that go along with the production schedule plus the distance and the just general pain and the asks of. Prison communication.

DANIEL: We basically set up a situation that's like how can we create a number of like really tough logistical barriers in one organization, and so we have a situation

where, you know, for instance, I'm. A felon I can't go to? Canada, you know I we can visit the people in prison, but like they're quite far from all of us, so we just exist in like the video, you know, call world and a tremendous amount of e-mail. We have a crabgrass account that we use a lot, but it's a remarkable amount of digital communication and the logistics, like you know when we're talking about themes. With our people inside, that is such a intense process and it really does require us to start in March just to get things out. But something you said before Brian really made me laugh. I always, you know I've known about the calendar since shortly after its creation. And, uh, Sarah and I met randomly in in like 2003 I believe, but I didn't really get involved for a few years. And you know part. Of me used to think, you know. Calendars are, they're cool, but you know, like I don't know it. Like a very tepid thing, or a very like mild thing. But the truth is that I think our. Calendar it's sort of a publication. And it's hard. It's hard to know what to call it, but there is such a large amount of it that. Is not the calendar.

BRIAN: Right?

DANIEL: Like you said, it's. It is like we have sections in it where we have our introductory essay. We have information on the beneficiaries. We have a book list, a website list we have, you know, a page and 1/2 of definitions. Regarding the prison struggle and then we, you know, we get kind of robust articles that are all original and art. And then we have, you know BIOS and informal. And so it always ends up being. For me, feels really sneaky. Like this idea that we're just, uh? We're, it's just like I've literally heard people say many times. It's just the calendar, like when I express how how often we get them returned for whatever reason, and I'm always like, yeah, but you know, if they're looking at. What we're obviously Britain.

JOSH: Then this is this is.

DANIEL: Why these these morons that? You know? Operate the mail rooms are threatened. By it because they. See, you know the engines and.

BRIAN: Right?

DANIEL: The that we have and you know and are clearly threatening the idea that a prisoner person in prison should read whatever the hell they want. You know to. Me, it's like a no brainer but for the person that's opening. Your mail is something that I battled with for seven years. You know tremendous amounts of male rejection. So I like. I think of it as a little bit of a Trojan horse. We have like a nice, you know. Nice image on the cover and inside is, you know radical ideas which I think are necessary in that homogeneous you know.

KIM: Yeah absolutely absolutely. I'm looking at the images from the 2019 calendar now, and I mean, they're just they're just gorgeous and. It absolutely stunning. I mean, they're all beautiful. The one that stood out to me with let sex workers sex trafficking survivors live and you know it just it. The image is. It's just. It's just beautiful. The colors are just so vibrant and they you know they. They get you and it's like I usually have a much more robust vocabulary than I. You know, you know.

SARAH: Well, you were just. Talking about beauty and it struck me in a Daniel said it too. it's this color. It's this ability to bring some kind of joy and resistance inside. In a way that's usually a. Bit hard to do. I happen to listen to an episode that you guys did recently that was around knitting, probably because I had knitting on the brain. With our theme. This year But the conversation that you had there was so striking to me too, about the ability to bring color, the ability to bring expression, and. Art and not. Even necessarily talk about prison. You know we have prisoners that are talking about issues that are happening around the world. You know, global struggles, healthcare, you know the resistance, movements and environmentalism. And all these things that are happening to be able to. Bring that across those walls and to bring that like brightness to everybody's lives every day. I think that's you know that's what keeps us passionate about it, for sure. And so it makes me so happy to hear you, you know, find it hard to find words.

JOSH: Absolutely I. I think it's also sorry, sorry I. I think it's also important to point out that that that beauty and that you know the artwork, that's.

BRIAN: A lot of.

JOSH: A lot of what you know what we're trying to publish is coming from inside and coming from such a dark place and such a you know. A place of repression, but you know. People are able to bring out so much beauty not only in the art in the essays as well.

KIM: Absolutely, absolutely. I mean it. It's something that I talk about often. I know that for me as an artist as well, it just art has been a lifesaver. So not just creating art but also, you know, looking at other people's art and I get. Art from both of my sons as well, you know, throughout the year my youngest son is a prolific art. And every time I, you know, open a letter and I see that he's drawn something. It's just so like I'm always, absolutely moved because you know, in the midst of all of the ***** that's happening in the midst of you know, yeah, being incarcerated, and you know. Dealing with. Everything that he has to deal with on a daily basis. He is constantly resisting that by creating, you know and by making images. And you know, I think that that's what's powerful about, you know the calendar is that people see that, and you know it is a daily reminder and you add. All of the other things that you mentioned earlier in the calendar, so that you know it's. It's a calendar, but and you've said this already, it's also more than a calendar, so it's you know it's a political education tool. It's a reference. It's history, it's a lot of things. And yeah, yeah, I want to pivot here because we had another question and I think it's an important one. Time is a subject that we've touched on the show before and how it takes on extra weight when we're talking about time for people who are incarcerated. So can you talk a little bit about the significance of creating a calendar for people on the inside?

SARAH: I think the concept of time is actually one of the things that you know sort. Of we grapple with the calendar. Many of the dates that we share are inspiring, you know, resistance, sort of milestones, things that we can look to every year and. Be excited about. Some of the dates are people being released, many of them after

decades and decades in prison. I mean, many of the prisoners that that we've worked with over the years. Have served unconscionable amounts of time in jails and prisons, so I think to be able to sort of like, see the milestones that are positive and see the ones that you know are so negative that they drive us to build a better world. To consider what we can do. You know, I think is super important as well.

JOSH: Just to add to that, I you know with some people inside and time we're spending an alarming amount of time right now. Sending just the artwork and just the articles in to people who. When we sent the calendar, it was rejected because it was a calendar. Because it reflected time and things like that so.

DANIEL: Essentially, we're getting rejections, often in the federal system for just the fact that it's a calendar and they can purchase their calendar from the commissary often. When that happens, I look on the commissary on the BOP website, and it's like their prison doesn't even have a calendar, so you know, it's great. Yeah, you can make your own calendar. I often had things destroyed. When I was in transit. You know you make your own calendar, but still, like there's no replacement for some, you know. Well, we're sending in. So like Josh said, we're getting rejections and we're sending back. You know, we're essentially, you know, in some level, complying with the, you know with the we're essentially complying with the censorship by. Sending back like a a slightly edited version. That essentially just ends up being the art and the articles and no actual calendar days, so it's like it's not really a calendar. If you do that, and so I feel like we're getting around it, or at least we're hoping we are a. Lot of these. Went out in the last couple of weeks, but you know it doesn't feel good and the increasing you know rejections on the federal level or or. You know? Very frustrating. But in terms of time though, what Sarah was saying, it's really kind of shocking. There's lots of different ways to look at this, but, like, like Sarah mentioned, you know our two inside editors right now are doing a tremendous amount of time. David Gilbert is a New York State political prisoner who's been in prison since 1981. He technically. He has a 75 to 75 years to life sentence, meaning he wouldn't be eligible for parole until 2056. Which, you know is absurd, and it it's essentially based on the whim of the sentencing judge who, instead of giving him a 25 year to life, gave him a 75 year to life. Symmachi or Alvaro Hernandez is his state name. Is doing a life sentence as well and our previous two of our previous editors got out after doing 42 and 45 years. That's Herman Bell and Robert Seth Hayes. So it's like when we're talking about time, it's so. It's for me. I find it really daunting. To conceive of this, I mean, I, you know, it's shocking to me that we got Herman and. Seth out and I'm really happy about that. But you know, we're working with people and people are getting our calendars that are getting hit with a tremendous amount of time and it's in service of this empire, which is just. You know? Very disturbing. So yeah, that's always. A bit of a eye opener for me and a reminder. You know, I did seven years in. Prison and that feels like. You know a a cakewalk in comparison to what we're talking about here. Not that it was, but that just in comparison, it's like hard to imagine being in prison for the length of my. Whole life.

SARAH: We tease each other about it a little bit. Being these like elders and activism. Now that. We're over 40. But you know, you know we're working with people who have been inside, like since we were born or before then. I considered a privilege in so many ways to be able to work with people and to interact with these like amazing minds who are from, you know, the civil rights movement and beyond, or who have sacrificed so much and have so much to give to our movements still. Every day. their insights on strategy, their. Just amazing spirits and what they bring to our movements. All the. Time, you know, I feel so privileged but I also feel super angry that I can't see them every day and that we can't be. Around them, so yeah, it's at the scale of things. This really keeps you grounded.

KIM: Yeah, yeah.

BRIAN: Thank you, you know. On that note I would love to hear more about you know if anyone wants to share about some of the folks inside that you're working with the different ways that people on the inside contribute or go back and forth with you on the content. You know. I would love to go a little bit deeper into that and hear. You know how the inside members of the collective collaborate with you all, and the kinds of things that they're doing? Let me add to that question, if I could. If you're willing to share the theme for this upcoming calendar as well, I wanted to ask you about that.

DANIEL: Sure, well, well the current. You know the 2020 counter that is out now and we'll be out, you know, will be new or in use in a few months and the theme is knitting together the struggles. So it's about. Sort of intersectional Paul that were stronger when we work together, or at least have perspectives that value other people's struggles. So yeah, it's a really good crop of artists and authors this year I'll list a few of them. Andy Banks, Eric McVeigh. Who is a supporting member of our collective Christy Bellacourt. Cindy milstein. David Gilbert, Eric King Ethan X Parker Fernando Marti Garen Zakarian Marius Mason Mary Tramonte Molly fair no new jails campaign. Steven Wilson and there's another few more. In the whole. List, there's probably about six or seven of our contributors are currently in prison in the US prison system. Scattering from the federal to New York to Pennsylvania systems, I guess, just in terms of how people. And get their hands on the calendar. We are really good at distributing, although we we definitely do sort of a DIY distribution model. Which just means we. Put a lot of work and glind on it. Our main distributor in the United States is burning books in Buffalo. They do mail order so you can get it from them at burbankbooks.com, our main Canadian distributor is Chris Quebec or left wing books and we have an international distributor for Europe and Asia. Called active distributing. And you can also get it from AK. Press just seeds and a number of other websites you can link to and off our site@certaindays.org. We also do our best to get it in a bunch of stores. We usually get it into about 25 different stores on in North America and we also have a means by which people can buy. Copies for people in prison. For just \$8.00 and we send it in with like a receipt and sort of pay attention to all the different. Prison mail rules to try to maximize our chances of getting it into people. The other thing I'll say about distribution is a lot of different groups use

our calendar as a fundraiser so we once you get 10 or more, the price of the calendar drops to \$10 and then you can buy. You know you can buy 10 for 100. And then sell them for \$15 each and then you would just keep the difference. So that that's basically there's a lot of individuals, different ABC groups and Jericho groups and info shops, and various projects. Buy a lot and sometimes they use it as like a incentive gift for like a crowdfunding campaign or things like that. So you can definitely get the. The bulk pricing through burning books.

SARAH: You you, you asked a little bit too and thank you. Daniel, that's so good. You asked a little bit, I think at the beginning of that question too, about sort of the process for how we get the word out to prisoners around the around. The caller did. I understand that.

BRIAN: Yeah, you know, I basically just wanted to hear you know not only just the process but how you collaborate with people on the inside. What kind of roles they play in the formation of the calendar? You know you mentioned you have those inside editors and you talked about some of the different people that work on the calendar with you and I. I just wondered if there was anything else beside the editors that you wanted to go into.

JOSH: Sometimes it can be a long process with some of the contributors we personally communicate with them. Through letters usually, which can be a very long process. Sometimes in cases like that, we'll work with the political prisoner or prisoner in general, to make sure that their pieces. It's compiled in a way that they like. It's not always, you know, just a straightforward essay for them. Sometimes it's. It's taken from different letters and things like that, but it really is on a case by case basis, especially with those on the on the inside.

SARAH: We're super lucky. Too, in that we get to visit in person with our editors. You know, I'm much happier to visit with them in person now that a couple of them are outside. And that's been. Absolutely wonderful. In this past year to be able to see Seth and Herman, but we usually try and have a few visits a year with David Gilbert in New York State. So you know we are able to chat with him about his ideas. He's just prolific writer, wonderfully insightful, so passionate about social justice in the world and. You know, so connected to the, day-to-day happenings that it's just wonderful to talk to you. You know, so we had a very lucky visit this past year where we got to see him all at the same time and so we had just one of those really perfect kind of days. Where you. Eat junk food and chat about life and you know plan for the calendar and do all the things that you want to do with the comrades that you're organizing with. You know, but in person together, and we really treasure those moments. We don't even get to see each other in person very often, as Daniel said, as outside members. So it'll all be in one place at one time. It's pretty celebratory, despite the grim surroundings. So you know, we just we love them. We have those opportunities.

DANIEL: Also, I'll say that last year was an interesting one in that you know, without getting. Into the details we we we had. Sort of a lot of back and forth regarding some of our pieces that we printed with David in the months afterwards, just based

on sort of like, you know, like friendly criticism regarding. The article and the and the points that were raised and it was. It was interesting because most of the time things have been very, you know, copacetic. But there were times where we just, you know, essentially disagreed on some level about mostly about emphasis. But I thought that was healthy, and I think that's that's, you know, these are people that you know these are people with different opinions and we don't valorize Our comrades, and so you know it was. It was, I would say I don't know. It went on it went on for quite some time and it was sort of, you know, sort of an agree to disagree perspective. I mean, nobody felt the need to, you know, you know, wasn't the sort of situation that people were like. I'm leaving the project over this. It was more just. Just differences in perspective, some of which is generational and some of which appear to be just be a matter of emphasis. But now I found that interesting and sort of I was OK with it because I think like you know we're they are. You know, both both of the editors are elders, but we certainly don't, you know. We we see each other as people that we can talk to. Really, you know? So it was it was. It was invigorating to say the least. I guess to have that difference of opinion.

SARAH: That is a great example too, because that one cracks me up just in terms of our general process. Honestly, we had so many respectful and long and detailed letters back and forth being. Like I disagree about this. Here's why it's noisy. And you know it went on for some time and we, as you said, kind of just got to a point where we were like. Fine with. Where it was at. Basically, the 2nd that we could spend a little bit of time in person. It was so easy to talk through the issues. And just like the stuff that you can't. You can't do through those other communication that you don't like. David laughed about it. You know, he said it's been 18 years since we had a disagreement. I guess we can get away with this. One, but thank goodness.

DANIEL: And it's funny because sometimes there's topics you know we've definitely, you know, you know, for instance. Kim, you mentioned. The art by Micah Bazant the sex workers and we. We published that with a with an article by a by an imprisoned sex worker named Melissa Walker and also. You know information about this new at the time, then a brand new law named SESTA or FOSTA. And it was regarding like cracking down on sex workers and their use of the Internet. And you know, like I honestly, I didn't worry about the editors I was. I was worried about some of the older members or older people that buy our calendar. I would I really. Truly thought that we would see a generational split here with sort of, you know, perhaps an. Adherence to like. A a bit of I don't want to say, well, OK, outdated you know ideas on feminism regarding sex workers, or, you know, I don't think that we have a lot of swerves that buy the calendar, but I was concerned. We were going to get some weird conservative pushback. I say conservative loosely, I mean amongst.

KIM: Yeah, yeah. The radical left, but you know, and that ended up being not a not a word from anyone.

DANIEL: And then the thing that we were like kind of laughing that we had this conversation about was such a no brainer. So it was really kind of funny. You know we put the stuff out there. You don't always know how it's going. To be accepted.

JOSH: Totally, that's it.

SARAH: Yeah, it's trust really plays into that too. You know, I feel like we have to trust each other and there's so many editorial decisions we have to make along the way. OK, where maybe it isn't what the other person would have done, but you kind of have to guess. You have as many conversations as you can and at a certain point it would take us five years to make a calendar if we actually had time to talk about. Every single piece of content, so. You know, we we. Spend as much time as we can getting to know and trust each other, and we go from there.

KIM: Fantastic, while we're talking about obviously the artwork, I'd like to ask each of you what? What are some of your favorite pieces in the calendars that you've been working on? What are the ones that stand out to?

JOSH: That's a great.

DANIEL: That is.

SARAH: So hard.

JOSH: And there's yeah, there's too many things to sorry, yeah, there's just so many images you know. 12A year for 19 years. Right, I'm not going. To do that now, but. I think what really sticks out to me is. I tend to. I guess go directly towards the political prisoner, artwork sometimes or I guess I should not specify, but the prisoner artwork in the new 2020 calendar, the piece by Oso, Blanco. I think it's really amazing as well as. The Richard Rivera self-portrait I think is great. But yeah, there are so many.

DANIEL: Well for this year I would say I really I really love. I think the portrait of Marilyn Buck, which is for July 2020. It's done by a man named Darin Carrion, who is at USP McCreary, and it's beautiful, and it's really just spot on and it really captures Marilyn's. Marilyn's eyes and her heart in a way that I really I really love. I also am the big fan of the cover art by Mary Tremonte. You might notice that often what we do for our cover is we take a detail of the image and so you know it's the cover is always a detail of a larger image. So if you you know you guys see it, I believe it's in January 2020. There's a beautiful one called building confidence building power.

BRIAN: Yeah, yeah.

DANIEL: It's of three different people that are screen printing and it's really beautiful. It's pink and tan and. Yeah, I like it a lot. The articles this year I think are really strong. I'm trying to think of which ones stand out for me. I don't have an. Answer for that one. I was really I. I am essentially the de facto art editor, which is hilarious because I'm not an artist, but I'm really good at administrative stuff. And bugging people. An e-mail everyone can attest to that. So that's really. Yeah, that's right, that's the. Major fieldset

SARAH: You just, you just need a resume that says bugging people on e-mail.

DANIEL: Bother in bothering. People on e-mail until they essentially concede to my demands.

BRIAN: It seems to be.

DANIEL: I am a big fan of the no new jails article which is for December 2020 and I love that cause it's I feel it's super cutting edge and their new jails is an amazing campaign. That has been. Just fighting the New York City bureaucracy and their quest to basically build more jails and some aspects of the left that seem to be OK with the new jails. Which I'm gonna say, it's pretty pretty sad.

SARAH: I love Tom Manning's art. He was an anti imperialist political prisoner. Unfortunately died this past year due to medical neglect in prison. After many years he was a just absolutely generous and brilliant contributor to the calendar over the years and. Many other projects he has the official running title of the person we featured on. The cover most. Over the years and, you know, we were happy to be able to honor him at. The same time as being. I'm very sad to lose him this past. Year, so I think. Like even more so than ever, we were just really, really happy to have a gorgeous piece art by him as well.

JOSH: What are your favorite pieces of art?

BRIAN: From ohh.

JOSH: Well, you guys haven't seen 22.

BRIAN: I haven't seen. The 2021 yet, but I do have my my 2019 one. Let me go through it. You know, I really like the. The no Mas muertes 1. You know no more deaths is an organization that I've followed for a while. And done some reporting on over the years. And I just I love. I just love that illustration and I think it's really powerful just for people who obviously this is a podcast, so I can't show it to you, but I encourage you to seek out this calendar. And just to see some of this art almost, there's no mass, more taste, and it's. It's a drawing of the desert with, you know, water jugs that are sitting out and some fruit, and this is where I was thirsty and you gave me a drink before I was a stranger and you welcomed me and I don't know it. Kind of looks like.

DANIEL: That's a beautiful one. That's by Fernando Marti and his. He actually sells that image on just seeds. He's one of the justseeds artists. we're also lucky enough to have his art in this year's. Calendar as well, which is amazing. I think it feels especially you know, interesting because the jury in the Scott Warren case and no, no more deaths just went to deliberation like earlier.

JOSH: That's right.

DANIEL: Today, so I'm glad you brought that up.

KIM: I'm looking at the images for the 2020 calendar, and I mean you mentioned the cover one by Mary Tremonte that I was drawn to that one like immediately because of the colors and like the very restricted palette. Which is something that I that I've appreciate more now as as I've seen my own work evolve, so really looking for you know those kinds of things and it. This made me think so much of how. Images are such an important part of movement work and creating those images, but I also like

the fact that it was being created by women and you know, it's two of the women are veiled, so I thought that that was also really powerful in terms of. You know? The entire composition. I think it's really beautiful. Yeah, that's a you know. Right up there I also like the one at the bottom by Richard Rivera. And uh, Oh my God.

JOSH: That's pretty great.

KIM: Yeah, and it reminds me of. Of a very famous painting by an artist who I'm forgetting and I think you know who it is close.

JOSH: Chuck Chuck

KIM: With that OK, but it, it's just it's stunning. It's absolutely stunning, and it looks like you know the watercolor in the background. Like really. The way it bleeds into the colors bleed into each other and then you see this image, but when you. Look more closely, it's. Like he it's. Is he behind the window, you know? And it's like and. What is all this? What are all these colors? You know behind there you know and it's like I don't know if it's meant to be like he's in a cell and he's looking out of his cell window so you know. So I like the way that the image plays with, you know, with the abstract. And is you really have to look at it closely. So from far away you get to see one thing but. Yeah, I mean it's for folks that are struggling with my very poor description of this image. I suggest that you go on a certain date.org website and click on images and articles and you can find the images for the 2020 calendar as well as the. For the 2019 2018 calendars there as well, and yeah, you'll get to enjoy what we're talking about as well.

JOSH: Yeah, and while you're there, sorry I was going to say. Also check out the 2020 extras as well as the extras from previous years there. There's a lot of artwork as well as essays that we can't include because of the graphic content that would preclude them from getting into prisons, so it's definitely worth checking out the extras. You know, even if those inside can't see them.

DANIEL: It's interesting you mentioned that Richard Rivera, because that's a person that was inside when he submitted it and he was since parole. So we're really happy to have Richard on the outside.

JOSH: Oh, fantastic years yeah really.

BRIAN: After 38. Yeah, I absolutely love the calendar. I get comments on it all the time when people come over my place and I like to take it down and like let them actually read it because it's not just like oh it's a calendar like we've been talking about. Uh, you know, we're running up on time. I do have one question. We've talked about it a little bit. Maybe there's not much more that you have to say or want. To say about it. But I figured I would ask them. You know we can always cut it out if. It doesn't work, but you know. You've alluded to a couple of times. Some of the struggles of communicating with people. On the inside, some of the mail room issues that you have and I wondered if you could just address that a little bit and talk about. You know some of the things that you run up against. You talked about like people who want to submit graphic work and having you know having to sort of contend with

whether or not you can get that inside and. I just I was curious to. Hear your thoughts on working on that side of things.

SARAH: I think it's. A really good question and you know one that a lot of people don't realize is one of the biggest. Challenges is, you know, communication with people inside you. You go to prison or jail and you know at that point it's kind of just you're at the mercy of these arbitrary systems in terms of what? Information you can get out in terms of how you can express. Yourself even trying to figure out what the rules are day-to-day or so are complicated and changing all the time, even if you follow them. Sometimes things get rejected. Like I wonder Daniel you have this like very first hand experience of that. If you wanna share any of that. I mean, we definitely know what it feels like. From our side.

DANIEL: Well, I will say like two things stand out recently. I mean, obviously we were talking about, you know, I, I just looked at the list and we have 10 calendars that were rejected from prison so far. I mean, one of those people were paroled, so that's really great to. Hear, but most of them were. Just really ***** reasons, so there's that obviously. and like I said, some of that is like we're technically on a calendar. Or they've just decided. That they're gonna reject us mostly for content, but they're not gonna say it's. For content so. That that's very frustrating. The two stories I. Stand out to my mind so far. Is we got a submission this year by Sean Swain, who's a a political politicized prisoner that's believe he's currently being held in Virginia. But he's his case is out of Ohio. They've sort of sent him on an Interstate compact as they do with people that buck. And I say that in the most positive way possible. I mean, Sean is just a thorn in the side of the Ohio prison system, and I may have respect for him, but you know, he wrote a pretty raucous article that you know, we. I'll say I love. I think we love. We all loved it but we're we just knew that by putting it in there. That any any of these mailroom sensors that were to look at it would result in, like pretty much mass denial. We certainly did, you know, or worse to be honest, and so we just kind of made the collective decision to not run that for that reason because ultimately we wanna. We don't want to send out a. Sanitized version, but we really do want people to. See, it is the point, right? and not the hundreds of people that get our calendar in prison because of the inclusion on principle to me would seem wrong. The other thing that happened that was really deeply annoying was because of the slowness of communications. I mean, Sarah alluded to it, you know, when I was in prison, I was. I was sent for most of my sentence to a communication management unit, which meant that bureaucrats in the either FBI or. Department of Homeland Security had a little counterterrorist unit in in Virginia and they received scans of all my mail, so my mail would come to the institution. It would be scanned, sent to these so-called intelligence analysts, and then they would release. It bit by bit. To me. And so it was always really frustrating to get like to get letters like weeks after and to never get certain things and for them to just decide that they were going to reject a whole. Lot of publications. On paper, but then they would just throw some things away. I remember in particular you know when when. You talk about like international. Now

you have this situation where you don't. Even know if it's customs. If the person didn't put the correct postage, is it the counterterrorist unit? Is it the internal detectives at the prison? I mean it. Could be anyone and that used to. Frustrating me to no end. So when we were communicating with Jeremy Hammond last year, Sarah, Do you remember?

SARAH: I don't.

DANIEL: With this, but we ended up not getting his piece of art on. Time because basically it just kept getting rejected or we couldn't get it from him and we finally got it and it was well past the time that we could have actually printed it. I mean, we were. Like weeks into the process by which we already picked our and it was really frustrated and so we used that image. Yeah, because it was made specifically for us and. It's really wonderful. But you know, we use it on our social media and like I would have, of course, loved to have printed. That had we gotten. It in time. But basically the internal detectives at that prison. I forget which one he was at, but they just decided that they were going to make it as frustrating as Poss. For us, so there's often that there's the waiting game. Hey, have you heard back from or you know, we when we were communicating this year with John Lamond, we were faced with the prospect that the prison he was at USB query was always on lockdown. So one of the last things we got this year were the BIOS for John and Garrett. Because of the fact that he wasn't ever able to call anyone. Get the bio so there's a lot of that. There's a lot of patience, and there's a lot of last minute shuffling. There is, oftentimes we will reach out. You know, some of the people we communicated with in prison. We have sort of like shepherds that are doing most of the they're already in contact with people, and they sort of shepherd the contribution. So we have that going on with a few people, and that's of course. Adds another layer, I mean of. I love that. Course it'd be much better to be.

SARAH: Term that you came up with. I just love that term.

DANIEL: It's really necessary, and those people are super helpful. I mean they have helped so much in getting us stuff and it's like you know, if people. Are already in. Contact with people on the inside through. You know one of the many lecturers you know. e-mail systems, then you know. Sometimes it's easy to just do it that way you know, like hey, we need this bio. And sure enough, you know someone can e-mail. Person on the inside but. Yeah, the flexibility is the biggest part. The fact that we can't call people the fact that we can't just e-mail people. The time the fact that, for instance, like if I wanted to set up core links with someone in the federal prison system, I could end up easily being rejected just because I was a former person in prison. In the federal system so. It's a lot of flexibility, I would say.

SARAH: Yeah, and a lot of as you said that this term I just love shepherds. The idea that you know people's family members, people's friends, other people they're connected with. Help us make this project happen. We could absolutely not do it without that enormous network of people who are willing to support this strange path of communication. You have to take some time.

BRIAN: Yeah, so I guess before we let you go and we really appreciate you know you you all taking the time to talk to us about your work and it really is tremendous work that you're doing. We wanted to give you some space to talk about. You know any final things and you know, let people know where they can find the calendar and learn more about your work and any. You know final details like that and then you know I was running. If we could just kind of go around and say a few words about what abolition means to you personally.

DANIEL: Sure, well there's there's. Definitely one part that we wanted to talk about, which was the fact that you know in addition to. Being this Pretty counter project. Our our. Our project also exists as like a fundraiser. And So what we end up doing is that once we are able to pay the printer and pay ourselves back for postage, which is, you know, considerable. All proceeds are divided. Amongst different social justice and radical organization. Our permanent beneficiaries at the moment are released 18 people in prison or wrapped in New York City and Ademir, which is a a political prisoner organization in in Palestine. Last year we gave money to women working within, which is a a group, that of midwives and doulas. In the in Nova Scotia. Who work with people inside with women inside. And we were also able to put aside a little bit of money for our contingency fund, which we used to make donations to our release funds of some of the people that have come out in the last year. Like Herman Bell and Robert F. Hayes and all the five people from the move organization. Connor Stephens of the Cleveland four and the cool thing is that the last couple of years we've been able to pay the printer up front, which is amazing so no one has to. We don't have to split it amongst 3 credit cards and no one has to go into. Yeah, and so the counter has always been a fundraiser, and so throughout the years we've given to groups like the how much law project, the abolitionist Law Center, the unistall in Indigenous Blockade Freedom archives for Struggle magazine and a whole bunch of other organizations. So we feel like that's a really good. You know, use of the calendar in addition to it being you. Know a a beautiful calendar full of dates. And I guess in in terms of, you know, finding us.onlinewhere@certaindays.org we're on Facebook at certain days and you can search for us on Twitter and Instagram as well. We sort of post a lot about. How to get the? Calendar information about political prisoners and the prison struggle, and we also. Post radical dates often, so you can definitely find us there easily.

JOSH: And also check out our monthly column on. It's going down called prison break and it usually comes out at the beginning of every month. It's recap of anything related to political prisoners and abolition in the last month, and I look forward to things happening in the month ahead.

BRIAN: Awesome, and we'll definitely link to everything in the description there. Did anybody want to? Did anybody want to go around and share what abolition means to them?

JOSH: I can go first, I I. I guess I'm initial or usually kind of drawn to the ASADA quote, which is actually part of the December artwork in the 2020 calendar. The wall

is just a wall and nothing more. At all, it can be broken down, and I think that kind of sums it up for me at least. You know it's just about tearing down these oppressive. Systems and replacing them with something more humane.

DANIEL: I guess, yeah, I'll say that I have a deep disdain for prisons. After experiencing it, you know I prior to my time in prison, I was an activist and I did a lot of work in the environmental movement and then in prisoner movements, but. There's nothing like personal experience for you. To have just a deep seated. You know, to staying in hatred of the prison system and I want to believe that at some point I don't have any children, but I want to believe that at some point my my sister's children or their children will look back in the same way that we, you know currently look back at institutions like slavery and that people will look and. Be like we actually put. People in cages for their lifetime like that's lunacy and I hope that at one point we push forth like a true abolitionist culture change. That you know in my lifetime sees it as like absolutely insane to do the things that we do to treat people as throw away. So I know it's complicated and you don't get from here to there, but you also don't get to where we want to get by looking at like piece meal reforms. And I think we constantly have to be pushing the envelope on abolition.

SARAH: I think it's super important to let our friends inside know that they're not forgotten and that we're here. To fight for them. We are working to build a better society outside every day that is not going to include prisons in any form. We don't want these walls to exist. I think in the meantime, the work that we do day-to-day on, you know big international projects like this and locally make such a difference. You know here in Canada, I'm involved. And a group called the Barton Prisoner Solidarity Project in Hamilton, and they are reaching out to families and local community members who are in jail every day. You know to let them know that we're here for them, and you know that we're going to keep fighting for. The living. And remembering the people that we've lost and. Making sure that they hear us across these walls.

BRIAN: Thank you 3 so much.

JOSH: Thank you.

BRIAN: Sarah, Josh and Daniel. I really appreciate you coming on and talking to us and for all the work that you're doing so you know keep up the good work and definitely keep in touch. Thank you for your card.

JOSH: Thank you, thank you so much.

01/16/2020 - SOLECAST: w/ Sara Falconer & Daniel McGowan of Certain Days Collective

Synopsis

SOLECAST: w/ Sara Falconer & Daniel McGowan of Certain Days Collective —
SOLE (soleone.org)

<http://www.soleone.org/solecast/2020/1/16/solecast-w-sara-falconer-amp-daniel-mcgowan-of-certain-days-collective>

January 16, 2020

SOLECAST: w/ Sara Falconer & Daniel McGowan of Certain Days Collective

w/ Sara Falconer & Daniel McGowan of Certain Days Collective

The Solecast

Download

In this episode of the solecast we're talking with Sara Falconer and Daniel McGowan of the Certain Days Collective. Certain Days puts out a calendar every year that donates its funds to RAPP (Release Aging People in Prison), Addameer Prisoners Support and Human Rights Association and more. It's a collaboration between political prisoners currently locked up and their supporters on the outside (including former political prisoners). In this interview we talk about the origins of this project, its aims and how it functions. The calendar itself is beautifully designed and reminds us of important and forgotten moments in history, the life and deaths of revolutionaries, their time in prison, moments of resistance both recent and further in the past, and so much more. It's a great way to turn each week into a history lesson and link current to past struggles.

Pick a calendar up here.

<https://www.certaindays.org/order/> [

<https://www.certaindays.org/order/>]

Sara Falconer is from Ontario and has been doing political prisoner support for 18 years and is also involved with 4struggle mag.

Daniel McGowan is from Queens and went to prison for his role in a series of actions related to the Earth Liberation Front. He was featured in the documentary "If a Tree Falls" and is also a Rush fan (R.I.P. Neil Peart).

Transcript

SOLE: Welcome to the soulcast today's guests. I'll be talking to Sarah Falconer and Daniel McGowan of the certain Days collective certain days. Is a collaboration between political prisoners locked up and their supporters on the outside? Every year they put out a calendar with writings and art from people both inside and outside marking certain days on the calendar with an important moment in history, be it a record of social movements, the life of figures, whose histories have been forgotten. From mainstream history and attempting to link up different anti-authoritarian struggles throughout time and space. It turns each week into a history lesson. This year's theme is health and care, which under Trump feels more important than ever. It's an incredible project and I really enjoyed talking to them. If you have some ***** cute calendar sitting on your wall, consider ditching it for 2020 to get this, learn something. New each week. And get organized without needing to use some dystopian application on your phone. The proceeds from this project this year are mainly going to Ademir prisoner support. It's a Palestinian non government civil institution which focuses on human rights issues established in 1992 by a group of activists interested in human rights and our APP release aging people in prison. The RPP campaign mobilizes currently and formerly incarcerated. People, their families and other concerned community members from this united base and through the RPP coalition, we work alongside the prison. Justin advocates to raise public awareness about the destructiveness of mass of mass incarceration and the benefits to society. Piety in releasing aging people, including those convicted of violent crimes who do not threaten public safety and to promote the use of key mechanisms for releasing elderly people such as parole, compassionate release and policy changes, and what other groups that certain days deems necessary of funds. Check themout@certaindays.org now. This is a awesome conversation.

You know I knew of Daniel McGowan from the documentary on Netflix. If a tree falls that like tells the story of his. Incarceration and his release and yeah, it was just cool to finally get a chance to talk to these folks. I just I had. A blast talking. To these people, and as you know or may not know, this podcast is funded through Patreon in 2020. I'm taking the Soulcast weekly. And you know it's a lot of work. So if you wanna throw some pennies in the digital tip jar, you can go to patreon.com/SOLEONE and. Yeah, help me make more podcasts and before we get into this one, let's hear from some homies in the Channel 0 podcast network.

CHANNEL 0 PODCAST PROMO: Where did you get this? Your friendly neighborhood anarchist. Oh, more of an anarchist. No attent. People involved in social struggles than everybody else you... And I'm brissie goodness. People have been waiting for some content... Final straw, and I'm William Goodenough. The final straw radio.noblogs.org... If you're listening, you are the result.

SOLE: Sarah, Sarah, and Daniel. Welcome to the soulcast.

DANIEL: For help.

SARAH: Thanks for having us man great.

SOLE: Yeah, thanks for making this. Thanks for participating in this amazing certain days calendar. It's cool how y'all live and how y'all doing.

SARAH: We're good man. 2020 is off to an interesting start, so you know just to doing the work trying to connect. With people we Love the usual.

DANIEL: The end of a long day. That there's a bunch of missiles. Flying in the Middle East and just. Thinking about how crazy this country is. It's this little daunting at the. I see this country meaning the United States there is not in the United States thankfully, so do you.

SOLE: One of the things that like I was really moved by in here is just like the simplicity of this. Certain days 2020. Knitting together the struggles piece that was written by the certain Days Collective. And just like you know it's like not this like overly academic thing. About intersectionality or anything, it's just like bam, like everything goes back to greed and oppression. And it's a struggle against indifference and ignorance. And it's a struggle for a life itself. And I just. Think that's like a? I think that's a. Beautiful way to frame everything and as like you know we're talking to y'all and missiles are flying in the Middle East. It's like you know. It's ***** same old *****. It's crazy.

SARAH: Well, it's one of the one of the challenges we have every year is you know whatever is happening in the world or in the news when the calendar comes out. You know, we had to think about that months ago, you know, and to try and make something that's still kind of resonates with people. And that is. Encouraging people to connect with each other and to be part of the struggle in whatever way makes sense for them. You know you can't be too specific because everything is changing so quickly that at the same time you can see a lot of the themes are not changing and you know haven't changed since many of our political prisoners have been inside since the you know 60s and 70s so. It's a, it's an interesting kind of this kind of way of looking at time that way.

SOLE: Yeah, it's like you know, these people are like you know, like I was saying in the in this calendar. Like some of these political prisoners were Vietnam War resistors, and you know who who obviously went beyond Proto.

DANIEL: Best, I think our themes are interested in like you know you touch them on the not being academic. I mean I think all of us in the collective are kind of like try to speak plainly and not just convolute our ideas. And I think what you're saying is some of the ideas are, you know, timeless? You know resistance to oppression, and you know, in a modern context. Probably takes the form of imperialism and capitalism and all these other isms. But yeah, like we we always we are. We are picking the theme, you know, eight months, no God. I don't even know. I mean, we're for instance like we are in January 2020 right now. It will be picking the theme for the 2021 calendar within two months. So we are not exactly like psychic and we also are not. You know you can't predict like where, where movements are going and what little like flare ups happen. I mean no one was able to predict you know, occupy or various, you know. There's been times where there's been just like intense like indigenous sovereignty struggles in

Canada and in other places. Then it's impossible to predict like what's going to happen, so we touch on these. Like sort of issues or themes that we think are important that are sort of timeless and long term like you said, in some ways, cyclical, you know, I mean. We're sitting here as the US is getting ready to go to war with another with another country, and in the Mideast and. It's just for me, it's just really starting to feel sick local in terms of, you know, I wasn't politically active during the first Gulf War, but I was definitely like of, you know, draft age if that existed and so I remember thinking about that back then and then. Obviously I was super politically involved in the anti war movement against when it was US was getting ready to bomb. Track for the second time, so there is a certain like cyclical nature of history and cyclical nature of oppression that you just sometimes feel like can be very frustrating, obviously. But I think resistance is sort of the same dynamic in that way.

SARAH: And on the calendar itself I. Think like through the history of. The last 20 years that we've been working on it, you know, came out soon after, or actually just before 9:11. You know. So already working on some of these things that were suddenly brought into such sharp relief during that time and just seeing. Over those years, you know the way that the resistance to those things was developing, and the way that we ran into some of the same challenges as the previous generations. You know, it's a. It's been something that I think for me has kept me really. Grounded in all of this.

SOLE: Yeah, well, especially because it's like when nowadays it's like it's really hard to find somebody who's been around for five. Years, let alone. Let alone 20 and so to be able to draw on those on that knowledge and experiences and to pull it all together. It's like I. I was just talking with. Some IV AW homies about. The stuff that's going on in the Middle East and they're like all depressed and ****. And it's like dude, you guys did something like people need to hear from you because like that's like 20 years ago. That's like ancient history.

DANIEL: Now you know like that's. That's kind of shocking how how fast that has happened, I mean. Yeah, I mean I think. Like when you run into any like political person over 40, that's still involved. You know you hear the same stories. You know, it's like suddenly you go from being like the youth, so to speak, to like people calling you Mr. to like then being treated as sort of like irrelevant you. Know and I. We think it's. It is. It's kind of crazy how that happens in the movement. You know, like one minute like you're you're working on all this stuff and you're young. And then the next second you're like. Wait, this is you start to see the same kind of people you know. That's why I always say I see the same archetypes. You know, like there's so many different types of people that are drawn to the movement and you just start to see them over and over. But I think you know, it's shocking to think IPA. You you know it's 20 years ago like that's kind of blowing my mind.

SARAH: Somebody called Daniel and I Ella. There's a wild. Super hurt our feelings. But can't really argue with it.

DANIEL: I wanted to fight them so bad. Then when you can, when you could be me, then. You can call me.

SOLE: An altar Oh my God yeah.

SARAH: There's too much pressure, honestly. It makes me feel old like but B. It's too. Much pressure, it's. I think about the people that I consider there as elders who have taught me so much and I just like. I wonder how much of that I can give to other people you. Know it. Really is a lot of pressure.

DANIEL: Yeah, I mean we we're we have through the calendar and through like a lot of the work that we've done, you know we we get close with a lot of the elders that have been around since the 60s and 70s. A lot of them have done time. You know, people like Ray, Luke Levasseur, Susan Rosenberg, Laura Whitehorn, people like that who are just, you know, still involved really working hard and I think like exemplify a lot of really good ideals of the left, so to speak, or. Political resistance and so like you know it is. Funny to be you. Know quote UN quote, middle-aged and, and. Be considered an Elser. It's like it's just mind blowing, but yeah. Anyhow, that's just the observation you'll hear from anyone that's been around for 20 years like that, that will start to creep in and. It's I, I find it kind of laughable.

SOLE: Yeah, I mean it was so funny it was. Can you hear? Yeah yeah, I feel like it was just like whatever six years ago or something that people were, you know, yelling at me and calling me a liberal or something. And now it's like, and now I'm like OMG and it's like *** **** like this **** is ridiculous. But you know what? I just realized like we kind of like let's let's just rewind it a little bit. And talk about like what is the certain day's calendar like? Sure, just for those who don't who've never heard of this project, like what is it?

DANIEL: Sure, Sir, you want to handle that or OK.

SARAH: Yeah, if you want to OK.

DANIEL: So the calendar is. It's essentially like a.

SOLE: Well, well, also like there may be like millennials listening. So like explain what a calendar is.

DANIEL: Back in the 30s of your people use the paper. Oh wait, you have to explain paper. Anyhow, so yeah. So we we create what some people might think is an outdated concept. A paper wall calendar. And we've been doing it since 2001 and our calendar is essentially a fundraising and educational project. It's educational in the sense that it's a calendar, but we also it's sort of like a scene, or like a little journal and that, like you know there. There's 12 pieces of original art, and there's 12 original articles, all centered around a theme like we were saying this year is knitting together the. Those, but then like there's this whole like front part of the calendar which talks, you know, has a lot of like definitions and sort of like concepts like there's a two page sort of glossary about terms that are used throughout the calendar, but then it's also there's a big update page which is like political prisoner and prison abolition. Updates, and then there's information about the beneficiaries of our project, and there's like an introductory essay which which we write. That sort of centers the theme for the for it, and we have like a book list and a. Website list as well. So the project was started by some people in Montreal, QC and three political prisoners in New York State. Who

was Herman Bell who was released from prison last year. David Gilbert, who is still serving a 75 year to life sentence and Robert Seth Hayes who was released about a year and a half ago and just passed away a couple of weeks ago.

SOLE: Can I? Can I just cut you off right there? Can you just talk about who those three people are for those who don't know?

DANIEL: just think. Well, Herman Bell and Robert Seth Hayes were black Panthers that then participated in actions with the Black Liberation Army. They were both convicted of killing cops in New York State. In New York City and they received life sentences 25 years to life sentence, which means that you do a minimum of 25 years and then you start. To see the parole board. Both Herman and Seth went to the parole board. I think Herman went like 9 times before he was paroled and Seth went like over 10 like maybe 12. And David Gilbert was a was a member of the Students for Democratic Society Weather Underground and participated in an armored car. Expropriation in Nyack, NY, in 1981 of a Brinks car. That led to. Actually sees on both sides and David was convicted of what's called felony murder. And that means that he was like, although not at didn't shoot anyone. He was there for it, and thus under the law was culpable. So he is. Serving 325 year to life sentences consecutive, so that's why he has this 75 to life sentence. She means he's. Not eligible for. Parole until he's done 75 years, which is based on his age, is impossible. So there are three elders. Excellent people really inspirational. Herman withstood a really tremendous campaign from. The peak BA the copy union if you wanna call. It that and with paroled after you know 10 to 1099 trips to the parole board, and a lot of the movement in New York City here around Pearl justice has been about getting cops and X DA's off to parole board and replacing the parole board with people that are actually have like rational opinions about like rehabilitation. Or what's a reasonable amount of time that one would be in prison as opposed to this very like throw the key away like lock him up and throw the key away, which is like you know the Eighties, 70s and 80s in New York, NY State. So yeah, Herman is free in New York State. Thankfully, on parole for life probably. But doing well, Seth, like I said, was in Buffalo, NY. But he passed away more, most likely from like diabetes, diabetic. Complications a few weeks ago unfortunately, and David is at Shawangunk Correctional Facility, which is a maximum security prison about an hour north of New York City.

SOLE: Damn yeah, it's.

SARAH: So I was lucky to go to the memorial for Seth some weeks ago in in Buffalo. And it was just amazing to see you know. Just like standing room only the people that came to pay their respects. It was people that you know, had been inspired by him as former prisoners that he had helped. As people on the outside that he had inspired, like young people all ages, you know just to. An amazing community of people came together so we really missed him and he was just an incredible person, but it was very touching to see that he had made an impact on so many people. 's lives.

SOLE: For sure. Yeah, yeah, like this. Whole, I don't want to call it a subculture, but like this culture of. You know? Inside outside support. Political prisoner support.

It's like I, I was always around like DAB Denver anarchist black cross people. And so I kind of like absorbed a lot of that, and I was never really that involved in it, but it's like a lot of people like just this idea of like. You know, like jailhouse speaks or these? These these these. These people in prison, collaborating with people on the outside and like just that sort of those sort of connections and like that sort of like solidarity like. I think it's hard. Or you know, whatever regular or not. I don't say regular, but just everyday people to even like. Imagine that you know what I mean, like just like you think of a prison as just a place where you just. Put people to forget about them, sure.

DANIEL: But I think our project is is, you know, in part you know a an antidote to that idea, you know. I mean, I know like for. Instance I was involved in the. Movement for quite for a bit of time before I. Well, let me think actually. Yeah, for about you know 7-8 years before I ended up getting getting indicted and going to federal prison. And I the way I looked at it was like, yeah, you know, prison is not gonna stop me from organized and then I already. Have like a? Good network of people. So I did, you know, I primarily did it through writing and unfortunately my you know my writing inflamed the Bureau. And into sending me to a communication management unit which really got me wrapped up.

SOLE: Oh no.

DANIEL: So I spent most of my sentence in like a in a in a ***** like you know, kind of shut him up kind of prison which didn't really work, but like definitely extracted a toll in terms of like my you know, my relationship with the outside world was pretty strained because I was like my communications were monitored. So I think like yeah, those. I mean those kind of inside outside relationships are important I think like the impetus of the calendar came from. Herman is right, Sarah is that, is that right? Do you? Can you talk more?

SARAH: It was, it was. His idea in the early days, yeah.

DANIEL: Yeah, and I mean I don't know if you know, but Herman was. Like just like a really deep kind of visionary and he, you know certain days was one of the things he or her excuse me. Herman is a visionary. He you know he started a program in in Maine called the Victory Gardens. Project with these two radical farmers, and they grew crops and had volunteers. You know there for harvest time like I ran into these people in like the South blocks in like 1997 when they came and they did a they did a food share at like this squad that was up there at the time and you know the thing was crazy because they brought in all these bags of food. All this like fresh, fresh produce that was grown, which were, like you know, a city kid like myself was like. Wow, like you. Grew that yourself and the coolest thing was there was like information about political prisoners like stapled to the back and. And that was like, you know, that was Herman that was Herman's idea. Along with these two, these two farmers, Carol and Michael, we're still around doing stuff. And yeah, I just you know the calendar, I think was another thing like that. It was like this way of like getting ideas and information about US political prisoners into the hands of people. And the calendar is like a pretty

safe thing. It's like something you get for your aunt. You know, and we often joke about it that like the calendar is a bit like a Trojan horse.

SOLE: So like.

DANIEL: Herman used to say he wanted us to do cuter stuff, right? Like Sarah like kittens and stuff as a way of just like get it in people's hands and then when they open it up they see what it is and it's like you know it's 48 pages of like radical political cost. Done by an anarchist collective in two countries so.

SARAH: That's what I love to, you know it's this way of making all of this very physical and just sort of like part of your day-to-day life, right? So instead of making those voices. Is invisible or far away from you every single day. A beautiful piece of art, a beautiful piece of writing a bunch of dates that maybe you never thought about before. You know to just have that as part of your daily life. I think that. That's part of the beauty of the concept as well is we have this ability. To like bridge those walls to you know try and fight the silencing of these amazing voices.

SOLE: Yeah, I mean, that's why that's why I like. I was saying earlier in the conversation like that's why I didn't want it in my studio. I wanted it in the kitchen, you know, wanted I wanted that to. I wanted that to be the thing I. Looked at every day. Just because.

DANIEL: I mean, those dates have literally literally caused me. To like when I was on the outside. Go to go online and find out more you know. Like because I was I've only been in the collective for like you know since I've been out of prison. Which is like 6 years now and so like I remember when I would be inside like Sarah would send me the calendar and stuff and I would. I swear like these dates would be like it would always be like ask so and so about this or is there a book about that? And like I remember, just like it would spur and I was like, you know, a sort of veteran activist by that time. But I would just always be like, yo, what is this? Or finding out that people got out of prison? Are finding out it was someone's birthday and like things like that are pretty pretty meaningful and it's international things. So you have a whole bunch of international dates in there too, which I thought was great. So everything we do in America is so so off and like focused on the United States, you know? So it's cool to like. Have other you know? The rest of the world, so to speak.

SARAH: Oh absolutely, I learned stuff from it every year myself. You know, even after all this time.

SOLE: Well, I mean, it's like, especially now that we're in this like Hyper Media world. You know where, like a a day or a week on Twitter is like a year you know it's like it's like I'm looking at, you know. February 5th 15th, you know after 35 years little Bobby Hutton's gravesite receives a tombstone. It's like **** like that makes your heart ache. And then you know, February 22nd. You know 2017 Standing Rock, no DAPL camp cleared by police. After 10 months of protests, it's like that was only a couple of years ago and that feels like.

DANIEL: Ancient history and there are some dates that are crazy. There is the one Sarah. I don't know if you remember this one about like when the federal government like the BOP wasn't it wasn't allowed to use cattle prods. Anymore like there's.

SARAH: Oh yeah.

DANIEL: Not in there. It's just like wild sometimes and you know, like these dates were gathered over the years and you know, we we, we've done like sort of reviews of them right to like find sources, because people often will write this and be like. What does this mean? Or what does that mean? And like we, we often try to, you know, give the. Source but you know, we add. We add, I don't know. Last year we might have added 15. Days because people will write us and go. Hey, have you considered doing this? Have you considered adding? I remember we added lender peltiers like a rest date, but it was somebody asked us. For that and. We added a bunch of birthdays last. There as well, but I'm always. I mean, even though I go into work every day and I look at the day and sometimes that's because I'm posting stuff on social media. But often it's just because I'm like curious because like obviously it's not something we memorize, you know.

SOLE: And now I get it certain days. Like, yeah, I didn't quite understand. Like I didn't get the title.

SARAH: You know that it's because it's. Like it's such an old title. It's actually from before when I joined the collective, and so we we always kind of room it into what it means and like yes to that and like. Also, I think kind of talks about like certain days to come. You know, like that there is like. Certainty to the work that we're doing. You know, I love that piece of it too, though like it's you know, all of these things in our history that make up the struggle that are eventually going to be like a better future. I know that sounds like. Pretty grand, but like I. There's a lot of vision in this project too.

SOLE: Well, another thing. Like about, it is like how it's like you were talking about. You know elders and aging prisoners, and like the two main groups that you are funding. Or that you're giving proceeds to is the releasing aging people in prison, and I thought that was like an interesting choice because that's like that's something tangible. It's something material, something you can do that, like has has a fact that like it gets people out early and then and then this add Amir.

DANIEL: Yeah, absolutely.

SOLE: Which is like showing the international solidarity with struggles in Palestine and then it's like then you. Have a whole bunch of. Other things listed here, like basically anything that falls within. **** like this if we feel if we decide as a collective that this is where we wanna put our money, the these are the kind of groups we. Give money to and.

DANIEL: Yeah, well we have sort of like you know, for instance rap and Adam are sort of our long term beneficiaries. But we usually pick like 1/3 beneficiary each year. That's a bigger one. So like last year we picked the Amistad Law project in Philadelphia that's doing like really solid work fighting like death by injury. And I think, though like

with rap like we just can't. We can't say enough about them because they've been like a major part of the like movement in New York City and New York State to like roll back. A lot of this, like punitive penal ideas, this idea that people are like disposable, that should be thrown away. I mean like I grew up in the city and it kind of rough gnarly spot in the 80s. And you know, a lot of people from my neighborhood went to prison and, you know, was just like throwing them away like just making them disposable. And so a lot of the people that are elders right now in New York State prisons were where youngsters in the? And this idea that people should be doing 25 to life or that like life without parole is insane and rap has done like an amazing job and it was started by a man that did 33 years in prison. Mujahid Fareed and this is this is someone that knew you know, the editors of our you know the inside editors of our collective pretty well. Because they all were at the different maximum security prisons. State, I mean he went to the parole board like 8 times and it was like for basically attempted murder like a cop said that you know he he cocked his guns at him or something and he got like he got 33 years for that so. They're doing amazing. Work and like they. They're part of the reason why the parole board is not staffed with. Just cops and prosecutors. And it's the you know they've been put forth some legislation which sounds like it could like close the gap on some issues regarding parole, but the parole rates have ticked up in part because of the advocacy that this group is doing is. Because, you know, it's like you gotta do culture change. You gotta like convince people that like these ideas, this idea that we need to build prisons, throw black and brown people and make them disposable. Forget about them that that's. Bunk like it's. It's a shame on. Our on us that we that anyone ever believed that that was OK but like now that we know that that's messed up like. If people are late to the party and now they're just getting it OK, cool, well now we gotta like actually do concrete political action to change like the narrative and shrink that population of you know. Down, but you know, like this kind of change comes hard. I mean, we have, like bail reform in New York, NY City right now. And like the PBA and the media and all these like conservative outlets are just crying crazy. They're just acting. Like if a person gets bailed out and then you know, like there's been some people that got bailed out. Then committed like a petty crime and it's just like the sky is falling, you know, so there's like it's a constant give and give and take and push. Pull, but I think a group like Rap which you know is run by formerly incarcerated people. Like with really good politics is like really just game changing. So, like, they're an obvious choice for us, you know, and Ademir, you know the. Editors of our. Of our the inside editors like are really have been very very involved in Palestinian work. I haven't as much but I obviously AM. My I have empathy and solidarity with Palestine and so like. that's sort of a. You know a big issue for. Us we always prints art or an article on Palestine. And then you know, we we kind of do a revolving thing like this year. We we put aside money in what we call like a contingency fund and that allowed us to donate to a variety of release funds for political prisoners. We were able to donate to Janet. Janine and Eddie. Africa Connor Stevens from the Cleveland 4 Russell. And shows Jeremy

Hammond. We were able to contribute to Seth Hayes, Robert Seth Hayes's Funeral Fund and Matulich core. And that's just because we sell these calendars and like we were saying, it's a fundraiser. So like we sell it for 15 bucks and once we pay the printer and our postage you know it all goes to the benefit. Series so it works out really well.

SARAH: So if you want to know more about some of those, we've got information on our website as well and you know we're just really proud that we're able to be able to raise those funds for everyone. So yeah, thanks, Daniel.

SOLE: That's ****, it's so beautiful. I mean, I was. I was as you were talking, I was like, you know, Daniel, you were a political prisoner for you know, many years how long? Were you in prison for? Yeah, for you know an alleged.

DANIEL: No, that's not alleged.

SOLE: OK.

DANIEL: I just. It's OK, you don't got it. You know I. I went in for like. You know, I. Went in for what I did, you know? It's but I. Understand I appreciate your.

SOLE: Caution, yeah, well, you know and so OK. So you well, what well, what did? Basically, what did you go in for in like you know how does it feel now? To be able to. to like you know do this work and help help it. Must feel great.

DANIEL: Yeah, it it does. I mean, I am seven years out and I I am like you know, I actually had a a moment a few months ago. A burnout was my first major bit of burnout since I've been out of prison and I kind of feel like what happened is I hit. I got out and I just have not stopped running and then I just hit a wall, right? And I've just said so that's been really interesting and so I had to scale back a little bit and now things are. Feeling a lot better, but yeah, so to back it up though and you know I lived in Oregon and Seattle and the West Coast for about five years. And during that time period I was involved in a lot of environmental resistance, and so I was involved with the Earth Liberation Front and for two for two years roughly and I participated in a number of different actions, and I was indicted in 2005 for two. Arsons, one of a tree farm and one of a logging corporation that was logging old growth in Southern Oregon, and I was basically in not entrapped, but I was a recorded by a old friend of mine and then who was essentially like trying. You know an informant, basically, and you. Know I got in trouble. Seven of us were arrested on one day, and ultimately it seemed like about 15 people went. To prison. And I did. I got a seven-year sentence and I did 6 inside because I had good time and yeah I it was. It was a tough Rd. I started out at a. Like low security prison because I don't really have much of a history and I was doing like a like a masters program and I was working really hard trying to like just do my bit properly. Like just keep busy, right? And you know, read and work out and that kind of stuff and they opened up this crazy communication management unit at Maria. The former, like home of the supermax and they sent me there, you know? And I was there for 26 months and I sued the government to get out of there and they put me on in general population and then four months later they. Put me in. The other CMU so. It was like most of my time was in this like kind of restricted

unit, with mostly like Muslim men. Most of the people there were like. Had so-called terrorism charges or crimes convictions, whatever and so.

SOLE: And was that solitary? Was that solitary?

DANIEL: Well it was what they called it is a self-contained general population unit. So what that meant meant is it was a unit within a prison, a medium security prison where there were up to, you know, 3540 men who we only interacted with each other in this unit. And if we ever left the unit to go to visitation, that's because the rest of the prison didn't have visitation. So it was really hard to see the doctor and the dentist because the whole. Prison had to be locked down. They treated us like hazardous waste basically. So we were we were out of ourselves most of the day but we were not allowed to interact with any of the other people in prison at that particular place. So it was. It was wild. I mean being around the same 30 people. You know that. Could be that could be a bit much. You know there's a lot of interesting. I mean, I was in with a lot of interested people, you know. And I learned a lot. Just about the world, really. I mean, I was in with all the Muslims and. People that lived all. Over the world and have very different experiences. So you know that's always eye open it, you know. And I like to tell myself. You know how worldly I am being that I'm from New York. But the truth is, like you know, Americans are tend to be pretty provincial, and you know, I was like my mind was. Really blown. I mean, I, I had never really interacted with a, you know, a Somali on a day-to-day basis and I was in prison with the kid that was indicted for piracy by the US government. You know? So is it? Interesting, interesting, uh time, but yeah, I mean, I kind of looked at it like you know, a lot of people held it down for me when I was inside. I had, like, really, really excellent support from my family from my friends from comrades and so, like you know, my thing has been like it doesn't feel like a duty, but it certainly feels like a mission. You know to get out and keep the keep the work going forward. You know it definitely feels like paying it forward on some level.

SOLE: Yeah, but yeah, but it's also like. You know you, you're you're thrust in this fight. This is what you, this is what you have to offer. Here's kind of. Like a a good place to put. Your energy, right?

DANIEL: Yeah, I mean, you know you should, you know. it's a. I mean, you should take your experience and use it in a good way, right? I mean, that's how I view it, and the US government is a horrible mall monster and I hate I hate it so. So and I see like what happens in in prison and it's just a horrible thing. And what it does to you and I just want to, you know, do my best to like fight that dynamic.

SARAH: Basically, but you know Daniel was doing prisoner solidarity long before that happened, and that's how we met, you know. So, to acknowledge that it's not just because you had this experience and we like.

DANIEL: Oh yeah, absolutely.

SARAH: You were really committed to this work and you did some amazing work over the years like. Well, to bring that experience back, I think you're you know it's a. It's an enormous asset. That we have, but.

DANIEL: It it is definitely felt full circle. I mean when I was like I had some moments I got a I got was really involved in two in support for like animal rights and eco prisoners. And then you know a a close friend of mine got indicted and got 22 years in prison, Jeff Floors, he went by for. And I did a lot of support for him and there was a moment where he won his appeal and I and I was literally home on house arrest with an ankle bracelet. And it was so trippy to get that phone call and to be like. So happy, like and just then realize? Oh ****, I'm going to prison like I forgot for a moment that I was going to prison. So it was pretty. It was pretty mind-blowing, but and also Sarah probably won't want to admit this, but Sarah and I met well I was. I was soliciting organizations to sign on to this letter of Solidarity for Jeff Luris, but Sarah and I met on Friendster. It's like saying like the. Atari or Nintendo, it's like. French, there's like before Myspace.

SARAH: That's where all the that's. Where all the others used to. Hang out, yeah yeah I.

DANIEL: Got on Friendster, it actually honestly I. Thought was is was cooler than.

SARAH: I miss it *****.

DANIEL: I had fake accounts I had, like you know I I. Don't even know it was. It was so ridiculous, but yeah, Sarah Sarah I. Met that way.

SOLE: Sarah, how did you come to this work?

SARAH: Yeah, so I I. Mean years ago I think I first became like involved in this work. Because a friend of mine had been involved in the general protests like in 2000 and. One that was around when Carlos Giuliani was shot and killed by police and at the same time like a very close friend of mine who was also an activist, was there and we had lost contact with. OK. Him and the local. NBC helped him helped him, you know when he was released from jail, helped him when. And he needed to get home just like get new clothes because they were literally covered in blood. They had been beaten and I was just blown away by that like level of you know, mutual aid, that, like they didn't know him. They barely even spoke a common language together and they you know that they had been there for somebody. In that moment. And I was just so moved by it that I wanted to look into. Like what ABC's you know in North America were doing. And so I started writing to some. Of the some of the prisoners here and you know, the rest is kind of history for me. You know, I started writing to some of the folks that Daniel was talking about before. People who you know have been in since the civil rights movement. And beyond and I just I learned so much from them and from their history and how I fit into it, it helped my political development. And you know, as as different activists like became imprisoned over time I, I just continued that work. So it's been a like a a longish journey. But you know, it's I feel so grounded in the work because of those connections, you know, because of the friendships that you make, and because of the learnings that we're getting from. Each other all the time.

SOLE: Yeah, I, I too was. I mean not not on the same level, but just like I said being around the Denver Anarchist Black Cross I. Was just always blown away even

when like you know there'd be political disagreements or whatever. They'd still show up with the bail fund and I was just always like because that was new. I was just like wow, that's ***** powerful. You know, that's cool. That's the way to be, you know, like talk *****, you know. Have your opinions. Have your disagreements. But like when the ***** hits the fan, like you know who's who's who's there? Waiting with the bail money. Who's there raising the funds and looking for lawyer? And like you know it's not like. You know it's not. It's not the. Sexy work that. You know people sign up for when they think. About being revolutionaries.

SARAH: We we really need to be there for each other. You know, like I've been involved in a bunch of projects over the years, like the calendar I was for a long time about doing a a scene called for struggle Meg that was edited by political prisoner John mom and prison radio like most recently here in Hamilton, I'm involved in a project called. Barton and prisoner solidarity. The project, focusing on like the horrible conditions and deaths at the local jail here. Like it, it just it just goes on and on and honestly like to keep that connected to all of the work we're doing. You don't need to necessarily be like a full time prison activist to connect this work to the things that you're doing every day. It's already connected to the work that we're doing every day we need. To be there for each other.

SOLE: Right on, yeah. Absolutely well, let me ask you this. How do you like going back to the calendar a little bit? How how does like the collaboration like you know inside outside like you know, a lot of the like the art in here was made by. Political prisoners and like how like can you? Can you talk about like the process of like just the inside outside collaboration?

SARAH: Yeah, you know it's a long process. I would say like it's sort of time and trust are the things that we need most. It takes basically a full year to put the calendar out. Daniel mentioned it earlier. You know we are already right now working on 2021 like we're the only people that write the proper year on like a year in advance. You said it accidentally writing the. I did something like that. Previous one

DANIEL: I've been writing 20. 20 for so long it's ridiculous.

SOLE: I was going to write a check the other day and I wrote 2017 and I was like I haven't written a ***** check since 2017 anyway.

DANIEL: I will say. Same process the calendar like the. I mean if you break it down. Sorry, it's like it's.

SARAH: It's true well so but the communication between us and our prison contributors takes a long time, so you have to give extra. Time for that. We basically put out a call out in the early new year. This is what we're going to be meeting about soon that has our theme for the next year, so we'll be talking about, you know, this year it was knitting together, struggles next year, whatever. The theme is. We'll put that out. Particularly to people inside to give them time to do research, to write about it, to think about. And then we start getting those contributions, and so we really do prioritize art and writings from prisoners as much as possible. But we do get beautiful contributions also from people in organizations on the. Outside that have. You know,

working in solidarity with prisoners or that are interested in those same issues, and so I think it makes a pretty nice mix. You know between people on both sides of the walls. You know, in terms of the process, a lot of it really just is about that trust piece. You know our production schedule is long. And we work, especially in the early stages to really make sure we're on the same page about what we want to see from the theme and contributors we're interested in soliciting things like that at a certain point, we have to be able to make decisions on the outside, knowing that the you know the communication or letters are going to take too long for like last minute things. Hey, do you like this cover? You know we got this introductory article, you know. Do you have any edits? Things like that sometimes we. Don't have the. Luxury of it. So I think we get to know each other through letters, through visits over time when possible, just like we build that trust so. We feel comfortable making decisions and our inside editors feel comfortable. You know, giving us the space to do that and it's for the most part worked out super well over time. We've been doing it for quite a long time and there's not been perfect all the time, but I think you know a lot of it is taking that time to really get to know each other. You know, see if we're on the same page about certain things.

DANIEL: Yeah, I think that the inside editors also contributed a lot to the theoretical like discussions around the theme and also have come up with ideas like you know, David Gilbert has come up with like multiple people for our collective that we had to that ended up joining just upon, you know like his word like people that he corresponded with. That was like you should consider this and you know right now. We we have a collective member that was a suggestion from David and we also have a contributor that was and like last for instance like last when last. What was it? April last spring we all visited David at in Buffalo. He was at a prison outside Buffalo. We all had a big like 2 day visit. Tim there, and like there's just like lots of conversation and particularly with David there's lots of letters you know we we go back and forth a. Lot about stuff. We also when you know Herman and Seth were released from prison, we invited a few people to join the collective and one of the people were able to able to take it up. Take us up on and that's a band that goes by. Actually his state name is Alvaro Hernandez. He's a Chicano political prisoner in Texas who has been through some **** the last 20 years, and so naturally is like super theoretical and political like you know, is into political discussions. And so we are like really looking forward to his like contributions this year in terms of like. Creating the. Theme But yeah, we you know if you look at like the list of contributors, a lot of them are in prison. Some of them are not. Almost everyone that is in prison usually has like an outside helper or a shepherd that helps us deal with communication because so many prisoners are, like you know, able to communicate on e-mail or whatnot. So we are or they call like one person a week and so each of our you know imprisoned. You know contributors. I mean like this year. For instance, I'm looking to this. Obviously David Gilbert is a contributor every year, but there's a man named Garen Sakarian, Marius Mason. And Richard Rivera was recently paroled that he was inside when he we started and he got

out after 38 years, someone named Steven Wilson in Pennsylvania and I believe that's it. I was in actually, so we have about 6 contributors on the inside, and you know, there's always these people that are on the outside that like help us. Kind of shepherd the process. Like you know is this gonna? Is this border going to be OK? Is this OK to edit it this way and they usually you know act as go between because we can't always have like. Act like you know on e-mail with everyone because of the cost. You know it's very cost prohibitive with people on the inside so.

SOLE: God, that that must be kind of stressful.

DANIEL: So we always like.

SOLE: A little bit, you know.

DANIEL: Yeah it can be. It can be for sure.

SARAH: It's funny though, like the things that we thought would be controversial. Ended up being nothing. Things that we thought were totally fine. OK. Ended up being, you know, something that we got criticism on and we're always open to that. It's like it's just an ongoing dialogue we have over the years. And again, it's a. It's an ongoing project. It's not. There's never the end of this thing, so we're always just getting better and better and knowing each other each year so. And we really do rely on, you know, people on both sides of the walls that are helping, even if they're not contributors you know to share ideas with us to send us. You know, you know information that helps shape the theme, things like that or like distribution and public. You know publicity things like that like. We have a very small collective, no joke, it's.

DANIEL: Hi 5.

SARAH: It's five of us right now, so like that's a big project with thousands of calendars going out around the world with five people. It's obviously not five people doing it, right. There's a bunch of really, really amazing people that help us do it. Although we could use more volunteers, so help.

DANIEL: We have like we essentially. Have a five person core collective and then we have three or four. People in like. A supporting member capacity, and that's sort of like a tier like people are. People are able to contribute in like a particular way, but they don't have to like deal with the headaches like they don't have to think about like how are we going to pay the printer, but they're like, oh I'm going to edit. 15 articles or I'm going to Photoshop or I'm going to be. I'm going to design. You know we have a designer. We have a person that lays this out for us. It's not like you know, we don't play this out in words, so it's just like you know. And then we go through like 6. Or 7 edits of just. The visual stuff over back and forth. We're all like looking through it over the course of a couple of weeks so we have a bunch of people and then we have, like you know, our friends. The Friends of the calendars you know, like we have. We're really close to the people that run burning books in Buffalo. They are like our main distributor in the United States and. You know our most of our mail order goes through them, but we also you know we distribute our calendar at AK Press just seeds. In the UK. We have active distribution like a punk distro DIY distro and then

we have Chris Lebedev in Canada and we do some of our own distribution. We send our copies out to people in prison. And our some of our Canadian copies. As well so.

SARAH: Yeah, I can sound a little bit administrative like and I we're so focused on the process because I mean, we kind of have it down to a science in some ways. But at the same time, I think we're also like doing sort of a prefigurative thing that you want out of any kind of project like this, an anarchist project. Or you know, anything like. But you know, we're working across borders across prison walls, across huge generational gaps. And we're just figuring each other out. And we're like finding things that we are passionate about working on together. And so like I love that we can both like get the real day-to-day work done, which can be tedious, but then have these big conversations too. That's I think one of our strength.

SOLE: Well, you know you mentioned that you you know you're anarchists and you know, obviously, like a lot of the people you're supporting a lot of the contributors. Like a lot of the dates in here are. Not anarchists. So can you, you know, just if people are thinking like this is just some you know anarchist thing or something like can you talk about like the? The criteria that you use to like you. Know like what goes? In here, like you know, is it. I mean, yeah, I guess we could just talk about that. Like the the. The people like the dates like the Black Panthers, and I mean maybe it's obvious, but I mean it's just like just.

DANIEL: I mean, it's a. To put. It's an interesting paradox that the majority of like you know if you consider the formation of the anarchist Black Cross Federation. In the mid 90s. That was like a lot of anarchists, and obviously it does not just because it has the word anarchist in the name, but that's what they literally what people identify as. And so it's interesting that you know how is it that like out of like the list of political prisoners there's there are anarchists, of course, but like largely they're, there's like, you know, communists or black nationalists or Puerto Rican. Nationalists or indigenous resistors or whatever I? I mean, I think I think it's paradoxical, but I also think it's really common sense. I think on one. Level I think anarchists have always been really good at prisoner stuff. Prisoner support, solidarity. I think the concept of solidarity is. You know largely an anarchist concept that I, I think there's also this idea that like you know, my solidarity with you, my my my view of you as a comrade doesn't require you and I to have the exact same belief system, you know. And so like. For me at least, personally speaking, I think a lot of the people from those movements are heroes. You know, for lack of a better term, like I'm inspired by them. That doesn't certainly mean that there's not like ideological contradictions that I'm like not in favor of. I mean, like, I am a. I'm like really inspired by people like Jan, Lemon and Ray Luke Levasseur, but like I'm I probably would have a lot of like nitty gritty issues with like you know, certain aspects of Leninism. Or you know, if they, if they identify as Marxist Leninist you know? Like but the other thing is that I also. Think that like people in time like. Often have like prep. Nuanced perspectives that aren't like you know, like you'll never find anything in the calendar. That's like kind of comedy paper, seller stuff like we. We really don't don't mess with that at all like we don't mess with

like the people that are shoving their newspaper down your throat, you know, and that's a that's a big city thing and it's not everywhere. But when you do have that in your city, it's insufferable. You know, that's sort of like. You know you walk into the books or, hey, that reminds me of what you just said. Reminds me of this article by Bob Avakian. Like you're not the spirit. Like you can literally ask them, can I use your bathroom and they're like, ohh, that reminds me of this article by Bob Vegan and you're just like really, how? How is? That possible, you know we're not into that, you know, like you know I'm cool with some little C Communist I'm cool you know I'm an anarchist but it's you know maybe it's I don't know it's also not tattooed on my forehead. I think you know there's a certain amount of like. Like I want to find people I could work with that were not at odds that we have like that are interested in liberation. Not interested in but I'm also not interested in litigating, you know, cosplay around the Spanish Civil War. You know, like I mean, like you literally could see people have these conversations where, like oh, what they did to mock though was. Was this or that? It's like, OK, yeah, I agree. But like are you cosplaying, are you in the real world? Like we, we can't just work with anarchists. I mean we can. But then we would be like the local info shop that. Like consist of like 5 young white white dudes that like just hang out with each other you.

SARAH: Well, yeah, I would bring that back to our theme. You know, knitting together the struggles if we try to start a revolution now with all the like fully committed anarchists out there would be a pretty sad state of affairs, right? So we are building relationships with other people and trying to show them. Like you know what we're passionate about and trying to learn from them and like. I don't think we have like a hard line necessarily on things you know other than things that are totally unreasonable. And so you know to try and find those bridges between all these different struggles so that we can stop arguing with each other and moving to something bigger. I think is you know something that we really feel inspired by.

SOLE: Yeah I love. I love it, I mean you. Know yeah, that's great.

DANIEL: No, you go. We're not even in lockstep. To be honest, I mean I'll be honest, there's sometimes I see a post and I'll be like damn I don't know if I would have put that one up. You know, like I have a, I have a real aversion towards Castro and Guevara and like sometimes stuff will go up there and I'll be like. I'll be like but. I just kind of.

SARAH: This guy like this guy likes to rush, so let's not even get into our. Disagreements about extremely important things.

DANIEL: Yeah well Rush Rush is the best band to ever come from your country.

SOLE: I don't know what rush sounds like.

DANIEL: Hey, here's a fan of the.

SARAH: Ohh please please don't don't do it to yourself. I'm just saying we have very strong political disagreements and we can still work together.

DANIEL: Yeah, Sarah is a big fan of The Tragically Hip, which is like A at Canadian band. Oh, don't either. Anyhow, so, but yeah, don't worry, so I'll send you rush later if that's.

SOLE: Well that's the trust me when I'm finding the intro and outro music I'm gonna find some rush rush covers.

SARAH: Oh my God, this is Danielle. How happy he is. Right now.

DANIEL: So I'm so beat red happy right now, you know.

SARAH: It's not.

DANIEL: So you know, The funny thing is the anarchist questions are really funny because we are I. I did a talk at the Boston Anarchist Book Fair and like you know, they were probably two people that are like. You know, like enough to be. He you know my kids, if I had kids and I was like I actually asked the whole collective like hey you guys all identify as Eric's right. Because it's just we're not ***** ideologues. You know, like if someone's acting like an ***** and A and an authoritarian guaranteed, none of us would suffer that. But like we don't sit around going. Well, I mean, I used to think I was like an anarcho communalistic, but now I really like those aren't the conversations we have and like. Maybe that's like some kind of like a just comment like I used to have those conversations when. I was younger. But like the truth is I we're just not ideological and like we are very busy doing our project. But when it comes down to it, like we'll, we'll like **** heads over like real things, but like. You know the like particular like suffix of your anarchism, but it's just not for me. It's not important. It hasn't. It hasn't been important in a long time, you know.

SARAH: I think the calendar project too is. We mean it to be welcoming, right? If you see it on the table, you're like, look at this beautiful piece of art. I would like to see the calendars about everybody's coming into it at different levels, right? And so maybe somebody doesn't identify as anarchist yet, but they might, and for us to come across like you know, as like hardline about anything doesn't help. Just like enormous audience, we were reaching thousands and thousands of people with the calendar every. Here I would love some of them to, you know, be inspired towards, you know a a different way of looking at the world. But even if they just learn a little more about history and just like their place in it, that's a pretty good start so.

DANIEL: But we don't dumb it down. I mean, we're not. We're not going for like to be non offensive. I mean there is radical content there. But it is true. It is total like Trojan. The horse and like you know, like we you know we have. I don't know. I feel like you'll see like little things in there, but for the most part we're not trying to make people feel like they need to agree with us exactly like they don't need to agree with us that the person that you know kill the cop should be paroled like that's fine. Just read it and like, challenge yourself. Like that's really. Really my goal there.

SOLE: Yeah, right on. I mean, for me it's always just like you know, is someone a ***** or not. Does this person do what they say they're gonna do or not? Like you know is you know, do I trust this person? Like sometimes people just read ***** things that like pointing like at one of my best friends. Loves Lenin and I don't

get it, but whatever you know it's just it's life, not we're all flawed. I'm a vegan. You know God God. Help me yeah. Well let me. Let me see. Is there? I think it's worth noting also that this is actually a really beautiful calendar. Like the artwork is really nice, and that's also why I wanted it in our kitchen because it's just so nice. It's full color. It's got a cool aesthetic. it's well done is there am? Is there anything about this project that we've missed or that people should know?

SARAH: Daniel, you're so good at doing this spiel about like the like where. People can find it.

SOLE: Oh, the social.

SARAH: And sort it, do it.

DANIEL: Media yeah, I'm gonna do that and then we I do want to talk a little bit about the aesthetic though Sarah. Especially if you can talk a little about like why we like how we choose December and stuff like that. I think that's really. But anyhow, I will say, OK, so do we make it really easy to buy this calendar? The best way to do it is. Through burning books, and that's through burning books.com you can buy a copy for yourself for \$15. If you buy 10 or more, the price drops to \$10.00, so you can buy like 10 for \$100. You can sell them and then keep the 5 bucks on each counter for yourself. And it's not just 10. You can buy fifty 100 whatever. We also sell them for \$8.00 for people in prison and you can like you can order that off our website where basically you you. Pay us and we'll send it out with like a paid receipt and like and we'll follow the all the restrictive like guidelines set to various school logs have for. Sending mail out. So yeah, but. Burning books is one place. AK Press is another. Justseeds.org has them as well. In Canada you can go to Chris Blev, which is also known as left wing Books. You can always go to our site. We have like not only all those links but also we have a list of all the different distributors like the small presses and the. Insect areas, but also there's around 25 different stores in North America that stock it. You know. They buy it bulk and then you know they buy it for 10 and they sell it to you for five and so it ends up being a really good fundraiser. So we have like campaigns. Buy it like that stores buy it like that and really you only need to get 10's and so we have a lot of. Like people that, like you know, this is like a little side hustle basically and we we also got a lot of people that do that. Buy 10 and literally give them as Christmas gifts or whatever, which I think is a great idea. But if you do. That kind of thing. But Sarah, I would love to hear you talk about like can you talk a little bit about? I mean, maybe we can both say like the art we like this year. In this calendar, but I would love. I'd love for you to talk about the aesthetic and like the December stuff.

SARAH: Yeah, Umm, so I think that every year we have like certain favorites that we pick. You know when he was alive. Tom Manning was an amazing contributor to our our project to a former political prisoner who passed away. You know that there was just things that touched my heart about the way that he saw the world. And you know, I love that about so many of our artists. What we really try and do with the December art is have something that brings you into the new year and like the end of the previous year, feeling super hopeful and excited and. So I think we're just, you

know, we're just thrilled to bring so many different visions about like what a different world would look like to everybody that picks up a calendar.

DANIEL: What's your favorite this year? So I don't just step in with the interview questions.

SOLE: No, no no, please by all means this is, you know we can call.

DANIEL: Sorry, cheers.

SOLE: This the *****. Daniel and Zerrick asked the tiny raccoon cast exactly.

SARAH: I love it. No, honestly. I mean I'm a bit obsessed. With the January art right now. Honestly, like because I've seen so many people sharing it as they turn their like new their new pages like. Into 2020 and then like it's such a striking piece and also the one that we used, uh, you know, as a little bit of a cut out on the cover as well, it's by an artist named Mary Termont and like just like totally. Beautiful and hopeful looking piece of art. What is your favorite Daniel?

SOLE: Hey, I actually really resonate with this piece. Well, I. Also the building confidence and building power.

DANIEL: Great exhibit.

SOLE: It's like a it's like a meditation or whatever, but I still like it. Sorry sorry to cut you off.

DANIEL: I like it too because it's sort of like it's like from those community like screen days. That they have. You know, like I think like they have them in Portland, they have them here at interference archive where like all the artists will be like come on down. You can screen our images you can like. I went to the one at interference archive and it was like. A huge table. Stickers, and I'm like I love sticker and I love graffiti. I love all stuff like that and so I mean obviously don't do graffiti. I want to do that, but I love like stickers and those days where people come down and they're like bring a T-shirt and you can like screen and that's what that is. That's like those women are screening. You know, it says times up, but they're screening. That at one of those like community print days, and I think that's it's just beautiful to know you know that I know that, say my speak. But I. I'm sorry I need.

SARAH: To interrupt no, I was just gonna say I also have to give like honorary mention to the August start by the prisoner that Daniel mentioned earlier. Karen Zacharian it's a portrait of Marilyn Buck, one of the first political prisoners that I ever wrote to. And just like a totally amazing. Person so if you wanna learn more about her. I super encourage you to look up her beautiful poetry and her history online as well. So yeah. Oh yes, he's got a a beautiful like book or a CD or something called wild poppies. That's freedom. Archives puts out. Yeah, it's awesome.

DANIEL: I would say my favorite. It's too like aesthetically speaking, Annie Morgan Banks's Land Trust remake trade the land is beautiful. it's a woodcut or. Lena's litho cut. I think of a photo which I think is amazing. It's of a a woman with her back to the artist with a little baby on her shoulder which I and I just love the colors. And I love. The the, like the sharpness of the words. And I really like Decembers inspiring 1 this year. Which is this crow landing on a cage with a fox? You have to assume

the crow is going to help the fox get out of the cage, and it's got part of this assata Shakur poem. I think it's called affirmation. And it just says a wall. It's just a wall and nothing more at all. It can be broken down. I love that you know, not exactly wolves and crows. Perhaps not the best of friends, but you know it. There's a conspiratorial look on the face of the fox, and it looks like I said well. I'm sorry it's the fox. You know, at the crow and I think it's. It's like it's like, yeah, I don't know. I like it so.

SARAH: I got used just you. Describing it, I got goosebumps. I love it.

SOLE: Yeah, I wouldn't even have. I didn't even. I wouldn't even have caught that unless you had. Told me that.

DANIEL: Well, I'll be honest, I didn't catch that particular. Thing until just now.

SARAH: That's a total word.

SOLE: Yeah, yeah and yeah. With our with the President we have you know what I forgot. We were at war this whole conversation, so that's great, yeah? Yeah, yeah, I think. No, it's not it's. It's like coyotes and Falcons have that. Like symbiotic relationships, foxes, foxes, and crows are. You know, they're they're kind of, you know they're they're close. They're both ***** highly intelligent, that's for sure.

DANIEL: Yeah, and crows are **** and They kind of like, you know, they're huge.

SARAH: They're kind of. On the edges of society, a little bit too. Both of them, which are like beautiful *****, yeah.

DANIEL: Definitely definitely. So I definitely like that, but to be honest, I love most of the art dish. I mean all, it's all looks so damn good and but I do agree like when we. Where we like logged into social media last week and or maybe yeah, it was like last week and like on Thursday when all the like my fellow office drones like got back to the office and like we were. Just getting. All these photos sent to us of like. Oh, got the new calendar flipping the new. Calendar and it was like so nice to see like people. You know writing all this love on like social media and being like oh I got my calendar. This is the best I'm like Oh my God, like we're so involved in it that like it's hard for us to remember that like thousands of people have. You know, and there is people tell me about it. Sometimes that always blows my mind. I love that I love absolutely love. When people start telling me about it. Although it's. Like that's awesome.

SARAH: Right favorite thing is traveling. I've been to France, Portugal like all over the states, little info shops and you just like walk into a place and. They've got art from. Like 5-6. 20 years ago up on the wall. And I'm just like, yes, the calendar. Is still reaching people in all these weird ways? I love it.

SOLE: Yeah, that's what. Scott, when I was telling Scott Crow I was interviewing. Y'all, he's like you you. Need to just go buy all the other ones you think. This one's great. Wait till you you need to get them off and they're ***** all works and it's like it's true. It's like you're you know you're like cataloguing the you know. So many hopes and dreams and ****. it's beautiful. I was looking at the. For sure. This this Oso Blanco piece you know, and Oso Blanco again I'm kind of, you know I don't. Oh

yeah. I'm not like deep in the political prisoner support so it's like I just know. Sure, sure. Like who the people I have would have been exposed to and like oh so Blanco again. It's like for people who don't know about this **** like the story and please correct me if I'm wrong but he he was a. Was he a Puerto Rican independence?

DANIEL: No, he's a he's indigenous. He's he's part Cherokee. Or he's Cherokee.

SOLE: OK, but he went. He went away for robbing.

DANIEL: He was robbing banks basically to try to send money to the Zapatistas.

SOLE: That's what, OK OK.

DANIEL: Yes to the South, the tremendous amount of banks in a short period of time. And yeah, got got busted here at one point, escaped from the police van. I mean he's a pretty. They used. To call him Robin, the hood. And he's been down for close to 20 years now and of a really hard times in and. Out of his. Special Management Unit, which is just a horrible. Place and twisted up on messed up charges. Just sending him to the solitary confinement over and over, but he's a good dude and we love his art. His art is. Really, really thoughtful.

SARAH: We've spent a passionate supporter of the calendar for a long time, and we we find that you know, like Marius Mason being another one and Leonard Peltier like you know people that have over the years just given so much to the calendar.

SOLE: But yeah.

SARAH: it's amazing.

SOLE: Yeah, and it's yeah yeah it's just but it's just you know when you hold it and you look at it. You think about. Or I'm sorry who that person is who that person.

DANIEL: Is any of the people that we are talking about too? Like if there are political prisoners, I always I always recommend that they check out the this really excellent publication by New York City Anarchist Black Cross called The Illustrated Guide to PP's and they could get that at like NYC abc.wordpress.com and that's an illustrated guide to all the North American political prisoners. With like a bio, an address and a photo basically, and so you can learn a lot about people like Oso, Blanco or Marius Mason or other people that that we Jeremy Hammond that we mentioned before David. Gilbert, uh, so that's a really really solid place. if there's a name that you heard that's unfamiliar, that's a good place to check it out because. You probably find it.

SOLE: In there, that's awesome. Well. Yeah, I mean I don't know, I don't, I don't you. Know we're at an hour. And 15. Minutes it's a sure good time to cut it so. Yeah, I don't. I mean, just really thank y'all for you know putting this together and putting doing all this work and you know it's this is hard work and you know. it's awesome. You know where it's? Like 10:00 o'clock at night, and we're doing this interview and really, really appreciate it and any.

SARAH: By the way.

SOLE: And if people wanna like track y'all on social media or support certain certain days or whatever, like just shout out all your social media stuff.

DANIEL: Yeah so yeah. Sure, OK, so our website is certaindays.org. You can find us by searching certain days on Facebook on Twitter. We're at certain days, Instagram. We're at certain days calendar on TikTok. No, we're not on TikTok. Not yet, we gotta. Oh no.

SARAH: Work on our dance.

DANIEL: Moves, yeah, we'll Snapchat. You know all that.

SOLE: They don't let baby boomers on TikTok. Ohhh 10X real yeah.

DANIEL: Damn, these boomer comments are coming way too much in frequency these days. I'm like y'all getting getting.

SARAH: You need to look in the mirror my friend.

DANIEL: Boomer, but yeah, people can do this up on e-mail to info. At certain days, we love hearing hearing from people. I think like it's the kind of thing that, like you know, usually feedback is given when it's negative. But like when you add this to our Instagram. Stories of like you putting your calendar on your wall like that **** is awesome. Like you know I'm having a bad day and I check Instagram and there's like 8 notifications and it's all people like just stories of people like talk about the calendar and stuff. That stuff is awesome. So and we always like rebroadcast that. So love the shout outs and we're really easy to find on social media. So just you know, check it out.

SOLE: Awesome and I always like to ask everyone who comes on to shout out like a book that they. Think you know that's? Your favorite book, or you think people should read whatever? If y'all have a book, recommendations?

DANIEL: That was a good one. Sarah, what do you got going on?

SARAH: Part I would say love and struggle by David Gilbert. Check that one out. It's beautiful. Nice way to start the year. Very hopeful. Lots of awesome stories.

DANIEL: Ohh man I it's so funny I'm like a bibliophile that you ask a question like that and I'm like thinking on level different levels like Oh well on this level like blah blah blah blah. I don't really. Have a good one I'm I just got the book from the library written by this ridiculous person from CNN, but it's about Patty Hearst. It's called American heiress. The Wild saga of no, it's about this to be honest, Liberation Army. The Ultra left of California, so I am really interested in this. I can't say that it's a good book. My all time one of my all time favorite. Saga, kind of. Intense fiction books was recommended to me by my friend B, and it's called a man by Oriana Fallaci.

SARAH: I was just about to say if you don't have a suggestion like?

DANIEL: Oh I love it. I have I. Literally bought this book like.

SARAH: This recommendation to me when I. When you were in prison and I read it and it blew. My mind it's so good.

DANIEL: It is. It's just heartbreaking. I have to disclaim the fact that Oriana Fallaci sort of she was. I would say an ultra leftist and kind of. Like fell off the deep end towards the end of her life like just she did have a positive response to 911. I would say she had sort of a ***** like you know, but a a man or a man as it's translated is a very good book and it's excellent. It was recommended to me at a. Show by a. By

an old friend who I'm still close. Many years ago, and I recommended it and bought it for a bunch of people and it's a. Really intense fictional story, loosely based on fact I guess I don't know if that's called historical fiction, but. It's amazing.

SOLE: Well, hey it was awesome talking to y'all, you know?

DANIEL: Also, can I just say I was, you know? I a lot of podcasts I listen to, including like edge of sports with Dave Ziron. He always ask people what they're listening to, and so I. Was totally ready for that.

SOLE: What are you listening to?

DANIEL: Did it that?

SARAH: The trick question.

DANIEL: Oh, this is like you're. Gonna have to leave.

SARAH: Tim, he's he's gonna list like 20 different songs and books. For you now cause he wants to press.

SOLE: No, no, it's.

DANIEL: No, that's for the emails later. I don't know if you know this so, but I'm a frequent emailer, so anyway, that's the nicest way to describe it. Oh I, I am listening to really old ****. It's ridiculous. I'm listening to Gangstar and Jezza right now.

SOLE: I've been going through a East Coast hip hop phase two lately. I don't know why.

DANIEL: Apparently go with like everything has to be AG too. I don't understand how that works, but gangster and jezza.

SOLE: All I've listened to is Styles P and Jadakiss. I don't know why, but this is all I can listen to. It's like it's almost just annoying. My wife. Maybe it's just when she hears it. It's like you're listening to that **** again. Well, yeah.

DANIEL: Now it gets better at the 50th time.

SOLE: Awesome, you got any music Sir?

SARAH: Yeah, I mean nobody wants to listen to my weird Stoner rock things. I listen to like High On Fire and electric wizard and ****.

DANIEL: I listened to rush, you know, they're really about really about about the.

SARAH: Don't embarrass yourself.

SOLE: Alright, well I think it's always good to. Like end it with the laughter and ****. Talk, so I'll just And the and the recording and. His mind is not correct. Down there again. What you say about? Today it's on you. On you.

03/16/2020 - Environmental activist Daniel McGowan

Synopsis

<https://kboo.fm/media/79296-environmental-activist-daniel-mcgowan>

Hosted by: acarpinelli

Produced by: KBOO

Program:: Prison Pipeline

Air date: Mon, 03/16/2020 - 6:30pm to 7:00pm

Adam Carpinelli interviews **Daniel McGowan**. Daniel is an environmental and social justice activist from Queens, NY. He was charged in 2005 with 15 counts of arson, property destruction and conspiracy, all related to two actions in Oregon in 2000, claimed by the Earth Liberation Front (ELF). Previously aired.

Download audio file

Topic tags: Activism, Law/Court/Crime, Prison, Environment/Climate

Transcript

MICHAEL: For Americans and the world at large about the systemic change that needs to take place in order to make sure that our society is working for working people and the vast majority of us. And hopefully we can build off of this and find some silver lining in this crisis.

ELLIOT: Yeah yeah everybody stay safe. Please go to census.gov. To take part in the census or to type in your information that you received for the census. And Please remember to try to social distance as much as possible.

MICHAEL: Wash your hands.

ELLIOT: Work from home if available. Yeah, wash your hands and to make sure that you limit the spread of misinformation.

MICHAEL: Yes indeed, very important. Well, everyone out there. Thank you so much for listening. Stay safe. We will come to you again next month. I am Michael Cathcart.

ELLIOT: And I'm Elliot Gilland.

MICHAEL: Yeah, until next time stay safe.

INTRO: You are listening to KBOO Portland. This is day four of our partial. Station shutdown on the COVID-19. Occurrence. we are about to go to prison pipeline coming up right next.

ADAM: Hi, greetings and welcome to prison pipeline airing from the studios of KBO, Portland. I'm your host, Adam Carpinelli prison pipeline presents a unique perspective of the criminal justice system. Addressing the root causes of crime. And broadening understanding of the institution of incarceration today, we're here with Daniel McGowan. How you doing Danny?

DANIEL: Hey, what's up? Adam thanks.

ADAM: Hey man, course always hey can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

DANIEL: For having me all.

ADAM: We might have some listeners who might not be familiar with you or your your case or your your present community organizing.

DANIEL: Sure thing. Well my name is Daniel McGowan. I'm a New Yorker. Born to raise out here in Queens. I used to live. In the northwest, I was indicted as part of this Earth Liberation Front. Case in two. 1005 And I did seven years in. Prison I was housed. At this place, called the communication Management Unit, which was. Sort of a repressive unit that they put political folks in to sort of silence us from from talk about. What's going on in the? Yeah, I've been out of prison since 2013. It's been organized and doing a lot of political prisoners for one of the projects that I work a lot on is certain days, the freedom for political prisoners calendar. So we're going to. Talk a little bit about that. Today, if that's cool.

ADAM: We certainly hope so, and that is it. Certain days.org and there's other ways of finding it online as well, but that would be first and foremost. So yeah, tell us about the project and how you got involved.

DANIEL: Sure thing, well you know I I was just telling someone the other day how I ended up meeting one of the people on certain days we actually met through the social media like site Friendster back in the day which is really like. I feel like really dates me, but anyhow so I bet I met Sarah through Friendster and somehow got found out about certain days. I was around 2003 or 4. And I started, you know, over the years, working on it sporadically, you know submitting articles or helping out, but when I got out of prison, really, that's when I joined the collective. And so I've been working on it about six years now. And just to give us give you guys a little background about our project. Certainties is a political prisoner calendar. It's essentially an art. Education and art and educational project and a fundraiser. So we're in our 19th year and. It's a project. That's done between organizers in Montreal, Hamilton, Canada and New York and Baltimore. And we're an inside outside collective, so we essentially work with people on the inside. So currently people that we are working with is David Gilbert, political prisoner from New York. And Sinofsky, who is a political prisoner in Texas recently, for many years we were, you know, there were three inside collective members, but we were lucky enough to welcome home founding members Herman Bell

and Robert Seth Hayes. In 2000 18 So we kind of reformed our collective and. Added a few new people.

ADAM: That's great project, can you?

DANIEL: Yeah, we.

ADAM: Can you say more about? The political prisoners, as far as what that means? Because some people have different, you know definitions. And obviously in this project really kind of sticks out. It's focusing a lot on these kind of long term US held political prisoners. There's others too, but it's very, you know, North American based and really around certain cases politics. And political organizations, right?

DANIEL: Yeah, I would say you know of course. You know, incarceration and imprisonment takes place in a political context, and I'm certainly not suggesting that people that are in prison are divided into. You know these categories of important or not important or whatever you know, good or bad or whatever. I mean, we use these words, sometimes political prison or social prison or. But of course, incarceration takes. Place in a in a in a political context, and like there's oppression that takes place against the majority of the people that are in prison. So, but I think you know, I can say for myself the reason that I had been drawn to working on political prisoner issues is I felt like these were folks that I had a lot of respect. For that were from our movement. And you know when I say our movements, I, I guess I could refer to, you know, movements for like black liberation from the 60s and 70s. 80S Puerto Rican independence and his you know, prisoners that are were taking action against capitalism in the state. Environmental and animal rights. I'm missing one, sorry.

ADAM: So a lot of movements.

DANIEL: I guess you know. Yeah, a lot of different movements. You know people, you know some of these people are, you know, a lot of good majority of them are elders or people that I think are good examples of not just like how to how to be principled. You know in prison, but also. Just like you know, the movements that they were part of. I mean a lot of the people were talking about have deep histories and movements for social justice. Whether it's you know students who are democratic society, resistance against the Vietnam War, you know I was just, for instance, I was just. At a memorial. For Tom Manning, who passed away in July and that was really impressive. Movement a bunch. Of memorial with a bunch of movement elders you know principled, like elder white people who you know. I think if you are, you know European American. You struggle to find examples of people, especially elders, that have lived righteous lives and are fighting our racism and their white supremacy in a way that's like not tokenistic or short term. And so I was pretty in awe at this as this event looking at. You know these people? That are largely my parents age, but lives. You know, pretty. Intense lives so you know people like Tom Manning and Bill Dunn. And David Gilbert. John Lamont people like that I I've always been impressed by but you know, there's people in in all movements that I think have something to offer. So I guess you know with the limited time that I have on this planet and my life, I just you. Know I want to. You know, at least since I've got out of prison, focused on getting these people from the

60s and 70s and 80s out of prison and living their the rest of their lives. You know, in relatively freedom out here, you know.

ADAM: Yeah, that's great and you then you provide this particular resource, which is it's interesting because I mean it's really like it's beyond the calendar, right? I mean it's the calendar as far as like that's the kind of the outcome that somebody would you know, go and you know can go pick one up or whatever at the same time. I'm, you know, there's all this information. That's in them. And for people who. Aren't familiar with their cases. Sometimes it's a great way to learn, kind of about them because there's the writings and all the artwork and things like that. So can you talk about how how this kind of links in with all these other resources and kind of how it's put together?

DANIEL: Well, it's funny you. Know we have like we. Always joke about the fact that some of the sections. Of the calendar, you know we change. We tweak it every. Year, but there's not massive massive changes to perhaps some of the sections like we have, like a section of definitions. Have like website lists and book. Lists books we really. Love, which is a very hard section to edit. As you can imagine. And just like updates and things like that, those sections, like you know, might change like 25% where it's the art and the articles is 100% new every year. So we know that you know the fact is that we continue to sell, you know, thousands of calendars leads me to believe that you know people are not just using it as a wall calendar. It's really more. I always think of it as like a really. Big vein. And it's something that. I think is really great to give to new people and whether that new people new to the movement or new to prisoner issues. I mean, we don't. We don't just talk about political prisoner issues, we talk about, you know where abolitionists we talk about all kinds of issues affecting you, know imprisonment in this country and this continent. And really, the world. But you know so. I will say that like I'm, I'm really excited about this year our our calendar has a few every year this team is knitting together. The struggle we we come up with this theme through like consultation with people on the inside. We write like an essay typically on that theme and then we give that idea to. To the artists and authors. So we have sort of an open call and we also do a little bit of solicited kind of target and asking people specific people. So this year, like I said, it's knitting, knitting together the struggles so it's thought a little bit about interest. Personality and movements working together. We have art and articles by a number of really awesome. Authors and artists. Including Andy Morgan, Banks, Eric McVeigh, Cindy Mills sign, David Gilbert, Eric King, Fernando Marti Yan Lemon, Marius Mason. New new jails. Coalition Stevie Wilson Mary Tremonte there's a few others I'm not going to say the whole. But I'm really happy about the content. It's pretty inspiring. We like to. We like to group our art and our articles in some kind of thematic way. So you'll see like similarities between the art. We have a lot of first time. Contributors this year. We have, probably, you know, six or seven people inside that contributed, so I think it'll be really solid. The other thing I mentioned is that a project is a fundraiser, so you know, there's we're like a six person collective on the outside and two people on the inside

right now. It's obviously an all volunteer thing, so once we pay for the printer you know, and the cost of postage, which are, you know, really, our only cost we have. Two beneficiaries every year. And then we choose a few others. So the sort of permanent beneficiaries are release aging people in prison rap campaign. New York then we have a group called Addameer, which is a political prisoner organization in in Palestine that looks out for the you know, thousands of political prisoners in Israeli prisons. Last year of our beneficiaries. Is this pretty young project that's doing excellent work called the Amistad Law. Project in in Pennsylvania. And in previous years, we've given from to the. Noah Olympics campaign in Canada. The abolitionist Law Center. The Unisto indigenous blockade in Canada. Freedom archives for Struggle magazine. We kind of picked different ones and in recent years we also put aside a little money for release funds because there's. There's been a number of political prisoners, you know over 20 that have gone out since 2015, and often those people have been. In for 30-40 years. And so we'd like to make contributions to release. Funds as well and this. Last year has been challenging because you. Know there's like 4. More people got. Out which is, you know, exciting, but also like it's you know it's a lot right.

ADAM: Right and meanwhile you have people. Yeah, getting out. There's people who are passing away and then there's like new new political prisoners. You know new people getting locked up and you you're you always seem.

DANIEL: Definitely definitely.

ADAM: You know, among kind of the larger national cohort of folks doing political prisoner work. You know, at the forefront of really knowing. Kind of what's going on with all these people and their cases and who they are. Can you talk about that cause? Because I think for a lot of people. Well, even if they're sort of familiar with this concept, OK, yes, we have long term US held political prisoners still not really clear. I mean, who are these people? You know how they find out about them, and you know, because again, like I said, some of the community organizers involved naturally, like I mean, you know they're, you know, they're getting phone calls from family members. You know the moment something happens. Somebody in this quick alert, kind of.

DANIEL: Yeah, yeah. So how does that? I mean, I think for me Adam a. Lot of it. Is just like I've been around for. A long time. I mean, going on a little over 20 years now and so I had been involved in in prisoner work in political prisoner work and environmental campaigning, right? So I think after I got out what started to happen was people would reach out to me. When, like you know, they're like yo, my friend caught a case could. You talk to. Their family, and so I sort of started. Doing a lot of this like kind of low key consulting because I find like the prison system and you know I was in the federal prison system. It's pretty obtuse, and none of it makes a lot of sense, and so you have people who perhaps their family members have never dealt with incarceration before, and so suddenly, you know, like with my family, I was just snapped out of my workplace. I was put in a local jail and then I was shipped across the country to Oregon. Within like a week. So you know I had, you know my family and my friends had a pretty. Deep learning curve. So like I have like. Many times like

you know, sort of got to people early and been able to kind of let them know what's going on. Like oh, they're in Oklahoma. OK, here's the locator. Here's how you find out where they are. Here's how you put money on the books. Here's what your your loved one is facing and try to you know. Assuage people's Fears but also give them like you know reality talk about. Like what's going on? So yeah, I would say in the last like you know six years. You know it's got to the point I. I work with a number of different organizations and we're sort of just tapped into the network of information, but really I rely on I rely on social media for some of this, I rely on personal relationships. I rely on like good old fashioned listservs. I guess I will if it's OK I will give you guys 2 updates on. Two younger political prisoners that are dealing. With some soft situations right now.

ADAM: Yeah, sure yeah. Before that just letting folks know if you're just tuning in, you're listening to prison pipeline airing from the studios of KBO, Portland. We're here with Daniel McGowan talking about the 2020.

DANIEL: OK.

ADAM: Get them all. They're hotcertaindays.org calendar, so look certain days.org. It's a 2020 calendar focusing on US long term held political prisoners and Daniel's going to tell us some more about some of these particular special people.

DANIEL: Yeah, OK, so I just want to shout out two. Youngish anarchist political prisoners in the federal system. Right now they're dealing with some soft cases. The first is Eric. King Eric King is a from the Midwest. He's doing a 10 year sentence for attempted arsin. I believe it was of a congressional representative office in reaction to Ferguson Ferguson Uprising and that particular representative viewpoint or regressive viewpoint on the protest. So Eric was doing a 10 year sentence without a low security. Prison got bounced to this. This medium security prison FCI floor. He was assaulted by a Lieutenant after being called into his office to discuss some ALCO and e-mail that Eric sent at least up to claim Eric was assaulted by. This cop spent roughly 270 days in segregation. Over the like. The last two years and then was indicted. Secretly, by a grand jury. In May and then he. Was just brought back to Colorado so he is currently on top of his 10 year sentence facing an assault charge of a federal official and he's currently being housed in segregation at FCI Englewood. You know, I read the indictment. It's pretty like you know it's. Pretty simple, it looks like almost like. You know like he. Said she said kind of thing, but Eric, unfortunately the charge carries a maximum of 20 years in prison. While I want to hope that you know the judge or jury could see between the lines that you know what really happened, you know that is the truth, that that is what he's facing as a maximum. Whether or not he would get that much is beyond me. Eric is in segregation. He has a new lawyer. They're in the process called discovery, where they got all the documents and he's definitely like, you know, he's on 23 hour lockdown minimum and so he can definitely need your help and support. You can find out information about him at supportericking.org that's you know, support Eric ERI. Dking.org he also has a Facebook group with the same name that you can easily find if you just search that support arcane. The second

person is a boy, Jeremy Hammond. He is a hacker doing again A10 year sentence, an anarchist hacker from Chicago. He you may know he he released documents related to this global surveillance company called Stratford. We called the trapdoor hacks. He's got a 10 year sentence out of New York City. It seems that Jeremy has been subpoenaed to a federal grand jury in Alexandria, VA. There's not really a lot known right now. He's being held at this detention. Center out there and you know. You can get. His address and updates from Free Jeremy dot. He also has a very active Twitter handle that supporters run for him that's at free Jeremy dot at free. Jeremy net. So there's not a lot of updates right now, but those are two of the younger generation of political prisoners that are already doing a bunch of time and are facing more time. And one of the reason Jeremy's facing time is there's this thing called civil contempt of a grand jury. And if a person refuses to cooperate with a grand jury. The judge has the. Ability to freeze their federal sentence. And essentially as a coercive tool to get. Them to cooperate. Jeremy is already, you know, looking at more time based on that. So these are two young younger dudes that could definitely use some support, so I want to make sure you all heard about that before I knocked off here.

ADAM: Yeah, well it's interesting too, because I mean with with, you know Jeremy's case for example with. You know this online type activism and there's been so many other cases where the system has really thrown the book at people involved with things related to the Internet and kind of release of information there was, you know that one person who the person they took their lives who were you know they they're going to get a life sentence. Or exposing not exposing really.

DANIEL: Ari Schwartz.

ADAM: But yeah, Aaron Schwartz. You know releasing the article. From JSTOR and things like that, and in the way that and even in your case, right, you know these post 9. 11 cases where terrorism really meant like a different thing. Sort of at one point and then took on whole new definitions. And then there's so much else that goes under that category now. So many things that go under that category and so many other things that don't go under that. Category like vigilante white supremacist groups. That you know should be in in that category, and they're not really deemed as much in that life. But then however, we have this whole cohort of activists. And so I mean, can you kind of talk talk about sort of that dynamic? How that's relating to the effects on people with these cases?

DANIEL: Yeah, I mean I. I think one of the major. Major reasons why the perception is that the vigilante, like white supremacists aren't. It's because there's like industry is not organized against them like capitalism and capitalists and corporations don't care. You know they. Just don't care about white supremacy, it just doesn't affect their bottom line to some extent I guess, whereas you have obviously groups on the left that are attacking corporations or this capitalism are perceived as you know, righteously scary I guess, or enemies of their business interests, and so you have. You know, industry actively organized and it's why you know my case and a lot of other cases like environmental activists or anarchists are being treated like monsters. Essen-

tially, so yeah, it's definitely frightening. There's a lot of you know people that have been dealing with this. Chelsea Manning is, you know, until 200 of civil contempt and that same in that same city. Alexandria, VA. You have that former soldier Reality winner in federal prison. So it's really funny theory. People say. What about the whistleblowers? And then you see, like wait, what about Jeremy and Sophie Manning like their whistleblowers like, you're just like using the term and you know you, you're not seeing seeing that for whatever reason but. I guess I also just added wanted to make sure that I let you all know how to get this calendar because I'd hate to tell you how awesome it is and then you don't know how to get it. So like Adam said, certain days.org is like if you can remember one that's the easiest place to go. You have links. To how to get the calendar but. I will say if you're in the United States. Which I imagine a lot of your listeners are. You can go, you know, our main distributor is burning books in Buffalo. It's burning books dot dot com. You can buy one for \$15.00 and if you buy 10 or more the price falls to \$10. And so, what? A lot of groups do is they buy 10 or more for \$10 each. The shipping is free and then they sell them for \$15. So essentially, if you know if you buy \$100 of calendars 10 calendars you sell. Them for 15 and you keep. \$5 you make 50 bucks, so a lot of different small groups, small shops, info shops and bookstores. Do that and it's a nice little way that they can make you know, make a little money, right? If you're in Canada. You can get it through our site or you can get it from left wing books, AKA Chris Lebedev. International like around Asia and Europe. You could get it from active distribution which is a big punk. Distribution in London. We also have this thing where you can buy a calendar for only \$8.00 for anyone that's in prison in jail, and there's a button that's on our website. So you basically just pay 8 bucks. We send it for you. An invoice or a receipt, so it's very legit. We know about all the mail restrictions, so we're able to send send it in properly, and then there's information on our site where you can find out what stores across the continent will stock it. So as soon as we're printed, we send it out to all these stores. There's usually about 5200 stores in the continent that sell. That sells our. Calendar and of. Course there's also a press, a press. And they're one of our major distributors and they have a. Lot of really awesome books obviously so. So I highly recommend if you're gonna buy both, buy more than 10. You'd be surprised how fast you can sell them or give them away for the holidays as we kind of get a little note. Is promoting it as a as a stocking stuffer come come November? We just like it's like nonstop and a lot of people you know. I find a lot. Of people do that and I you know, to be honest I used to do it before I was a member of the collective and buy a ton and just give them away because I think they're pretty awesome. Presents you give it to your racist uncle, you give it to your younger sisters like you know. And stuff. Whatever, and you can find it like I said on certaindays.org, we're on Facebook with our name certain days. We're at certain days on Twitter and we're at certain days calendar on Instagram, so pretty hard you know, to find even possibly overexposed on social media. I post I post. A lot obviously, as you as you know.

ADAM: Yeah, I know, I know and that's what I was saying about this kind of wealth of resources. That that is there. And even on the certain days website you know, looking at the personal political prisoners. States and there's, you know, almost almost some of that. Well, I don't know how you want to frame it, but you know so many of the political prisoners do have their own support teams and support networks and websites and that's definitely reflected on this particular list here. And then there's you know, the different ABC and Jericho lists and stuff like that have some other prisoners on there in context of. You know you're talking about. The whole global thing, you know where you know people are online and all over. You know other other parts of North America? What have you and dialoguing with folks what about within the newer kind of local scene. These days, what? What might be some things in the last couple of minutes that we have that you might want to highlight as far as like ongoing work, whether whether it's political prisoner related or not, or just prison related kind of community organizing that you see as successful in New York, yeah, New York City.

DANIEL: Are you staying in New City?

ADAM: Yeah, for any listeners kind of curious what kind of things are happening on the ground there.

DANIEL: Oh sure, yeah.

ADAM: What kind of campaigns?

DANIEL: It's actually a campaign that I'm not super involved in, but I did like a a big fan I've been watching. It like crazy. I'm sorry, I just spaced out for a second. No new jails is a really awesome coalition.

ADAM: Uh-huh yeah.

DANIEL: You know there's been numerous groups fighting jail construction in New York City, and some have you know, seemingly capitulated to the politician demands for taking ten years to close Rikers, but no new jails is not one of those groups and they are keeping it real. I follow them on Twitter, but they we obviously are printed something by them in the calendar. I'm very happy. To do that, they are totally keeping it real because politicians are doing this thing where they say they're going to close Rikers which is technically and clean. It's in the it's in the river. In the middle of nowhere. Basically, it's possible to get. To and then. They want to open up 4 new jails so they talk about how Rikers is only at you know 6007 thousand people. Only by the way which. Is insane, but then they talk about how they're going to close the island. But they're going. To open up new jails and in. All the four of the five. Boroughs, which I just find. To be madness. And it's kind. Of like that old joke about traffic like. If you build. The road you're going to fill it up. It's like if you build.

ADAM: Right?

DANIEL: Prisons like they will have an. Imperative to fill it up. And I just do not understand that. So you got no new jails right now, just like. I mean they're they're legit, they are like. Disrupting City Council, they're out there in the street, giving out fires, letting people know what's up. Recently, Angela Davis spoke in New York. City and she made a comment. About Ford Foundation and their. And in promoting the idea

of new jail construction. And lo and. Behold, on Twitter today new jail talk about Ford Foundation. I mean they are like legit and cutting edge and I think I'm very inspired by that because you know, I work a lot on the what the people might consider the back end. You know prison prison is like once. People already go through the. System, but like you know, New York. Prison population has fallen. Pretty dramatically, in the last 20 years and a lot of that is because of the front end work. So all that work that's done to that you know to restrict the police from doing.

ADAM: Right?

DANIEL: What they do they're. Nonsense, but also. Like alternatives to incarceration, getting getting charges reduced from felonies to misdemeanors. I mean, that's how you shrink it, right? I mean, it's not, it's. Not destroying it, but it is. Definitely making it a lot smaller than it used to be when I was a kid. Rikers Island, which is like 100 years ago, Rikers Island with 20,000 people. At one point it is now 7000 people, so we live in a different world and we need to. Now where we live in does not should not have 4 new jails in New York City. Jail construction is A to me, a racket and somebody's getting paid. I don't know who it is, but probably politicians and so I just would say new new jails is who you really want to follow and I'm sure you can find them online really easy on Twitter. Because that's what I've been doing.

ADAM: Yeah, no new jails and then and also rap seems very progressive. Coalition of Kind of consortium organizations.

DANIEL: Yeah yeah, rap rap is yeah rap is excellent.

ADAM: We're kind of different stuff.

DANIEL: Releasing people in prison. I mean, I'm biased. They're one of the beneficiaries of the calendar, but I think they do amazing work. They are dealing with. It's like 9500 people that are in the prison system in New York State that are elderly and you know in prison. When you saw by elderly that's 55 and older, partially due to the lack of medical care and neglect that takes place. So you have like. Close to 10,000 people out of 46,000 people that are elderly and those people like are in serious need of like. Parole and parole, and compassionate release. We got a governor that doesn't do any of that. He just seems like a fake progressive. And he fronts, and he pretends that he doesn't. He is given 18 people clemency in eight years. But 1000 people have died in. The prison system. Since he's been the governor in the same period of time. So that's a ratio that's just garbage, and I think. Rap is really. Rap is engaged in culture change as well as just straight up, organized and so I have a. Lot of respect for them.

ADAM: Well, well, that that that is.

DANIEL: And they are. Really awesome group of people.

ADAM: A wrap in a good wrap and wrap up for the show and you've been listening to prison pipeline hearing from the studios of KBO Portland. Listen to this and previous prison pipeline programs at KBO dot FM Slash prison. Pipeline like prison pipeline on Facebook. Big thanks to our guest Daniel mcgowancertaindays.org. Look that 2020 calendar is coming out soon and our engineer Selena. Thank you so much for them all.

ADVERT: You are listening to KBO, Portland. We are also on K282, BH, Philomath on 104.3 FM and K220HR Hood River on 91.9. You're listening to kboo on day four of our COVID-19 partial station shutdown just to go off of what Adam was just talking about. COVID-19 poses the greatest risk of death to the elderly as well as to those who are immunocompromised and in the California prison system. One in seven people are aged 55 or older. People in this age group are at the greatest risk for death from COVID-19 yet pose the least public safety risk to the communities. So there are about 20 groups that have put together a letter to California Governor Gavin Newsom calling for the state to release all medically fragile adults and adults over the age of 60 to parole supervision. And that is they are talking about how it. Very likely that this will spread into a prison, one prison or another, and when that happens that will spread like wildfire even faster than it would in a school. They're also calling on the governor to release all people who have anticipated release dates in 2020 and 2021 to do early release. And to expedite all review processes for people already found suitable for release lift holds and expedite the commutation process as well, they are calling for an immediate suspension of all unnecessary parole meetings. Eliminate parole revocations for technical violations, IE. Sending someone back into prison and lift all.

02/04/2022 - Certain Days

Synopsis

<https://wfhb.org/news/february-4-2022-certain-days/>

February 4, 2022: Certain Days

Kite Line

Podcast: [Play in new window](#) | [Download](#)

We open this episode with our monthly collection of prison disturbances, generously compiled by Perilous Chronicle.

Afterwards, we share a conversation between Daniel McGowan and Brian Whitener about the Certain Days calendar. The Certain Days: Freedom for Political Prisoners Calendar is a joint fundraising and educational project coordinated between outside and inside organizers in the US and Canada. Its founding members Herman Bell, Robert Seth Hayes and David Gilbert were welcomed home from prison in 2018 and 2021. Today, McGowan talks about the history of the project, his own experiences with prisoner support, how the calendar supports folks on the inside, and some of the challenges to long-term organizing. McGowan reflects on his time inside following his arrest for Earth Liberation Front actions and emphasizes the importance of supporting grassroots movement organizations.

Find out about Certain Days, including how to order, its history and information on how to write to political prisoners [here](#).

You can find out more about Perilous Chronicle [here](#).

Tags ARTS CERTAIN DAYS DANIEL MCGOWAN EARTH LIBERATION FRONT ELF FRONTPAGE KITE LINE MASS INCARCERATION NEW YORK NEWS PERILOUS CHRONICLE POLITICAL PRISONERS PRISON PRISONER

Transcript

INTRO: Welcome to Kite Line, a weekly radio program from WFHB that focuses on issues in the prison system and beyond. Behind the prison walls. A message is called a kite whispered words. A note passed hand to hand a request submitted to the guards for medical. Care, illicit or not, sending a kite means trusting that other people will bear farther along. Until it reaches its destination here on kite line, we hope to share

these words across the prison walls. We start out this week with a roundup of last month's prison disturbances as compiled by Perilous Chronicle.

Prison Disturbances

HOST #1: Confirmed by journalist Carrie Blake Enger on December 31st prisoners at the memorial unit in Rosharon, TX, went on strike to protest conditions and the use of solitary confinement. Prison officials confirmed the strike, saying that up to 16 prisoners were participating and one prisoner was hospitalized, but recovered. The strike ended on January 14th. Supporters of the strikers have posted their written demands, which include demands to change policies of restrictive housing, visitation rules and offerings. As well as access to basic necessities.

HOST #2: On the evening of January 2nd, a disturbance was reported at the Maryland Reception Diagnostic and Classification Center in Baltimore, MD. According to several news outlets, several fires were started at the facility, resulting in four people being sent to area hospitals with non life threatening injuries and now released 28 prisoners were treated for smoke inhalation. The fires occurred on the 5th floor of the facility where books, mattresses, clothing and food carts were set on fire, amounting to more than \$50,000 in damages. The cause of the fires is unknown. Or how many prisoners were involved. The Baltimore Sun cited issues related to understaffing of guards.

HOST #1: A group of prisoners at Millhaven Institution in Ontario, Canada, launched a hunger strike on January 3rd to protest their proposed relocation within the facility due to a construction project. Prisoners were concerned that relocation would increase their risk of exposure to COVID-19 after a meeting between staff and protesters, the relocation was successfully called off.

HOST #2: On Monday, January 3rd, 14 prisoners at Taylor Correctional Center in Perry, FL organized a sit down and work strike to protest the conditions inside the facility, including unwashed linens, assault by guards, unsanitary food and non working toilets. During and after the sit down, Flyers circulated with the title. This means war. We are responding that outlined the prisoners demands. The facility went on lockdown after the SIT down. There is an active call to contact prison officials with the list of demands from the revolutionary intercommunal Black Panther Party, where R IBPP.

HOST #1: Decades of mismanagement at Rikers Island Correctional Center has been exacerbated by the past few months of the COVID-19 pandemic. On January 8th, about 200 detainees in the Robert N. Davern complex where many young people are held began a meal refusal protest in response to generally worsening conditions and COVID related quarantine procedure. In interviews with the New York Times, detainees share they were not being granted access to recreational programming or the law library and that they had not been allowed outside for weeks. They said violence

was rampant in the facility. And even more widespread hunger strike has been planned ahead of Joe Biden's visit to New York City on February 3rd.

HOST #2: At least two dozen prisoners at the Santa Rita Jail in Dublin, CA are on hunger strike this month in response to an increase in prices at the jail's commissary. According to KTVU prison officials claim commissary prices increased by 5% this year, but detainees track increases on standard items ranging from 21% to 68%. Commissary prices at the jail are much higher than the nearby San Francisco jail, in large part due to the 40% Commission. The Alameda County Sheriff's Office levies on all purchases. One detainee, Eric Rivera, told KTVU that he planned to go as hard as I can and that collective protest is their only option because prison authorities respond to nothing else. On January 27th, strikers at Santa Rita sent messages of solidarity to those on strike on Rikers Island quote. We stand with you because it's the same everywhere.

HOST #1: On Wednesday, January 12th, 4 prisoners detained at the New Orleans Juvenile Justice Center in New Orleans, LA escaped the facility. The detainees escaped around 1:30 PM as one person used an access card, letting the other three people free and physically confronting a guard. The director of the center said it was experiencing staffing problems due to the pandemic. All four prisoners have been recaptured. Two prisoners were recaptured after a 2 hour standoff with police. According to nola.com, the escape came four days after another escape attempt from the same facility. In 2019, Perillus reported on a significant disturbance at this facility where prisoners barricaded themselves in the unit, in which the NOPD Special Operations Division was called in. No injuries were reported.

HOST #2: Two disturbances were reported at the Marion County Adult Detention Center in Indianapolis, IN and a video conference with the Marion County Judges, Sheriff Kerry Forrestall and other county officials reported 2 disturbances at the detention center. The first on January 25th. The guards received intelligence that prisoners were going to take over their cell blocks and ambush. The guards Reserves are called in to quell the takeover 24 hours later, on January 26th. A similar disturbance happened in which prisoners alerted guards that there was someone injured in the unit. According to the video conference, when the guards arrived, it appeared that there were plans for an ambush on guards, but were treated when reserves were called in. Box 59 alleges they have received other anonymous complaints, such as prisoners breaking plexiglass windows and suppressing sprinkler systems. These events come after prisoners were moved to the new Marion County Adult Detention Center. Within the Community Justice campus on the east side of Indianapolis. Previously, detainees were held in three locations. Marion County jail. One Marion County Jail two and the city county building. Sheriff officials claim that the new building has security glitches that they are understaffed, due to overseeing multiple occasions, as well as being underfunded. Officials also admitted to disruptions in virtual court offerings as well as a stalling and commissary. It is unknown what specifically caused the disturbances, or if prisoners were charged in the events.

HOST #1: Five teenagers between the ages of 14 and 17 escaped from a juvenile detention facility called the Echo Glen Children Center near Snoqualmie, WA after overpowering staff on duty and stealing a nurse's car. The five were all housed at the facilities. Only maximum security unit. The escapees were able to drive through the facilities gate without difficulty because it had been smashed by a visitor about a year ago and was never replaced. As of January 31st, two of the teens remained at large.

You can find out more at perilouschronicle.com.

HOST #2: An organization of Revolutionary Texas prisoners called Team One alongside another prisoners group titled The TX Liberation Collective, are calling for a campaign to boycott, rally and strike. On the days approaching Juneteenth and on that day The organization's. Right? In the wake of social unrest, the current US White House regime, in an effort to pacify a sector of the populace, did indeed make Juneteenth the federal holiday, while Juneteenth, is a celebration of the ending of slavery in the US. It is factual to state that slavery on this continent has to the present day, gone on without. Instead, slavery has been transformed and we cannot let the narrative of a now state sanctioned holiday gloss over the fact the US and general and Texas in particular took systemic measures to continue the Arrested Development of so-called minority communities. The prisoners demands include an end to male censorship compensation for inmate labor, an end to monopoly business practices that exploit prisoners and their families, and abolishing long term administrative. Negation their communique also calls for prisoners themselves to use this initiative to catalyze their own autonomous liberatory spaces such as libraries, study groups, prisoners, workers, union and youth engagement programs. The communique is being spread publicly as an invitation to outside groups including the Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee. Anarchist black cross groups. Revolutionary abolitionist movement chapters and other prisoner supporters and anti prison groups to help spread the word to prison populations in their own states. Two years ago, the Louisiana Pardon Board recommended Gloria Williams for clemency. On Tuesday, January 25th, after 51 years in prison and a long struggle with COVID-19, Mama Glow was finally released, Williams, the longest serving female prisoner in Louisiana, earned the nickname. On a glow behind bars, a testament to her tendency to mentor younger women, her sister Mary Moore, told the parole board that Williams participated in virtually every program available behind bars and hadn't had a prison disciplinary write up in 14 years. Williams was sentenced to life in the 1971 shooting death of Budge Cutrera senior, an Opelousas grocer killed during an armed robbery involving Williams and four Co defendants. Williams maintains that her Co defendant who died in prison, pulled the trigger. Mama Glo's parents were sharecroppers in church point, where she grew up in extreme poverty and was married at 14 and to a man six years older than she. They had five. She left her husband after discovering his infidelity, then remarried to a man who brutally abused her and forced her to take drugs. While in prison for armed robbery, he demanded money for a lawyer. Williams, fearing him, took part in the robbery. More than 4000 people are serving life sentences in Louisiana. When Williams was convicted, people serving

life became parole eligible after 10 years and six months. But over the years the state legislature eliminated prisoners eligibility for parole, making clemency the only option. Williams escaped from prison three times, once making it to Houston, which added eight years in a Texas prison to her sentence in 1985. She escaped again, injuring a guard, but was recaptured and convicted of simple escape. I'm elated. It's just now setting in, said her youngest son, Darrell Robertson. Who was a toddler in 1971? It was like a dream at first. Now we can celebrate.

Certain Days Calander

INTRO: This week we share a conversation between Daniel McGowan and Brian Weitner about the certain day's calendar. The certain days freedom for political prisoners calendar is a joint fundraising and educational project between outside and inside organizers in the US and Canada, its founding members. Herman Bell, Robert Seth Hayes and David Gilbert were welcomed home from prison in 2018 and 2021. Today, Daniel talks about the history of the calendar, the various ways it supports folks on the inside, and some of the challenges to long term organizing. Here they are.

DANIEL: Well, my name is Daniel McGowan and I am a member of the certainties collective. I am from Queens, NY and I've been involved since the mid 90s. I really got involved, organized in environmental and animal rights circles. And there's a prisoner from the animal rights movement back then. Got a few. Years in prison and that sort of introduced me to. The idea of prisoner support. And so I wrote this person and did some fundraising for their commissary and distributed scenes from them. And so it's sort of like, you know, I, I only really became exposed to prisoner issues through things like that, and through seeing like protests in support of Mumia Abu Jamal or Leonard Peltier, which were quite large in the 90s. And then in two. 1000 a friend of mine when I was living in Eugene, OR was arrested for. The arson of three trucks in Eugene OR at a dealership, and he received a 22 year eight-month sentence. His name was Jeffrey lures. This was in Oregon State and. I really got. Fully involved in prisoner sport at that point, thinking that the sentence that free got was so bad that we really need to do something about that. And then as as life. Turns out a few years later 2005, I was indicted myself for actions taken by the Earth Liberation Front in Oregon. Around that time and I ended up doing seven years in federal prison and I've been out since. Late 2012. So certain days has been around since 2001. I think this is our 21st calendar and my entry into that world came as a result of organizing a Synod letter of solidarity for the man that I just talked about. Jeff layers and I was reaching out to all the different prisoners support groups that I could find at the time, and I reached out to. We called Montreal a BCF to show you how old this is. I reached out to them on Friendster. You know many people listen and we'll probably have to Google to find out what the hell that was. But it was like a more primitive version of Facebook or whatever social media early. Social media and I got the person in Montreal BCF to sign

on to the statement of solidarity. It was just like an organizing tool to generate support and we became friends and she was telling me about this. Project she worked. On and yeah, it got a calendar in the. Mail and I was like. Wow, this is like at the time this was just way beyond anything that I thought I could be part of. You know, it's like a new. To this, and just like this is pretty amazing and. Then through the. There's you know I would help out. I would get copies of the calendar in the mail and distribute it and sell it. You know the calendar is a educational project. You know in that it has tons of information about radical history, about prisons, political prisoners. But also it's a fundraiser, and so Cervantes is always like basically sold at a cheaper rate. Like, you know, if you buy 10. You can get the \$400.00 and then sell them for \$15 each and keep the difference for your organization and your campaign, your info shop or whatever. So that's like kind of. How I got involved? Just it was a friends project and I'm always interested in what my friends are doing and so got introduced to it. And then I went to prison in. 2007 and I. Remember I wrote an article for the calendar 1st, then about the Black Panther Party, which I believe was having some anniversary. I don't know if it was the 40th or whatnot, but it was something big and then basically just. You know, got the copies of the calendar. When I was in prison, shared it. With people that. I was in. Time with and then got out and joined the collective in about 2013. So I've been involved for about 8 years now. What I do is often either directing the flow of art that comes in, or just you know in writing some, but all the collective members are generalists. We write, we edit, we solicit our none of us are artists unfortunately. But you know my dealing with artists is essentially just like reach and like sending out a call for submissions and then getting you know, over 100 pieces of art. All the world including prisons, jails and then we go through a whole editorial process to decide 12 pieces, which is really difficult. That call that I mentioned that we send out is also. Usually has a theme. And so the articles we try to get the articles on a particular theme and then we we also go looking for art that we like on particular topics. So we'll reach out to artists that don't know about us, and, you know, send them a copy of the calendar and see you know if they want to send it so the end result is essentially 12 original pieces of art, 12 original articles, all loosely centered upon a theme. The theme in 2000. 22 is creating a new world. In the shell of. Old usually ends up being a very beautiful result. I mean, we have obviously the 12 pieces of art and 12 articles, but we also have this like we front load the calendar with like a bunch of information so that in a way it's kind of like a scene has like definitions about prison campaigning. It has a big updates page which usually a picture of a recently released prisoner. It has books. We like zines. We like websites, it's just a bunch of stuff like that. And then you know anywhere from 10 to 20. The different days in the month have radical dates that are noted so that people that are new to the movement or just are interested in in our history can like go through and find out. Like you know, Rosa Parks was born today or so and so was released from prison or whatever.

BRIAN: That's amazing, so the calendar is at the center of what you all do. Could you talk just a little bit about the calendar as an organizing tool? Seems like you

know, cause you're not only publishing art and giving info shops a way of supporting themselves, you know and giving prisoners a way of getting their ideas and their. Voice and their artwork out, but you're also building relationships. And that seems like that. That is also at the heart of a project that's been around for such a long time. Could you just talk about the. Calendar as an organizing tool.

DANIEL: I think it's an organizing tool in the sense of like we're building relationships with many artists and writers, and people that help us. You know, like we call them shepherds like people that help us be conduits with people that are incarcerated. You know, people that like are like my friends gonna call on Tuesday and he's we'll ask him what picture to use and things like that and what we do is we. We obviously we want to distribute the calendar we want to like. These funds so that we can then give it away to different organizations. But I'll I'll say that as an organizing tool, like the end goal is essentially to distribute this beautiful calendar that like people can hang in their home in their office and like their jail cell or prison cell. But also it's just like it's a radicalizing thing. I feel like it's a Trojan horse. It looks like just a plain old wall calendar, but yet it's chock full of radical history and radical dates and putting together. The calendar, essentially like puts us in contact with so many people both inside and out, that we're able to try to amplify the voices of many of the people that write for us. And so, like we always try to get. A lot of people that. Are incarcerated to submit and we publish their art and then you know when things are happening with these people. We try to amplify like what's? So for instance, there is an artist that in this year his name is Comrade. See his like state name is Julio Zuniga and he's a Texas State prisoner that drew really amazing piece of art of Lucy Parsons, and so you know, in dealing with you know comedy, we find out that like Texas State Prison, it's a particular prison that he's at. It's like basically has a really major issue with the water. And they're just like you know, this serious kind of like toxic prison situation, right? And so trying to amplify the different things that are going on as an organizing tool? Or, you know, promoting the parole campaigns of the people that helped put out. Counter so just to back up, our collective was started by three maximum security prisoners in New York State. A man named David Gilbert, Robert Seth Hayes, and Herman Bell. Now the great thing, and also the challenging thing is that all three of those people were released from prison in the last three years, which is exciting because, like essentially, they were doing life sentences. And through like a lot of like advocacy, their own advocacy and just push in the parole board in a in a better direction. And pushing the governor to commute. David's sentence, all three of those people have been released, and unfortunately, Robert Seth hey, it's got two years. So, so we always try to have like inside voices and so we added another collective member and his name is annachi His state names Alvaro Hernandez and he's a Texas State prisoner. During the period of time that there was like a large crop of like former Black Panthers that were in New York State prisons like we use our social media and our calendar project as a way to amplify their voices and to help them. You know basically helping get free. We pretty much allow like people to join at like a level. In which they. Can like contribute

right? They don't have to. Like take it all on. So like you know when we have to pay the printer and when we're trying to figure out how to get calendars over the border like that's a particular like headache that we don't, we don't ask new. Members to deal with. We have we welcome people on the collective that we have political affinity and trust with and we help them. Like they can help with edit or distribution of the calendar. Social media stuff like that and then they get acclimated. They can do more. Stuff I mean. We we've been like I said like three of our former members have gotten out of prison. We have now one inside member. We've asked a number of people on the inside and unfortunately it's just like a lot of people have just situations going on that like either. It wouldn't help them to be a member of our collective. They have communication restrictions. They are concerned about what's going on in their family, and these are all like. Actually like I want to say excuses, but these are reasons that people have said they couldn't participate. You know the censorship in the mail or just like communication restrictions being cut off things like that. So we are always looking to grow our collective, but it is. A challenge we put out two calendars now during the pandemic it should be said that we have two members in Canada and two members in the United States. It's back in the day the way it used to work is like at the end of the year people would get together like either in Canada or in the US and have like a full session about like how the year went. That has been like full for the last couple of years, not just COVID, but also the fact that like I'm a I'm a convicted felon, I can't even go to Canada. So like that has always been an issue since I got out, and when I originally got out I was on probation. So I wasn't able to lead and lead the state. So we have a lot of like obstacles and we're at like a particular turning point in our project. Like you know, is this going to continue going on for the next 20 years or not, you know. And so you know, it's cool. It's like nothing needs to be forever, but I do. You know, we do want to continue putting it.

BRIAN: You hit on something that I also kind of wanted to ask about, which is something that's interesting about the project. Is that it does go across national borders? Could you say just a little bit about how you see the project fitting into the ever changing landscape of prison organizing?

DANIEL: I'm not really sure it's really interesting, I mean, and I don't know if this is because of the role of the United States and how it incarcerates people. Like first and foremost, our project was about political prisoners, not as a way of exceptionalism them as the only people worthy of support, but as a way of amplifying their voices and trying to help free them from like insane sentences. So even like the Canadians that have been involved in the project, the Canadian prison system is just a different animal than the United States one, and so, like a lot of work that happens. Yeah, a lot of the focus in this calendar are on US health, political prisoners and you know, to be mindful like that is a group of people that is shrinking pretty. Medically, you know, as much as it's it is shrinking. There's also like new people coming into the system, and so people that, for instance, involve this sabotage and the Dakota Access pipeline. Or there's a case out of Florida man named Daniel Baker who was accused of making threats

against right wing people online and was given through your sentence or whatever. So there's definitely like. Obviously people coming in there are obviously. People who present deserve support regardless of their convictions. Things are changing and I'm not sure like how that plays out. It's 12 original pieces of art and 12 original articles, all on the theme. This year of creating a new world in the show of the old, which is arguably an IWW or Catholic worker sentiment at the origin of that is lost, but both groups have written about that concept, so we have an international group of artists I said before Comrade C has a really amazing. Drawing Lucy Parsons, there is a man named Jesus Barraza from the Jesse's collective that has some art. Oso Blanco, an indigenous political prisoner, Pete Raylin, also from Justseeds, a group called Windego Army in Canada, and a person named Carrot in Brighton, England. We have articles by Montclair Mutual aid, Shukri Abu Baker, who's a a Muslim prisoner that was indicted for running a charity. Basically, I wrote an. Article about prison book. Gramps we have David Gilbert who is our recently released editor Logan article. I'm really happy about it. To cover is a beautiful. It's actually our February part right now. It's called our time will come, it's by Roger Peak, who's an artist out of Portland, OR also associated with just seeds. And it's a beautiful like bright image. Of a of. A cicada which or a cicada, depending. On where you live. So I'm pretty. About it, I've referenced it a few times that the calendar is a fundraiser. We have kind of standing projects that we give to every year and those include release, aging people in prison, which is an organization in in. New York City That fights for like an end to the punishment paradigm. Basically getting the parole board to meaningfully release people from prison. In ways that they have in and pushes the governor to grant clemency and things like that. Last year we gave to a Canadian group called Barton Prisoner Solidarity. They're based in Hamilton ON. We gave to the Tucson Anti repression crew, prison health news, out of Philadelphia, Austin, TX. ABC Solidarity across borders, also in Canada. Buffalo books through bars, which is a small prison books program and mall goose distro which is based out of Brooklyn, which publishes writings by anarchist prisoners. And also they have one of the best taglines ever and it comes from a rejection slip in a Texas State prison. It's Mongoose distros tagline is contains material solely for the purpose of achieving breakdown of prison. Through disruption, so it's always nice to get that kind of component from. Your enemies, I suppose. I love. That we really rely on a lot of online ordering. As that has become pretty normalized these days. So our main distributor is our friends in Buffalo burning books, their website is burningbooks.com and you can get free shipping on orders over \$35 and there's bulk discounts available. We sell copies to people in prison for \$8.00. And that includes postage and we send those out for people. So all of that information is on our website, certaindays.org, and we're also on Instagram and Twitter and Facebook at certain days or certain days calendar. It's pretty easy to find us, I'd say. People can e-mail us if you have ideas for who we should give our money to. We always ask. Recommend someone other than yourself if you have a particular interest or you have art that you want to send it to the calendar, we will be put in our call for submissions out in the next couple of

months. Like a small group like so it's even harder, like the fact that we send about 430 calendars into prisons this year and that feels so poultry. And even though we. Know that like each person shares it with multiple people. It still just feels so, so tiny. You know we get groups like Anarchist Black Cross and Jericho and groups like that to sponsor copies so. Times, like ABC groups will like donate like \$150.00 so we'll use that towards like the 8 R. And then we just basically send to people right off our list and we get family members, right? Uh, sometimes people send us checks, you know, when they send us checks from inside. We appreciate it, but we're always like you know, like making \$8.00 in the prison, any prison job. It's tough to the extent that we get these sponsorships, we try to send people free. You know we are definitely in the consultation phase where we're figuring out what we're giving our proceeds. So if anyone has any ideas, you can always feel free to e-mail us. We don't wanna like be like the Girl Scouts give the money to the Red Cross, right like we want. To like give. To people. That when they get to check they're like oh wow, look what we got you know like that kind of vibe we're like \$500.00 will make a huge difference to a group. I think the calendar is a really beautiful. We really want more. People to see it.

OUTRO: Thanks to Daniel and Brian, you can find out more about the project including where to purchase it at certain days. Dot ORG Daniel mentioned that their collective welcomes help of all experience levels. Their website also includes how to purchase this calendar for someone on the inside as well as a short video on how to write to political prisoners again that website. With certaindays.org This has been kite. Line thank you to everyone who contributed to the show. And if you want to financially support our work, you can become a supporter at patreon.com/kateline Radio. Any funds raised beyond operating costs will be set to folks on the inside. Please check out our new searchable website with hundreds of archived shows at katelineradio.org. After a brief hiatus, we're happy to report that our prisoner call and phone line is back. Folks on the inside or their outside. Friends and supporters can call 765-343-6236 to record a message to be played on the air. Please share this number widely and we'll try to answer and air all messages possible. Tight line is intended as a means of communication between people across prism walls, kite line, WFHB, or any affiliates. Airing this program are not responsible for The opinions expressed on the show.

02/18/2022 – “If I Fall, And We Struggle Together...” Certain Days, Political Prisoners and Movement Defense with Josh Davidson and Daniel McGowan

Synopsis

millennialsarekillingcapitalism.libsyn.com

Feb 18, 2022

In this episode we interview two members of the Certain Days Collective.

Josh Davidson has been an activist for nearly two decades, focusing on prisoner support and the abolition of the carceral state. He is involved in numerous social justice projects, including the Certain Days collective and the Children’s Art Project with political prisoner Oso Blanco. Josh is currently editing a book detailing the struggles of current and former political prisoners, and also works in communications with the Zinn Education Project

Daniel McGowan is a member of the Certain Days collective, and former political prisoner from Queens, NY.

He works with NYC Books Through Bars, the Anarchist Black Cross Federation (ABCF) and supporting political prisoner Eric King.

The topic of today’s discussion is the *Certain Days: Freedom for Political Prisoners Calendar* which is a joint fundraising and educational project between outside organizers in Montreal, Hamilton, New York, and Baltimore, and political prisoner Xinachtli (formerly known as Alvaro Luna Hernandez).

All of the outside collective members are involved in day-to-day organizing work other than the calendar, on issues ranging from refugee and immigrant solidarity to community media to prisoner justice. They work from an anti-imperialist, anti-racist, anti-capitalist, feminist, queer- and trans liberationist position.

In this episode they talk about welcoming founding members Herman Bell and Robert Seth Hayes (Rest in Power) home from prison in 2018, and founding member David Gilbert home from prison just a few months ago at the end of 2021.

Daniel and Josh talk about the nuts and bolts of putting the calendar together, working with political prisoners on the project, and supporting prisoners against state repression. Along the way they both talk about tensions they feel in political prisoner support in the present moment. Both embracing prison abolition, understanding the inherently political nature of all imprisonment, and holding firm on the critical importance of movement defense to the creation of a better future.

Daniel also shares many insights from his own time as a political prisoner on the vicious and arbitrary nature of carceral power and the role that political prisoners try to play teaching and sharing radical knowledge but also seeking to legally combat the most repressive facets of the prison system both inside and out.

Josh and Daniel reference a ton of great projects and ways people can get involved, we will include all of them in the show notes so make sure to check them all out and get involved. One in particular we want to draw folks attention to *uprisingsupport.org* which was created to support people facing political repression for their involvement in the uprisings in response to the executions of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and others in 2020.

c

And of course make sure you pick up a copy of the Certain Days calendar if you haven't yet, they're now on sale for \$10 at *burningbooks.com* and the other outlets listed in this episode and in the show notes.

c

Finally, a reminder that if you appreciate the work that we do, we also need support. Become a patron of the show for as little as one dollar a month at *patreon.com/millennialsarekillingcapitalism*

Other links and projects discussed in the episode:

2022 Artists- Carrot, Comrade Z, Jesus Barraza, Leila Abdelrazaq, Oso Blanco, Peter Railand, Roger Peet, Wendy Elisheva Somerson, Windigo Army, Virginia Lee, Xinachtli and Xue.

2022 Articles- Alanna Kibbe, Cory Charles Cardinal, David Gilbert, Daniel McGowan, Eric King, Hanif Bey, J.“g.”J., Martha Hennessy, Montclair Mutual Aid, Mwalimu Shakur, Sean Adams, Shukri Abu-Baker, Tauno Biltsted.

PPs- editors are/were David Gilbert and *Xinatchli*

Prisoners - *Comrade Z (Julio Zuniga)* - Texas, Fed: Eric King, Hanif Bey, Oso Blanco, Shukri Abu Baker, Martha Hennessy. Sean Adams (released from Texas state), Mwalimu Shakur (CA)

x

x

PP News

Current campaigns-

Dr. Mutulu Shakur (clemency, parole, compassionate release)

Sundiata Acoli

Political Prisoners Near Release-

Doug Wright

Josh Williams (12.22)

New(er) Political Prisoners -

Jessica Reznicek

Dan Baker

Daniel Hale

Floyd Uprising defendants (Uprisingsupport.org)

More orgs:

Books Through Bars NYC

Anarchist Black Cross Federation

Support Eric King (March 14th trial date)

Daniel's consulting

Proceeds 2021

- *RAPP (Release Aging People in Prison)*
- *Barton Prisoner Solidarity* .
- *Tucson Anti-Repression Crew*
- *Prison Health News*
- *Austin ABC*
- *Solidarity Across Borders*
- *Buffalo Books Through Bars*
- *Mongoose Distro*

HOW TO ORDER -

US orders

Burning Books

AK Press

Stores that sell the calendar

Canada

Kersplebedeb/Leftwingbooks

Canada bulk orders (10+)

[[<https://www.certaindays.org/order/>]]UK order:

Active Distribution]]

***Prisoner orders-* only \$8 and you can buy it from Certain Days directly, and they will send the calendar to them.**

Deaths in or after custody- 2021

[[<https://www.certaindays.org/order/prisoners/>]]Chip Fitzgerald- 3.29.2021 death in custody (RIP)

Russell Marroon Shoatz- 10.25.2021]]

Releases 2021:

Michael Markus (Rattler)-

Father Steve Kelly-

Jaan Laaman-
[[<https://www.certaindays.org/order/prisoners/>]]Martha Hennessy-
Joshua Stafford-]]
Carmen Trotta-
Clare Grady-
[[<https://www.certaindays.org/order/prisoners/>]]Patrick O' Neill
Mark Colville- 9.11.2021]]
David Gilbert- 11.4.21

Transcript

JAY: Welcome to millennials are killing capitalism. This is Jay. In this episode we interviewed two members of the certain day's collective. Josh Davidson has been an activist for nearly two decades, focusing on prisoner support and the abolition of the carceral state. He is involved in numerous social justice projects, including the certain Days Collective and the children's art. Project with political prisoner. Oso Blanco. Josh is currently editing a book. Billing the struggles of current and former political prisoners and also works on communications with the Zinn education. Daniel McGowan is a member of the Certain Days Collective and former political prisoner from Queens, NY. He works with NYC books through bars, the anarchist Black Cross Federation, and supporting political president Eric King. The topic of today's discussion is the certain days. Freedom for political prisoners calendar, which is a joint fundraising and educational project between outside organizers and political prisoners, and actually formerly known as Alvaro Luna. Hernandez, all of the outside collective members are involved in day-to-day organizing work other than the calendar on issues ranging from refugee and immigrant solidarity to community media to prisoner justice. They work from an anti imperialist, anti racist, anti capitalist, feminist queer and trans liberationist perspective. In this episode they talk about welcoming home members Herman Bell and Robert Seth Hayes rest in power from prison in 2018 and founding member David Gilbert home from prison. The end of 2021, Daniel and Josh talked about the nuts and bolts of putting the calendar together, working with political prisoners on the project. And supporting prisoners against state repression. Along the way they both talk about tensions they feel in political prisoner support in the present moment, both embracing prison abolition, understanding the inherently political nature of all imprisonment, and holding firm on the critical importance of movement. Defense to the creation of a better future. Daniel also shares many insights from his own time as a political prisoner. On the vicious and arbitrary nature of carceral power, and the role that political prisoners try to play teaching and sharing radical knowledge, but also seeking to legally combat the most repressive facets of the prison system both inside

and out. Josh and Daniel reference a ton of great projects and ways people can get involved. We will include. All of them in the show notes make. Sure to check them all out and to get. Involved one in particular. We want to draw folks attention to is uprising support.org, which was created to support people facing political repression for their involvement in the uprisings in response to the executions of George Floyd, Brianna Taylor, and others in 2020. And of course, make sure to pick up a copy of the certain day's calendar if you haven't yet. They're now on sale at burningbooks.com and other outlets, which will also be listed in this episode and in the show notes. Finally, a reminder that if you appreciate the work we do, we also need support. Become a patron of the show for as little as a dollar a month at patreon.com/millennials are killing capital. Welcome to millennials are killing capitalism to start? Can you 2 just talk a little bit about the history of this project? For those who don't know what the certain days calendar is, what its purpose is, and how did it get started and come together originally.

DANIEL: Sure, well yeah. The certain days calendar is in our we're in our 21st year. The first calendar came out in 2002. Both Josh and I are not original members, not by far, and so some of what we know has been passed down through so many people that it's become almost like mythology at this point. But yeah, the so the Collective started in Montreal by I believe, college students. Again, this is the part that I'm like. It's mythology, but. Either way, people that I were were, I believe, going to cuper Concordia living in Montreal and three different political prisoners that were in New York. State at the. Time that was Herman Bell, David Gilbert, and Robert. With Hayes, who passed away shortly after getting out a few years ago. So we started by those three people and inside outside collective. And it's been coming out for 21 years. We're in our. I believe this is our 22nd calendar. And it is essentially a fundraiser project and an educational tool. The calendar contains like 12 original pieces of art and articles on the theme. It also has a calendar up to 12 months where the radical. Dates are on most of the pages of each month. Or at least. Half or so. And then there's sort of like a like an intro section in the front of the calendar that deals with like recommendations that the collective makes for, like books and websites as well as definitions of like terms regarding the prison system. So that is essentially like the calendar. At its core, the currently the collective on the inside consists of a man named Symmachi who's formerly known as Alvaro Lunar. Amanda is a. Texas State prisoner who's been I believe to in life a life sentence the last 22 years or so and the theme for this year. Is creating a new world in the Shelby old? So that's essentially what we do. We we sell the calendar. It's a volunteer collective we pay. For our costs. But we give away all the proceeds. We can totally get into. That at some point.

JAY: Yeah, yeah we will, you know. So I guess one of the interesting things is. You know, obviously you talked about this kind of inside outside element and the three political prisoners who were involved from the beginning. Did they have like a? Like I'm interested, kind of in what you have in terms of the lore or whatever it's passed

around and like what was the spark for this thing? What did they? Say like you know who who was sort of like, yeah, let's let's create this. Let's do this calendar.

DANIEL: That's a great question. And no, we don't have really definitive answers about that. I think that Herman Bell initially came up with the idea. With people in Montreal and in Canada, who were and those people were also visiting, David Gilbert and South Hayes and a few other people. But I know David Gilbert and stuff has expressed interest in being involved in either writing. Or artwork or just in the many projects that they were involved in as. Far as in and out stuff like that. Yeah, the situation back then also was much different. I mean, not only was the prison population in the United States much bigger, the prison population in New York State was more than double the size of what it is right now. It was, it was around 70,000 people. 72,000 people was its height in 1999. This collective obviously formed in around 2001 and even. New York State Got a whole host of political prisoners that are have all been either released or unfortunately have passed away. People like Abdul Majid Bashir, Hamid Sikku Odinga, Maliki Shakur, the team. Joshua will learn this and oh Albert no. Washington should be moved to Keith. Yeah, this is the first time in years after David. Gilbert got out. There you know it's at this point in New York. I think it's running Joy Powell. It's the only. Real political prisoner at. This point. Obviously, we use that term, you know, with some caveat that like obviously the prison system is politicized. And I don't believe it's about political prisoners or people that come from specific movements are the people that are only worthy of support and no one else is. I mean, obviously it's 30,000 people in New York State prisons and tremendous amount in the country, and so those. It's not. It's not about these people really have supported and not. For good reason, at times the political prisoner movement has been criticized for that sort of mindset. I think it's there's some fairness, but ultimately. I think our collective looks at it. A little more holistically.

JAY: Yeah, that's a. It's a good point and I think you know I've I've always listened to kind of. There's always arguments on sort of both sides of this discussion, and I think I certainly think that. One of the things that I've taken from political prisoners that I've spoken with over the years and folks who've worked in solidarity with them, is that. You know, if we're not fighting for the people that are in our movements, you know to get back out, then like you know there, there won't be any movements you know essentially and so well. I'm also, you know, like I consider myself a prison abolitionist. So when you look at like the size and scale and who's targeted with our prison system in the United States, that it is a very political project inherently. That you know in my mind it constitutes sort of a a form of warfare. Essentially, you know class, war or whatever. However, we want to look at it, but definitely you know in terms of, I think most people that I've encountered even most political prisoners you know, have a very nuanced perspective of that. And it's not like a, you know we're only looking at political prisoners. I think. Sometimes it's sort of that it is that kind of outside solidarity work. It's like how do you do that in a way that's able to like, highlight, and work with kind of movements around prison abolition around. Like maybe the types

of reforms that can get more people out that don't kind of harden the situation for everybody else that gets left inside, et cetera.

DANIEL: Oh absolutely yeah.

JAY: OK.

DANIEL: I mean you look at like some of the reforms. That are put forth by. Sort of. You know, Prison Reform, movement, and so many of them have to do with like so-called nonviolent offenders. And oftentimes this is a point that's made really well and John Faff book locked in by John Faff. It's PFFF he's a I believe, a criminologist. John, Jay, and he makes an excellent point that a lot. Of these, like low hanging fruit. Is passed these reforms are passed, but at the expense of people with so-called violent cases. So when you deal with like the prison state prison system where just like 75% of the people are in there for what the government considers violent crimes to really fall for that low, hanging fruit at the expense of carve outs or exceptions, it's problematic there was an aspect of the First Step Act that was finally implemented. Its own time crew. It's now this is the sort of situation where you take classes and the BOP would give you time credits and it sounds like a great thing and really is, but I can't help but like look at it through this filter of like how many people can benefit from it, right? And so when you look at the carve outs and you look. At the fact that people that. Will be supported. Cannot benefit from it. And then there's 5 pages of like carve outs of exceptional cases. So of course I you know. It's hard once you've done time not to look through things through like a very narrow focus of would. This have helped me, and I look at it. And of course there it is like 844 Title, 18 USC code 844 arson exception. So I would you know I took a bunch of classes and I they probably took more classes than anyone. I know that have done time and you know it would have resulted in no earned time. Credit so. But then you have people, anyone with. The material aid to support terrorism or people with like so-called violent cases are just completely, you know, cut off, so it's great that law people got out. And I don't want to bemoan that like. The positive aspect, but then you you carve it out by like sacrificing the majority of people to like the reform you know. And it's that's not in the headlines. It's a very downer approach. But like we have to be meaningful about the things we're struggling for and not throw people under the bus.

JAY: Yeah, absolutely. I saw something too. I was listening to something and like I don't put a lot of stock in it because it's like NPR. So I'm like at like I don't. Even know if the people they're talking like trustworthy or honest, but like the they were saying something about essentially that I think they use another one of those. It's not algorithm. It's like the same crap that they do.

DANIEL: It is an algorithm, yeah, so the BOP has an algorithm, a new one called pattern and pattern.

JAY: It's like, yeah, yeah.

DANIEL: Like many of the criminal legal algorithms are racist, like and what they prioritize and what they don't prioritize. It's sort of like the idea, like when the Bureau of Prison sends like a. 19 year old To the United States Penitentiary. It's

like somehow like in their mind that makes sense because they're at a higher risk of recidivism. But what you're? Doing is essentially sending kids to like Gladiator school. In many respects, you're sending kids like super violent like children who have not. Fully mature, and I mean the science is there. Obviously the 19 year old is not fully mature and you're sending them to essentially like a place where it's going to be incredibly hard for them to form. Like become decent people and form like their own ideas because they're living pressure. Environment like high levels of violence. But in the Bureau of Prisons mind, this algorithm will spit them out like a 19 year old. Must go here, and it's like that's a. That's horrible decision, and this pattern algorithm is also what has prevented people from. Going home on elderly home confinement or the Chaos Act thing that allowed. People to go. Home on home confinement. So it's all, yeah, the algorithm. I mean NPR. It's like a broken clock, right? They might be right twice a day or vaguely correct about some things. But like the you know, the algorithm is problematic and it's been criticized. I mean, the Bureau of Prisons been criticized a lot the last year. Whether or not that means anything. That'll change anything. That's beyond me.

JAY: Yeah, you know. And then the counter argument to the algorithms too, which they are racist is that, like so are the judges, right? So you gonna leave it like? Whose hands do you put it in? It's like you know so that the then the argument becomes, well, you know, wouldn't we rather have a racist algorithm than a racist person is?

DANIEL: Like yeah, I mean mandatory minimums. Were essentially a reaction to racist individuals and maybe all the all the individuals were racist and acting out in particular ways. But you know the mandatory minimum. It's like a, it's just. A hammer, right? And so it's just people get crushed by it. Everyone gets crushed. It's essentially the goal there or the outcome. And essentially in in saying that we're saying that all all people are political. In a sense, you know it's. A result of. Shoddy politics that are meant to put people in those positions.

JAY: Yeah, absolutely well want to get back to the calendar. We could talk about this all day, so if you don't mind Daniel and Josh, just share a little bit about yourselves and talk about how you became involved in this project. As you mentioned you weren't involved in it in the beginning, you know. And so, what made the project something that you know you wanted to contribute to? and help. Coordinate, sure, I do a.

DANIEL: Lot, I guess the most recently added member of the collective. My name is Josh. I live in Baltimore. I've been involved in political prisoner support for a while. I got involved by running with David Gilbert and visiting with him in in New York for many years, and he was actually the one that put me in contact with Daniel and then asked me to join the collective. So that's how I became involved. Besides that, I work on books and bars, programs here in Baltimore, mutual aid groups, things like that. I work with political prisoner, Oso Blanca on a green card project. It's called Children's Art Project and it raises funds for the Zapatistas and children in Chiapas. You can check that out at burningbooks.com and I'm also working on a project with. American political prisoner Eric King where we interview current and former political prisoners

about their lives inside. So yeah, then that's a snapshot into my everyday life and how I got involved. My name is Daniel McGowan and I've been on the collective for since about 2014 I believe. Been sort of connected a certain days. For a while. Though I met one of our collective members, Sarah many years ago. We actually see is running Montreal a BCF, which is no longer and living in Montreal, and I think I contacted. Your group through Friendster. That's how long ago we're talking about. Here is like 2003 maybe, and I was asking her group to sign on to a statement for a person that was doing a very heavy sentence at. The time somewhere by the name of Jeffrey. Yours and he was doing 22 years and eight months for an arson of a car dealership that burned a few large trucks and he got 22 years, eight months and I was circulating like sort of one of these sign on statements against the sentence. So I begged Sarah that way and Sarah was, you know, working the calendar. The calendar is pretty new at the time and I sort of became a distributor. So I would buy calendars at wholesale and sell them and use the funds for different groups. I was working on which. Is something we still. Do a lot. Of we like sort of. Offer them a decent price so people can. Buy it and sell it for a little bit more and then they use that money for like their bookstore or their project, their campaign person in prison, whatever. So and then I wrote. I think I wrote an article in like 2009 when I was inside about the Black Panther Party. And then I. Used to, you know, when I was in prison I would get the calendar. Put it up on the wall. People love that they would always see it. I've seen that some. And ask me how to get one whatever and I would just like to do a little bit of like you know, ideas about the fee and more about like things. You should include or things. You shouldn't include whatever. But in addition, in the calendar I I'm employed as a paralegal for a large national organization, and I work with New York City books bars. I work with anarchist Black Cross federation. Mostly on their war chest fund promoting their running down the walls event and I work on Eric King's legal team. And I do a fair amount of consulting, sort of like volunteer consulting with people with political cases or not political cases with their families trying to figure out how to best like set up legal defense committees, how to how to work through the trial process. I do a lot of stuff, mostly in the federal system. Many time people end up going to the communication. Management unit I usually somebody ends up hitting me up about that, so I've talked to a bunch with Daniel Hale, the whistleblower Obama Joe. Explorer with his people getting them to understand what it is that Daniel is still with right now because he is. He's at Marion Marion, CMU, so do a lot of stuff like that. And yeah, that's pretty much it. I've been involved for a long time and certain days and I got involved in political prisoners support, even prisoners stuff. Probably like 25 years ago, working on a case of an named Rod. Tornado is a animal. Fiction activists and started learning about the prison system, but I you know, when I was a kid in prison in jail was something we were trying. Desperately to avoid. And you know those people, my neighborhood that went to jail in prison and it was still very much like a this is a bad thing and thus avoid this at all costs kind of vibe. So my life has come pretty full circle obviously. I mean I've. Already alluded to it, but I've done,

I did. Seven years in federal prison. For actions I took with the. EF in. The northwest in the late 90s. Two thousand.

JAY: Yeah, well, that's a lot. I mean, that's great that you're able to take those. You know those experiences and share that with folks that you know and help them work through their cases and. Stuff like that. So one of the things about this project you know is due to the longevity of it. The project has been able to see a lot of folks. Come home, you all have seen a lot of folks come home. You know, as as you mentioned, Robert Seth Hayes passed away a few years ago. But was, you know, released before that, Herman Bell had been released a couple of years ago, and then David Gilbert, who you? Mentioned was really like release riders. The calendar is kind of coming out like just going through that process. So the three founders you know were able to come out. So I'm just curious in relation to the project and also just because you both work with, you know kind of in this. In this milieu of like and. Kiss Black Cross and political prisoner support, you know, obviously you build connections with these folks so you know what does that mean for you all to see folks coming home. And yeah, I guess just talk a little bit. About that process.

DANIEL: Sure, yeah, that's a great question and I'll I'll just throw out. Let's not forget about maroon shorts, who was released recently and also passed away after over 40 years in prison. But it has been amazing. I think I can probably say collectively, we never expected to see Herbin or Seth or David come home. From prison and it's, you know, heartening to see them come home. It's amazing to build relationships with them. That don't, you know, have bars and prison guards mandating what happens to be able to eat with them in places that actually have food and not just vending machines. That's ***** food. Yeah, it opens all brand new doors. You know I'm speaking with you on land and the other day and he's doing amazing things in this community. Working on, you know, helping to set up February Black History Month things with people in this community. Yeah it it's really amazing to see people come out after so long and not have lost the motivation to continue the struggle in whatever way they can. Josh and I were visiting David on a Friday and you know it was. It was depressing because it was the end of the Cuomo. Governorship gubernatorial ship, whatever it's called and you know both of us have. I mean, we didn't. Expect that these. People come home, but I can't even count. How many brothers I've written to these people? And like it has pulled me into writing politicians about their cases. I mean, my local state center, the state. To some I mean call these people doing the call in. Leave the messages on Cuomo's, you know phone for like 45 days in a row. Things like that and it's just not it's not. Not, it's not really what we do. But like you know, doing whatever we can to get people out and it was shocking. I mean, we saw David on a Friday. We were like, you know, it's a few hours. Upstage Josh was visiting we went up to press when we leave and like always like is this the last time we're going to see him like you know he's David's like roughly 8 like just a little younger than my dad. You know, it's just like it's always. It's always tough, right? And so you know, I've had, you know each time like Herman Julio Seth got out, I was. Like alright, this

is amazing. I need to. I need to think. More expansively, like the you know, demand the impossible kind of faith like stop being so such a realist. Obviously realism doesn't get us anywhere, right? But we left that day and it was for me a tough drive. It was a tough ride. I was. I didn't drive but it. Was a tough. Ride home and I was just like oh ****. And it's like. Three days left and like, no joke that Saturday would get a text that someone was visiting. Someone we know was visited. And I heard from you know a few a few points disconnected from that that he got climate. Saying we were just. Like holy ****. Like I remember I was. Like I was at the mall. And I was trying desperately. I couldn't even type like Cuomo or David. I'm gonna shake it, you know, and then we found out it was just like unbelievable. So, and that's a that's a tough one. Cause David, I was 75 years to life sentence, right? So like he not only needed. To get Pearl he. Needed to get his sentence lawyer to time served to get to Pearl. He knew as possible with Judy. Mark David was like. **** was very critical of actions that he was involved in, but didn't denounce his politics, didn't denounce his anti-racist politics, and has been, you know involved a lot of things over the years. So with Herman you know. Obviously you know Herman created the Victory Gardens project, which is amazing. Herman had a huge amount to do with creating rap release aging people in prison, so you know, it's just like it's it was hard to imagine. Like the work that groups like RAP and the Pro Preparation Project and others did in replacing turning the parole board from a group of like law enforcement boot lickers to? The point that the you. Know one of the members of the Parole board was the interim executive director of the Correctional Association. Of New York, which is. Actually, a nonprofit group, despite its its name, right? So they're just having people on the parole board that are not monsters makes a huge difference and then just pushing and pushing and. The you know it was. Like the rising tide lifted. All the boats, right? So like Herman, a political prisoner, basically helps start a project that helps everyone in New York State and that is pro eligible, which is most people. And by doing so, the tide gets lifted. To the point. That Herman chalil Seth Maliki say cool can get paroled in new. York State, which was. Like unheard of 10 years ago I. Mean the idea that they would get out? Unheard of, so that was amazing. I will. Say there's a transition right now. You know that that, like we lost, I mean for good reason like and I'm very happy. That they're no longer in prison. We were faced with the situation where like we were down to one inside editor and it's a person that like we've like none of us have visited Sinatra. Like the visit we used. To all, visit them, including. The collective before Josh and I were out. There these always. Visit, you know. We had contacts with them and we were constantly in touch but like this is totally different. We've been thinking like who can we add to those collections? And you know, a lot of people that we've been thinking about adding or just in positions where like they can't for whatever reason capacity. Their profile situation and so like we are definitely looking and so if anyone has any ideas, we're always open to hearing ideas. And you know, there's different levels that people can get involved with the collective. But yeah, in the last five years, so many people have gotten out that actually Josh has like a quite a lot of people, he

writes. But like my list of people I wrote has gone from like 12 to like 2. You know pretty dramatically John Lebaugh, Jeremy Habbit, David Campbell, Josh. Effort from stand rocking so there's just so many people and I'm currently in a position where not only certain days in transition to like what now, but I'm personally trying to figure out where am I gonna. Put my efforts. Because we're left with the, you know. Right now this the list of political prisoners is quite small. The cases are. Very tough well life without access to. Pool and I've been trying to figure. Out where to put my energy? To better serve that. I don't want to be. Tied to, you know, this very strict definition of political person. I want to work against the prison system, which I obviously have a problem with. I'm a prison abolitionist. I don't think things are, at least. As simple as you are or not, but that is where my politics lie. So we we are at a nature support right now in terms of our collective and a lot of us. I mean Josh and another friend of ours that we're talking about the fact that. We send all these letters out and now we're just like you know and is this? Is this what Middle Ages? I mean, that's another thing that comes up, and it's as the decades start to pile. Up, you say to yourself like I need to change. I need to grow. I can't just stay stuck in this position of when I was 22 and I was like free. All political prisoners like yes OK, but then you have all these people that don't fit that definition of what are those. Those people are not worthy, obviously not. We'll see that. When we talk about our contributors, we have a lot of people that contribute in. Prison that do not fall into that that rigid definition. So we can talk more about that.

JAY: Yeah, no, I think those are those are really good points and you know, like I think it was in in 2000. Did we do it in 20? I can't remember if I did it in 2018 or 2019, but we did an episode on move right and like at the time that we did it. I think there were still like six of them that were incarcerated and you know a couple had passed away inside, right? Like you know and like now, everyone who's still alive is, is, is released. You know from it it's pretty.

DANIEL: Yeah, it's amazing.

JAY: You're right in terms of. Like it can seem like you know it's just impossible. And then like you know something shifts and I think that point that you made about rap. The rap campaign is hugely important. I think that for folks in. You know trying to figure out certain things in their state that are useful in terms of getting elders out and things like that. You know organizing around around, changing you, know the parole boards is off. And it's not easy. It's difficult you know political organizing for sure, but it can have a huge impact because so often it's a big factor. We'll just. We'll just put it that way, you know.

DANIEL: Yeah, yeah, because it creates a bottleneck. Got release and then the people that have very serious cases like you know where they have life on the back end you have 15 to life 25 to life. They have to do a minimum like 25. Life means you have to do a minimum of 25 years before you go to the parole board and it used to be like Herman and Seth and Julie for instance. I mean they went like 10. 13 and 14 times I mean each in that order. So it was like unbelievable. It's like there was such

a bottleneck that. Just yelling at the board was not going to change anything like we literally just have to change the constituents, right? I think it is a useful model because what happens is you know even New York State has this problem now where like because there were some reforms done a lot of younger people got out the percentage of older people in the in the New York State system is outrageous. It's like I believe it's like 9000. People over age 55 and there's only 30 like I say only with you know there's only 30,000 people in the New York State Prison. So like you're talking about. But roughly a third or 30% of the people being over 55 and 55 is aged the standard age for considered. For considering somebody aged or elderly in the prison system based on access to healthcare, pre and post incarceration and just all the factors of stress that make living in prison and a dangerous affair.

JAY: Yeah, for sure. Well, let's get into this year's calendar a little bit. So you mentioned the theme, but talk a little bit more about the theme this year. You know why it was selected. Yeah, and just talk a little. Bit about it.

DANIEL: Sure, yeah, so. The theme for 2022 has been creating a new world and the shell. Of the old. It's an old anarchist thing. I think it's kind of disputed as to where it first originated, whether it was the IWW or Yeah, yeah, there's some great essays about it. The Catholic worker. Peter Moore and maybe with the Catholic workers. Great effect. IWW, just to be partisan, no, I'm. Joking, but they're the great essay by Martha Hennessy, former political prisoner and Catholic worker in the call. And there there's essays, really amazing essays this year by the last one after 21 years by David Gilbert, at least as a political prisoner, Daniel wrote an amazing essay. Eric King was a really kind of fun piece. You know, for the. Theme Honey Bay, one of the Virgin Islands 3. He lived a great piece. They've got a new website, outnowbi3.org, which is really great. Hopefully we can get them out soon and then the artworks there. It works all really amazing. We've got pieces by political prisoners. Also Blanco and Nachley. Comrade Zee, he's a really amazing artist and person I've been writing with them since his. You know, yeah, there's some really great pieces, some really beautiful artwork. A great poem, I think by Shukri Abu Baker, one of the Holy Land Foundation 5 prisoners. Yeah, it's a really great stuff. You know the thing. Is that we the year the. Gregorian calendar has 12 months, right? So we are. We essentially seek out original pieces of art. We try to just do original art so that like people aren't feeling like they're looking at the rerun. I mean, our counter has been fully committed to like not having people just flip through like I saw this already, you know, like a lot of stuff we do sometimes it's repetitive and that's fine. But you know, we try really art to like. You know, embargo stuff. And like print it so that we're. Covered this year is. By Roger Pete from just seeds. We always send stuff to Joe Seeds and we're always happy to. Print stuff by them they you know. Basically, the artists all have different styles, but we have a few different gussets people. This year I believe it's Jesus or ours. Uh Roger, Pete and Pete Ragland. But then, you know, we have our from synoptically We need to go army which is a group out of Canada. Wendy elder Shiva Somerson and like you said comrades, he has a great sketch of Lucy Parsons which I believe. Like and the

prisoners this. Year, I mean we we got a bunch of. Prisoners we don't really have. Order on how many we try. But we try to get a fair amount we send in like 3 or 400 calls, you know, call for submissions to prisons that you know. Things in prisons are shared pretty widely, so this year we had Comrade Z who is a state prisoner in Texas. His name is Julio Zuniga in the federal system. Eric King Hanif. They also blow. Michael Shukri Abu Baker, Martha Hennessy and then in the state system man named Sean Adams, who was recently released from Texas State and will be moved. Shikor, who's in California? And so, like you know, we come up with. The theme we put. It out there, but we don't really like. We don't want it like jam packed it with all everything has to be thematic so that some of the articles. Cover that like. Montclair Mutual Aid has an article about the work that you're doing in Montclair, NJ Town. Posted has a piece about Lower East. Side like free. Refrigerators, which is like a big thing in New York like mutual aid networks and such like. Peace is excellent. It's kind of an homage to Yamaha. They found themselves in the same prison for like 5 days when Eric was put on seasonal therapy and that time with a great impression on him. But yeah, that's it. I really encourage you to get the calendar. I think it's beautiful. I'm very happy like February is coming up and Roger Pete has a an image. It's an image of us akata, which I think is interesting and it's the cover image. What we do is we usually take the cover is always a detail of one of the images and so you get to see Roger Pets full image. In February, and it's called our time. Will come and I think it's really.

JAY: Beautiful so yeah for sure. I mean I'll plug. I usually buy the calendar I bought. It This year and. You know, like you said, the pieces are always like the artwork is beautiful. Having those dates, those radical dates and things like that is a really cool and then and then there's like you said that kind of introductory part where there's like some essays, some poems. Things like that so you know it's really neat. It's really worthwhile. I think there's also like not a lot of like. Left calendars out there right in the you know, political left calendar like so it'll.

DANIEL: Listening shot Autonomedia has the Jubilee Saints calendar. There's a working class. Oh yeah, the working class history one is. Cool, you know we we don't even you. Know we're a. Wall calendar so. In some ways you're a little archaic. Like they're not competing with people and like a planner, it's a totally different animal than what we do.

JAY: Right?

DANIEL: But like you know, we kind of just do our own thing. It's a. Benefit project people know. That I'm sure it helps us, you know we. Donate you know? I mean, it's a donation, right? Like you're donating \$15.00 and obviously there's costs involved for us, but proceeds go to a good spot, so I'm sure that helps people get that. Today is an interesting day. It's the 50th anniversary of late Sunday and so I look at the calendar every day. And you know the way we. Do our work. Our our learnings. Josh handles. So much of like the social media like the. Dates and just has put together just this like huge. File looks like dates that we put in, so we do that like on dates like today. You'll find out like you know Instagram and Twitter and Facebook. Just

you know some kind of post about the date. We don't do every day because we're not trying to be like complete about it. But we do like the dates that we feel. Are like most. Relevant, it might be interest in as a way of just. Like obviously know your history but also just like you know we want to. We want people to find out about the calendar. It's a lot cooler to. See a paper calendar than it is to look at. Binary code you. Know I was just going to say it's also kind of Evergreen in the calendar. It's great to see people come back and request older copies. We've heard that. People cover their rooms and the artwork you know just kind of rip out the pages and share either the share, the essays or just cover their room with the images. So that's always encouraging. Yeah, we've been trying to figure. Out some of our. Issues are kind of stored in like a college storage unit and COVID is another way to laugh about this, but we've had so many missteps of trying to get our hands on our back issues. So once we get that, then we're just gonna do grab bags and stuff. Like that I don't know if. You saw Jay. But we made our books and websites list. An actual picture this year. So I really love this, it's. Just like instead of having. A list of code we. Basically just rated Joshua's book Josh's. My my library pretty much yeah yeah, but there are some errors in there. Some ones who need to add some ones we need.

JAY: To remove from this.

DANIEL: Yeah, you know, sometimes like people are really usually. People really good about giving. Negative feedback, but with us all we get a lot of good and praise. You know Instagram stories. We love this calendar, but. Like this this year we heard some. We got some criticism about some of the books we listed, and to be honest, we've both just pled like, yeah, we were exhausted. I'm sorry we didn't need to put this book in there. I mean, you know, like we made some bad calls, but like honestly, the process for converting that list of books into a digital thing was way more fast than I thought it would be. And it's just, you know, some books got included. And we're not trying to please everyone anyway, right? I mean sort. Of like So what? Yeah like. We'll do a whole new list next year.

JAY: Yeah, absolutely. So you've talked about a little bit about this, but you have contributions from political prisoners. You have contributions from some folks who are just, you know they're there. You know not to get into the categories, but they're prisoners, right? They're they're not. Their cases weren't necessarily for political activity, we'll just put it that way, and then you have activists on the outside who contribute as well. So talk a little bit about some of the some of the incarcerated participants this year, you know and just share a little bit about what they contributed. You talked a little bit about Eric. Things piece and then if there's anything about like their cases that you know that you could share with folks that might be interested in that.

DANIEL: So Martha Hennessy and David Gilbert and Sean Adams were three prisoner contributors this year, and all three of them were released amazingly so. Nazly is also a contributor. He did some great artwork this year and he's one of our collective members. He was just denied parole a few months ago, so he is still struggling and still facing life in prison. Eric king. It was very difficult this year because he's basically been

on a mail ban, so it was hard to get any sort of communication from. Him at all. With the help of some great people, we were able to get you know his submission. And edit it with him. And Eric's actually got a trial coming up in March with Daniel, and I am on his defense team and trying to help out in any way trying to get the word out. So he does have a trial date in mid March. As of right now. Honey Bay is another contributor and wrote a great essay this year about other older former political prisoners. Namings, Indiana College and Leonard Peltier Peltier was just diagnosed with COVID the other day and Cindy OTT has also got a large campaign going. To get him out. I'll talk about 2 submissions. One is the art. Strong, seemingly with pencils by Julio Zuniga, who goes by Comrade C. He actually has an Instagram account. It's like [instagram.com/julio a Zuniga art](https://www.instagram.com/julio_a_zuniga_art/). But you can find searching committee pretty easily. I really like this one. I mean not only do I like Lucy Parsons, but just I think it also shows that like the people in prison don't really have access to like excellent supplies. And like even despite having just really a basic pencil like this is like you look at this and this instantly, like oh that's Lucy Parsons like. This is excellent. And I like icons and sort of portraits of of.

JAY: Like older, you know.

DANIEL: Anarchist elders, so to speak or ancestors. I should say. The other piece that I'll talk about. It's by Shukri Abu Baker. He is someone that I actually did time with at Terre Haute, CMU and he's a wonderful man who was a part of the Holy Land Foundation case where the government decided that they were going to retroactively prosecute 5 men. With the end providing material aid to Hamas. Plus, we're essentially running the world's largest Islamic charity. It's one of the most horrible cases you got. 65 years is currently being held in in Beaumont Federal Prison in Texas, but I was his neighbor and I think he's a wonderful person and I know he likes about his daughter. He has a few kids, but he works out his daughter with his sick daughter. Quickly we passed away and it's just. By heartbreaking essay, but I really like you know. Despite it all, he, you know soldier falling keeps on. I think he's he's a great person, someone that probably would have this. Those people right? And you know, it's like it underscores the situation of so many people, which is just. You know they have nothing left like this. It's literally just waiting for, like clemency from Biden or whomever, and. That is just like. Often feels like an empty an empty thing to hope for. But you know, Despite that you know because so many people get released, I think it's important to so always back up and say like things might seem hopeless, but like look at all these people. Got it now. I did want to say if it's OK this if this is not too redundant to just list the people the political prisoners that got out this year. Unfortunately, like Josh suggested before, Russell Miller Schultz did get out on a Medical Group pre, you know, basically because he was terminal and he passed away in October 2021. Also remained ship Fitzgerald. You had done. Almost 50 years or over 50 years as a. Member of Black Panther Party in California, die. In March 2021. But there were a number of people that were released. Some of them are from the same case on this list. Them, Michael Marcus, also known as Rattler as a water protector from Standing

Rock Father Steve Kelly from the Kingsway Cloudshare case beyond Lamond, Martha, Hennessey, Carmen Trotta, Patrick O'Neal and Mark Colville. From Kings Bay Plaza. Joshua Stafford AKA Skelly from the Cleveland 4 case. I am left out Claire Grady from Kings Bay and then also David Gilbert. So, Despite that, I'll you know, despite like just what my downer point that I brought up. About shoot me. You know people just they go on and they just we just keep fighting and I think it's important to not get you know to have hope and not get totally. This made by. Like how empty things might feel even though. You know the person in the White House right now looks even worse than the last person in terms of criminal legal stuff. I mean, he's now past one year and has not has not done anything. Obviously there's so much more to do other than clemency, but that clemency is that low hanging fruit that you think he would find enough you know. So-called nonviolent drug offenders that the Obama phrase to release. But even. And that, and it's, let's say you know his backlog of clemency, applications being like 18,000 people, which is a remarkable amount. I mean, it's like a 10 page application, about 18,000 people. And fill that out until that. Is testament to just how desperate it is in the in the federal system, and probably everywhere.

JAY: Yeah, absolutely. You know, I haven't gotten my hands around all of it yet, but there's some articles written just about how bad things have been. You know, in terms of incarceration under Biden's watch and you know it represents the first time that we've seen the numbers actually starting to increase again. Basically over the last. You know 12 years or so. Probably you know, and so you know.

DANIEL: Yeah it was falling for a really a while, right? It was falling most.

JAY: It went big under.

DANIEL: A bottle and then it was towards end of Obama had started falling and it was falling all throughout Trump and that has nothing to do with Trump necessarily. A little bit, perhaps with the first step. Back but it. Really wasn't Trump as much as just changed to the system, but yeah, for the first time recently it's been ticking. And that's that's. More people is always a bad thing. In the federal System to dramatically understaffed, unprofessional agencies so that the more people just means more weight on everything. Have to wait for everything that much longer. You know medical. For instance.

JAY: Yeah Daniel, I wanted to ask if you could talk just a little bit about this. You know it's kind of an aside, but you've mentioned CMU a couple of times, so you know. And you've also mentioned Eric King's situation, which I know that he's dealt with a lot of different, you know, just BS. So can you share for folks who don't really have a handle of like what? Does that mean?

DANIEL: Mm-hmm sure.

JAY: Just a little bit of background on. What that is?

DANIEL: Sure, the communication management unit are these two units that the Bureau of Prisons runs. One is in Marion, IL and one is in Terre Haute IN and there are units where like the government takes people they want to just kind of disappear. They want to just like shut up for the most. Smart and stick some of these units. And

restricts our communication pretty dramatically. So I was sent there after doing 10 months at sandstone, which is just a normal federal prison in Minnesota and I was sent there and the restrictions were on communications and so there was no e-mail. System at that point. But the phone calls were limited to one a week and the visits were limited to like 1. A month and it was through non contact. And so part of the problem was. I was just blogging about like prison issues like nothing dramatic, nothing crazy. But the fact that I was doing that and that I had a terrorism case in the. Eyes of the government made it really. Easy to send me there. And because the the. Earlier attempts to open up these units were criticized for basically only moving Muslim men into these units. Always use, those were the people that they sent there to look like. In fact it wasn't set up as a Muslim unit, which it of course was right and so myself. People like Andy Stepanian from the shack case, some sovereign citizens, some weirdo, posse comitatus, right wing tax, people, a few white supremacists were sent there to make it look like. In fact, there wasn't Muslim units and so we sued the BOP over this. The lawsuit is surprisingly still going on, although I've been dismissed. Because I'm no longer in prison. And the units have like essentially through some advocacy and through pushback, have received like more phone calls. And you know, there's been. Somewhat of a standardized. Which was better than the Wild West kind of unit that I got there when I got there, they just give you different answers depending on the day, like how long am I gonna be here? You'll be here forever. You'll be here. For the end of your sentence. So I ended up doing. I think 48 months at both places, including at the time I marry and I got since the general population and then they accused me of trying to have my lawyers send me something I wasn't supposed to see or something, and so I immediately got bounced back to Terre Haute. I did them later by. Time there, and so the cases the units are full of people with high profile cases a lot. Of them have gotten out like. Many of the people were talking about. But you know, I was in there with, you know, John Walker Lindh, the so-called American Taliban. I was in there with the Somali pirate that was featured in the movie, Captain Phillips. You know the Holy Land Foundation people that were doing charitable fundraising people from the World Trade Center case in 1993. And like all kinds of people like that, right? So it's interesting, interesting, met a lot of really cool people. Really well thought out kind people, but ultimately just felt like a big, you know big **** you to me for blogging. Essentially writing about like immigration and the drug war and. Things like that. And it's so funny it's like you get in trouble for doing stuff you just like, at least make it worth it. It's like I was like blocking. I wasn't, you know, I was like not breaking any stupid rules. So you know the rules are so easy to break. But I was. Kind of keeping to myself and doing my thing, and that was not good enough so it got broke off and sent to seeing you. And they continued to. This day, like I mentioned before, the Obama whistleblower Daniel Hale was there and experience and all the kind of ***** communication restrictions you get. You know threats that he can't communicate with this person or that person. You know, the presumption is. Always that that. Your legal calls and visits or listen to. Because, you know, once you

have a so-called terrorism case, they can do whatever the hell they want, right? They stick these units in the middle of the country. They make it very conservative legal districts. It's hard to say. It's hard to be in contact. I basically just caught up with paper the whole time I grieved everything I gave all my information to my lawyers, sued them, but you know the federal courts. This is nowhere that you're going to find a lot of. They said the case got whittled down year after year. I'm sorry you had another question. Was it Eric king?

JAY: Yeah, well it wasn't. I mean, you could talk a little bit about Eric King. No, Eric King at different times is like been denied mail. You were talking about that. You know, and so I. Just you know, it was really just a segue to ask about CMU. But if you want to speak. About Eric's case. Well, we mentioned he's got.

DANIEL: A trial bill is coming up in mid. March he's been basically assaulted since he's been in prison. He's been in for going on seven years now, seven or eight since 2014 or so. Most recently he was assaulted by a guard, and. He's really just kind of been dealing with the aftermath of that ever since, and he's fighting back against that and trying to get the truth. You know, he acknowledged. Apparently his mail ban has been lifted, so hopefully by the time that this. Comes out, people can and we'll be writing. To them, I know he's and he'd love to hear from people. Yeah, he's a great guy. Hopefully people can write to him. Check out his submission in the calendar, check out his website supporter.org and his playlists which are. OK on YouTube, but yeah, they're playing games with them with the mail. I mean, Eric. Eric is essentially. Doing a 10. Year sentence for an attempted arson at a Congress person's office. A Congress person I was talking smack against the Ferguson protestors, right? She got a horrible sentence. Got three more years than. What I got for far less and. You know, had a really bad public defender. Those pushing them into a bad plea was no slight against public defenders, but this one was horrible. So it goes into the federal system and he's trying to do his time and you know he's an outspoken person. But he's doing his time and ends up, you know, getting called into the lieutenants office and getting assaulted by this man. Then giving diesel therapy center all around the country. Various places gets assaulted by a Nazi at 11 facility, which is the subject of a lawsuit. Basically, the civil Liberties Defense Center is representing him in the civil matter because the Bureau presents and also representing him for his criminal case. He goes to trial March 14. He's represented by CLBC. He has it's essentially 1 count of assaulting a government official. He faces up to 20 years statutorily it's going to be a fairly simple jury trial, but it's scheduled for four days and the prosecution has appeared to be pretty rigid about everything, and they're understanding that the case and the BOP. It doesn't appear that if you get assaulted by a cop, that you're. Allowed to do anything other than. Well, like just go down just like I think it's really hard to you know if you think you're getting killed. You know you're gonna be assaulted like not to fight back. You know I wasn't in the room so I don't know what happened. I just know what Eric is said in court. He testified that his evidentiary hearing about what took place that day when I suspect. You know his trial? We're going to find out more. About it, but

he's. A good dude and I just don't want to get buried and I think it's. He's been, he's been trying to. Do his time in both ethical way. But yeah, Eric is a good dude and can always send the books. So we encourage people to go to his like social media. He's on Facebook and Instagram. Support. Eric king.org. We post his the books that he wants there. He could get books and zines. And magazines. Right now, and he's allowed to communicate with a small amount of people and mostly family members. And at times have been promised they can speak to. More people but. It the Bureau of Prisons plays games with him pretty much non-stop, so. You know it's been hard for him like you know it's been hard for him to write letters to friends. He's he's asking. Information he's a huge Nirvana fan and always wants to talk to people about that, but it's been hard for him to find out any Nirvana news in the in the context of this male restriction so. And we. We obviously like he's a little younger than. Me and I have spoken about big. Brother relationship with him and I. I adored him. But he's he is a. Great leader, right? I will say. That I really wish this mail bank that's overturned so that we can write him again because it's been ****. He's not write him throughout. This whole time and he's had called it twice now. So I don't wanna exceptionalist Eric, he's going through. A lot of stuff that people go through, but. Like when the BOP decides. And state the system decides they want to **** with you. They just like. They have been. Trying to crush him with cutting him off from his life. He's been in this segregated housing unit. Solitary confinement for over 1200 days. The league literally send Nazis out in to try to fight him, so it's a disaster and Josh and I are both involved with that and trying to look for the best outcome there.

JAY: Yeah, I appreciate you saying you don't want to exceptionalist them, and I think that you know there's always a risk of doing that as we talk about political prisoners and stuff like that, but I. I think for folks, for those of us who who write prisoners and you know, build relationships with prisoners and whether they're political, whether they're politicized, or whether they're not, you know, like this sort of arbitrary, constant ***** with people that happens in these systems, especially, you know when as well. We call them the prison cracks, right. Decide that like this is somebody that they're they're going to **** with right then. Like you know, there's a. There's a lot of folks. I mean, I know folks who just have their kids inside and stuff like that and like they. They've dealt with a lot of these same kinds of issues over the years, you know, and so it's just, you know, this is part of why the system is so ***** horrible, right? Is because, unfortunately, this is an aspect of it and. You know, I do think that for political and politicized prisoners, it's a. It's an even. You know greater risk and sometimes that these things can happen, but not, you know, it can happen to anybody, really, that's inside. it's just that arbitrary nature of the system, so yeah.

DANIEL: I mean they don't. They don't like when people push back. I mean that's the reality, you know the thing, the incident that led Eric to get called into lieutenant's office. And this has been stated multiple times in court is literally an e-mail from Eric. To his wife about. About a cop getting punched that he had nothing to do with and he never been accused of it. He literally laughed at them, you know, and you know we can

sit there and go. He shouldn't have done that, but whatever, like you know, you're in this situation like who might have said that he should or shouldn't have done anything. It's OK to laugh at people see. That's the difference. Just the difference. Between inside and outside, like the things you do inside, have such consequence right? And it's like you know you let off a little steam and like you're getting drugs in the tenants. Office for that like and by. A very hostile man. That's a great offense at this, right? So like you know I. Don't wanna exceptionalist him but like he. Has been through it. And like I've heard horror stories that Eric has dealt with so much and I just you. Know I have no. Bodies for caring about him or fighting like him. I don't like spend a lot of time working on his case because he's a political prisoner and I and that must be, you know, he's. How do I get introduced to? He's an anarchist. So he's in our world, he's in my world, right? So I found out, you know he's fighting New York City ABC and I saw a letter came I saw what's this and I read it and I was like oh what's this guy up to OK, Kansas City yeah I don't know much about the Midwest other than the prisons that I was. I was forced to live in, you know, but You know you could You you maybe associate with people based on the shared politics and you get to know them, you know and I care about him. You know obviously have different relationships. with anyone that. I've done support for him. You know some are Comrade Lee and some are, you know more. And Eric has more friends, like Big Little Brother, you know than anything but we have shared politics and shared interest, you know? Although he likes he he. Loves like Taylor Swift and soccer. Which he's called football. I think no. I don't like it and so I get we went to a baseball game and he found out we. Went there and. He he I got a. Very critical letter about patriotic rituals and did I stand for the flag which we didn't. And yeah, it was just I got. I got busted on pretty hard and I was told that I used to go. To a soccer game. I used to go to the so. You know it's cool. I enjoyed the. The back and. Forth, but I will just add to that that. You know, Eric. You write to a ton of people, but Eric. As always, since I started writing to him, requested that I write to other people people that he meets inside people that he befriended. You know and then got shipped to another prison. I probably like to four or five people that he you know. He suggested I write to and I try to form some sort of solidarity, some sort of friendship, and I've learned so much from. These people who. You know, aren't maybe considered political prisoners, but I've learned so much of the come politicized inside, and yeah. I think Eric yeah. All political prisoners you know, use their position to. So, social prisoner, so-called social prisoners, but Eric, for one has has done as part of. Them yeah it would costly. Send him, send this person a calendar. Send that person a calendar. You know it's just like you know, I really respect people that could politicize inside, you know. And I think it's important like people fight back against the prison system. I mean and when they do, they should be sorted. I mean, it's like you know when they get crushed, you know there's a lot of people I don't want to get. Into too many details, but like you referenced someone before that I suspect is. You know, I sent some books to a person's son and like that prison decided like that. They can't have books anymore and I was like so disappointed.

So was the calendar contributor, so that's how we knew about it, and you know then to find out that there's like this, ridiculous DOC decides that like oh, no, they can't have more than. Like I said. Five books which. Is like OK I get it's five books but. Like so they. Can only have 3, so you're gonna send. The rest back it's like you're not just gonna give it to them like I mean, it's just. Like it's so unjust and it's like. It's like your first interaction with bullion, right? It's like you just like bully and it's so raw, right? Like you, just like and to be bullied by people that like essentially like they're bullying you because they have guns because they're you're in a cage like you're not bullying me based on merit, right? Not bully, it's just circumstance, right? And the idea. That you're a bad person. Because you're a person and it's like, well, I. **** on that idea like. **** that like people make mistakes people some. People are in. Prison they make a mistake. You know, it's like, it's just. It's gnarly like to hear about people streaming, even when. They're not being. Like ***** with even when it's just the basic running of persons. I mean what is going on with COVID and how people are locked down? How the government just uses it to be as lazy as possible and not processing any of the paperwork associated. I mean, that is like so frustrating when you're inside to deal with.

JAY: Yeah, absolutely, it's just been. I don't know. I mean, it's been such such a frustrating couple of years for so many reasons, but certainly when you're talking to prisoners when you know. It's fast. I mean, it's just been, I mean every story that I talked to from you know somebody inside in this time frame. It's just like **** man like it's just, it's just.

DANIEL: Awful right now.

JAY: So pivoting back a little bit and also in relation to the pandemic, this is now the 2nd calendar that you guys have put together. Your collective has put together during this pandemic. How has that changed the process for you all in terms of putting this together, you've managed to do it, but I imagine it's been a little bit more challenging.

DANIEL: Yeah, yeah it has been more challenging for sure on the outside, really. There's four of us in the collective, you know. And there are several other people that we're depending upon that help out that assist us in in critical ways. But there are really four of us that are making the decisions as far as themes. What pieces? Make it in or out of the. Under editing those pieces and you know working on the whole design and layout of the calendar, I'm the only one of those four that doesn't have kids, so you know, raising a child during this pandemic, as you know, is insanely difficult, so that has kind of added to. It just the ability to communicate with prisoners has become so much more difficult during the pandemic. Whether or not they're getting our mail at all. Yeah, it has been been saying more difficult and we are looking for more support on the outside. You know if people want to get involved, want to lend a hand. Whether it's as a full collective member or just a supporting member. We are definitely looking for help.

JAY: Awesome, well hopefully we can help with that because there's a lot of folks that listen to this that you know, do different levels of prisoner solidarity and stuff. Like that already, so yeah.

DANIEL: Totally yeah, we we need. Help for sure and it's you know in all different kind of departments. Some of it is grunt work and we all do grunt work. Basically, you know, but just moving the ball forward in the calendar is a tough. Project and it's a lot of. When we send out our call, we get a tremendous amount of mail back and we have to put all that into like a wiki. Then we then examine the mean we we might get like 80 pieces of art, and we only picking 12, maybe 13. If we do those small piece or something that is tough and just I mean. Josh handled it off this year. It's like when you're communicating once we actually decide what we get, what you're actually asking for is, like, you know, high risk. Piece of art. Usually they give us low risk and so we have to train people to understand what we need and then sometimes they don't know how to do it and we have to really get the art and bring it to FedEx and do it ourselves or it used to be. Easy, just go to your office and do it yourself. Now we're doing it like. Asking people to do it at Kinko's and then reimbursing them. I mean there's so much right, it's. We need their photo. We need their address and send them a copy of the calendar. We need their bio. Oh, their bio can't be 600 words. It has to. Be 100 words, it's like and.

JAY: That's like 12.

DANIEL: That's 12 people, and then it's 12. For the artists. And it's like we're we do things on, you know, with people in prison. We're also always deal with a shepherd like someone on the outside so it's harder someone's friend. It's very hard to like. Do it like from us to someone in prison. Like always need someone that's gonna call or you know to make that happen. There's a lot of emailing. It's like e-mail constantly. And also just. Like expose like getting younger people to submit heart? I mean like we're all like suffering from this like we're middle age and like we're worth everyone we work with as our age like you know.

JAY: And so I.

DANIEL: Mean God, Josh? Are you the youngest? Yeah, and I'll be 40 in. My so which is messed up. Right, and I'm like though I'm 40. Seven and I feel like so cut out.

JAY: Like New York right now is like.

DANIEL: Like I don't know the kids. That came out for the fluid protest because there's no spaces, there's. Nowhere to go. There's no shows. And so I. Haven't even been. Able to meet them even like you know, even if we have. This in it. So we like barriers with like age and stuff but. Like and then I don't. Go out late or like I have to. Babysitter, you know, whatever whatever. The case may be so. It is. It is tough now we did. It is amazing.

JAY: That it looks good, I'm not.

DANIEL: Really happy with this year. But the calendar is also, you know. Half of our. Collective is in Canada. To save prices. You know we don't want to do too printing so we gotta printed mid burning books and outside of Buffalo and then just

trying to get calendars across the border into Canada was it's you know itself. Just a crazy venture. We discussed getting a a drone to try and drop them but. Yeah, well, actually you know it's almost February and by the time you hear this, it's February, so you should already have a calendar, says your Big Brother or Daniel. But if you don't and you wanna get Trance 1, the best place to go is burning books that's burning books.com. It's a small bookstore in Buffalo went by our friends list and Teresa. And you can get 10 if you got 10 there only it's only \$10 each, but there's free order free shipping on orders of 35. Dollars or more. Of course you can get them at AK, Press on our website certaindays.org. There's a list of 33 stores that carry it on the continent and in Canada. You can get it from Chris Lebedev, which is also known as left wing. In the eukarya. Active distribution and we sell them to prisoners for people in prison and jail for \$8.00, and that includes postage. And you can buy that on our website at certaindays.org and we send it in and we send it in with like a fancy receipt. And we follow. The stupid restrictions that the Bureau of Prisons. And DOC's Put on us and we sent out. About 400 calendars to people in prison. Which is. Actively small when you think about it, but the fact that it was out in my. Living room or. Like a ***** little printer should. Is worth a lot. And we got so many back this year I. Mean it's like the. Bureau of Prisons like rejected. I think 25. It's frustrating because like when we get them back, we get an e-mail from burning books and it's always like scan like the reason and half the. Time, it just says return to sender. And sometimes it's like the person got out very happy because we update our this obviously and the other cool thing we do is we get people to. Sponsor copies so like. It's very easy to get like the political prisoners and the political politicized people copies sponsored. Where you? Just like ask. It's always ABC. Groups and some Jericho groups that chip in like \$200.00. You know it's \$8.00 apiece, so that covers a. Lot of people. But then we have like this, just like most of the people on our list are people in prison like that have seen the calendar. I think it's cool, they're artists or whatever. And so like. Getting what we do is we send out, you know, emails to like all our people on social media and we ask them to sponsor and this year we got a Family Foundation that sponsored 200. We have a friend of ours, Texas, who are not allowed to name, but it's a very generous person and he donates like 50 every year and it allows us to just go down the list and just you know, and then we send in a little copy of an invoice that this copy was purchased for you by so and so and oftentimes. They write back like who sell? And so we're like how? We gonna do this, but yeah, our calendar is really easy to get. I would say like. You haven't seen a copy of it. It's worth getting from certaindays.org or burning books.com, and if you are abroad and you can't get it because we only have a UK distributor which has a lot to do with the EU laws currently you can e-mail us at info at certain days and we work on some PDF situation where you can buy it for a nominal fee. And your promise that you're not going to just print massive copies of it, and we'll send you a PDF at a higher risk PDF. Then you could print that yourself.

JAY: Awesome, well I just had a couple of other questions I wanted to go through. You guys, one was as you mentioned. You know it's a fundraiser, so talk a little bit about the organizations that you all are supporting this year.

DANIEL: So every year we kind of contribute to some bigger organizations that have been around for a while. One of those is wrapped out in New York release aging people in prison. We support them. Last year the proceeds went to Barton prisoner Solidarity, which is a group out of Canada doing a lot of abolitionist work out of Hamilton. ON doing some really cool work, you can find out more about them on Facebook. The Tucson Anti repression crew out of Arizona also doing some really amazing work. We've contributed to prison health news books through bars, organizations, Mongoose distro, which is a really cool organization that in New York doing some really cool prisoner solidarity. We work, yeah. Every year we we kind of try to pick new groups that are in need groups that are doing really solid prisoner support work that could benefit from from the proceeds that we do make. So it's and it's been great to see the proceeds, you know, jump since the you know the calendar started 21 years ago and I think they sold maybe. 500 copies in that one. Selling thousands and thousands of copies and making them feel. Many more proceeds to. Yeah yeah, we printed 6000 this year and. We're going to sell out. Eventually, you know towards the. End, you know once it's like March. I mean, we dropped. Price eventually and. You know we. Like just like a little bit of a fire sale. But we also. Like we'll send. Like we've, we've gotten various mailing lists where people just sent them to, you know, leaked them to archives we, we sometimes send them to people. I have bought from burning books but never have bought a calendar and you figure out like in March or April. That's a pretty cool little thing. To get in a. In a shipment, obviously it's been a fundraiser since the early days, but like when you sold like 400 calendars, it's a lot different than selling 6000, and so we essentially just like we reimburse each collective member for any. Any costs associated. So like you know I put out a bunch of money and postage or paying for stickers. Josh, also with postage. The printing, like all those things, are paid for, you know, because we don't really want to have like a collective of people that can like, are wealthy enough that they can just write that off. You know it's. Like I can't like I'm owed a. Little bit of money right now and I'm like I'm I don't know and I'm sweating but I'm definitely like in the process of reimbursing myself. Because I need to. And you know, so we do that. So basically, like we put aside, we pay the cost associated with the printing. We put aside our printing money for next year. Super responsible early and. And then all at the rest of those proceeds you know. And so we give to everything from like small groups to bigger groups. We definitely never replicate that nonsense where we're like the, you know, a. Girl Scouts getting to. The Red Cross, you know? I mean, the Red Cross is you. Know money you know, obviously. So we give to groups that. Like, actually like when they get we always.

JAY: Like, say when they get the check we. Them to be like, hey guess what?

DANIEL: We got like that's the vibe we're looking for, you know, and to be honest like the proceed thing is like again always open to getting emails or messages on social

media. If you know about a group that does good work, just don't make. It your group if you can recommend another. Group that would be the best cause. We have like a. A very a large list, right? Now that we're going through and we, we need to. And repeats, I mean we do release aging people in prison because our project is most fundamentally started in New York State prisons. And like we, we want to make sure that like you know that work continues on that, but for the most part, we don't really do. Beats repeated groups, repeated donations, but uh, if you have an idea or group that should get some proceeds from certain days 2022 proceeds, please e-mail us at info at certain days that would be super helpful. Right now I'm just essentially I mean Josh and I. We just bother people. Hey, do you have any ideas? Like Jay, you're. Going to bother you like we just bother people. Like do you have any ideas and people are like oh? Sometimes they'll give us, they give us people we've given to already, or they give us people that we've decided we're not because like they get money from the Arnold Foundation or something. And why would I give money to that group, right? But we're always looking to ideas.

JAY: Another question that I wanted to ask you. You you kind of alluded to it a little earlier on is just talk a little bit about how you guys kind of how your collective defines a political prisoner and then chooses someone to highlight it as a political prisoner. Ask a little bit just because it you know we've had different groups on before. We've had different political prisoners, you know, there's. There's different definitions, obviously that are out there. I know you all are aware of this, so I'm just curious about like kind of how you think about it. It sounds like it's, you know, maybe a little more flexible than some of the other ones, but just was interested in any thoughts from certain days.

DANIEL: I mean, I don't fall back on some of the United Nations definition. I generally look at as as people from social movements, people from from movements for justice like we don't regard the January 6 people as political prisoners. They're people do right, but we. Don't, and that's fine, and I don't. Think that's weird? I generally follow like the what a BCF and. Jericho does for the most part. I think it's people that come from the various movements for social justice and for. Revolution and so like in that I can include like you know people from like the Black Panthers and PLA American Indian movement movements for like social justice regarding you know standing rock prisoners from the environmental. But I realize it's like it's. It's always hard to like. Figure out how you define it, and maybe it's something that like will eventually be seen as or is seen as archaic, and we're clinging to it. I'm not really sure I do think. The justification for doing support for political prisoners is not rooted in that. Certainly people haven't long sentences or being elderly or anything like that. I think it has. More to do with like this core. Principle of like. Movement, defense and that. Like if I. Fall and we struggle together and you let me just fall. Then what then we essentially? We lose, we lose to the government we lose to. Like you know. We lose because we are forgetting our people and not supporting each other. And I I. Just think that, like. Any movement that serious needs to be serious about defending itself and

supporting the people that are taking. About the state and maybe. That's provincial on some. Level, but I think that like that's a very like. That's a first. Step in terms of regeneration, like how do we regenerate if we allow the government? Like if we're pushing if any movement is pushing then there is a push back. There is a. Legalistic or extra legal pushback right. However, the government does it. Whether they do it like they used to do it very traditionally, with like the Black Panthers. Like literally writing fake letters, or they just throw money through the nonprofit complex at fake leaders you know to make like liberal sell out type fake leaders and then that becomes the ascendant. Thing, and then that you. Know puts the radicals in a corner, so to speak. Either way, it's important, I think to support people that are held captive that are taken from your roof and movements that you have solidarity.

JAY: You know, I.

DANIEL: Got politicized in the 90s, one of the first things that people gave to you is the book agents of repression. About the wholesale like attack. On the Black Panther Party in the committee movement by the American government. And I saw like you know. How destructive that was, and it was like, well, how do we not support people that come from those moves like I had like tremendous solidarity with those with. Those two movements. So I don't. I don't know if I'm getting at. The heart of your. Question and I don't want to be so. Rigid as to. Like to just do, yay. Or nay on people, but. I often when faced with. Like the confusion about it, I. Often wonder like does this person. From the movement were they involved in collective struggle like you know and it comes up with whistleblowers, you know. Often because some whistleblowers have been very, you know, call them apolitical, right? They have no politics. They don't talk about anything. They don't seem to have a history of struggle in any way, but are. Those people worthy of support. Yeah I think they. Worthy of support. You know, I'm glad that like there's these people that eventually decide I don't want to ***** do this anymore with the. Military, you know? It doesn't matter that they weren't drafted. Meaning like just because there's not a course of drafts, I mean there's not a. Poverty draft or? A draft of people trying to get the **** out of their ***** towels and not seeing anything on the horizon you. But my requirement I guess on some level is that people are in the struggle, people are. Political people are. And what does that mean to be political, like to be fighting, oppression to be fighting against unjust things happening? Wherever the hell you are. So when I was, you know, doing something you left. We had a particular set of methods and strategies and tactics, and that's what I did. But when I was. In prison, I did what I could. To struggle against the male censorship or the fact that I was being placed in a unit and like for no reason without a hearing, they just took me and put me there and so obviously I was fighting. That and helping. People around me. You know, cause honestly I. Don't think like the goal is to just help yourself like you're in prison. You're trying to help everyone. Yeah no, I agree with what you said I am. It's interesting. I've been having this conversation for the last few months with Sean Twain about, you know what's a political prisoner who's not a political prisoner, and I just want to read something that he just wrote to me he he said

there's no such thing as a political prisoner. The state is a political construct. Judges hold political office. Prosecutors make political choices. Criminal laws are passed by politicians. The act of cajina human being in the political one to violate law. To say I am above the state rather than the state being above me. That's a political act. All prisoners are political, some are more consciously so. And I totally agree with them as well. You know, I think the focus on political prisoners is really a focus on those that are more consciously so than those that did actions, knowing that they might end up in prison, you know, but they don't like hardless because they realize that it's the, you know, the struggle is greater than their personal struggle. But yeah, I think every political prisoner. Doctor says that they need to. Make that dichotomy of political and social prisoners you know they need to destroy that dichotomy. That is, is real and is necessary.

JAY: For really you.

DANIEL: Know interested in in prison evolution? I mean the idea. Could never be like just these people. I mean, that's just. That's self defeating even if you thought that that was morally correct, which it's not. It's like exceptionalism and. Elitist, you don't have the numbers I. Mean I mean like? I was I was at sandstone and. There was an. Animal Liberation prisoner there. And I guess I'm being specific about how I'm calling him because he seemed to be just like very his politics. Were very narrow. In fact, they were like all these politicized prisoners there guys that were like jihad. Players are just, you know, just hustlers that just ***** hated to be OP and makes it so much more than this person. But somehow this person would be considered a. Political prisoner, and. That that got him a lot of support from at least that more tepid parts of that animal rights movement, right so? In such rarity, to be in a spot with. Someone like that you. Know it's like everywhere I've been I was like the only person. And how that? Shows up in real life you. Know is that like people see the. Cops ***** with you. And people see you fighting back, struggling back, and you know the only thing that I thought was particularly hard to deal with was just I had such an embarrassingly large. The level of support because I had a really intense like support crew like we were close like I knew them for years. When this happened, I was like I was worsted at a time where, like it was just I had done prisoners for it. I had had people's backs. And I got so so much support that. Mail call Was an embarrassment for me, often because people were had hostility towards me for the amount of books. And should I got and? I shared because I feel like sharing and share a sense. Of guilt but. It was just this weird situation. Where I was like, you know what? I don't think my sister wants to write you. I you know my sister. You know a liberal like and loves her brother, but like isn't interested in having a bunch of you know. So like there were moments like. That where like I was like, this is such. An awkward position, right, and. I'm not and I don't think my. **** doesn't smell. So like it's really awkward because people like who? Are you man? Why you got? All those books and stuff like that, you know. And so it. Creates awkward situations, but like really like I just think. Like I kind of approached my time and there like I approached my time on here it's like

what can I do to help? What can I do to move the ball forward and lift up all the boats? I don't wanna just be like haha. Life is good and now we're all set, you know? So our project is changing in some directions because of how the political prisoner landscape is changing and there's new people going in. There's a number. Of different developments in the political prisoner world one, I'll say, we've already talked about is Eric King goes to trial in the federal system on March 14th. Very few people go to trial in the feds and you know Eric is facing up to 20 years and we're just, you know he's going to be in Colorado and we're uncertain whether the judge will keep the courtroom. But right now. But, you know, we're hoping. That people could show up and at. Least be supportive and. Not, you know, disrupt proceedings and stuff like that. There's two long term political prisoners who have big freedom campaigns going on. One is Matula Shakur, who has a legal team that is working on any Ave. to get him out. Whether it's parole, capacity, release, or clemency. And Sundiata Acoli, who has a who has, is actually in court tomorrow on the 31st of January, New Jersey Supreme Court. Now he won't be there, but his. There's we arguing for his release. It's regarding his parole and. His team has done some pretty amazing things lately, including getting a billboard on the New Jersey Turnpike, arguing for his release, getting Bunny Colvin from the Wire to record a video and getting like 6 different organizations. Including, I believe, a black. Law enforcement organizations to write amicus briefs arguing for his release. OK, so the other is. So great, I mean we, we asked the audience to join the collective few years ago and he wrote us like the nicest letter back, like just being very complimentary and just saying he was really focused on helping people out at Cumberland and his family. And you know, we just took that as like. You know, of course, you know there's a few PP's near release. Doug Wright is getting out, hopefully in March. That is, he is the last member of the Cleveland. Four to get out. We got like a I believe a 10 1/2 year sentence for that entrapment case in 2002. Well and Josh Williams is finally getting out. I believe in December 2022, that's. the kid who. Got an 8 year sentence for essentially an attempted arson in Missouri and has done some pretty hard time there. There's also a few new political prisoners that have gone in Jessica. Resend check was a woman who, with another individual, sabotage a bunch of machinery and. Pipelines on the Dakota Access pipeline and got an 8 year sentence in the terrorism and. That's the case is actively an appeal and should be going to court for the tears and the payment at some point she's being held at FCI wasicka. In Minnesota, there's Daniel Baker, who was found guilty of making threats against the government. For some Facebook posts he posted in Florida, he got 46 months in in prison I believe, and he is. At FCI Memphis he went. To trial and. They basically convicted him of making threats based on his Facebook posts and I have been involved a little bit in his support, helping his defense committee and read all the documents and it is ridiculous that they decided to attack him, just totally pathetic. He writes a lot so. Those on the right. And I said previously, there's Daniel Hale, who is the Obama drone whistleblower who is in USP Marion CMU right now and then. I'm not gonna get into all the different cases, but there's, uh, for some friends launched a website

calleduprisingsupport.org and it basically is all the names and websites and addresses. For a variety of different people that were arrested and indicted on during the Floyd Uprising, many of whom have been in prison. Since and our many are entering the system right now and fighting their cases, a few people have upcoming trial dates and there's different ways to support them and find out you know who those who those folks are, so that's sort of the updates I would say Josh, do you have any others? No, no, not really. I would just add that that website you were talking about has caught up risingsupport.org. Most people want to get involved with them, but no, no. I think you.

JAY: All of it. I'm so glad, too. I mean, thank you for all of that, but I'm also really glad to hear about that development with the uprising support.org because it's a. It's an issue we've talked about a few different times on this podcast of like who's you know, like who's doing this like what's going on, you know, and it's so essential, right? And obviously there were a lot of people that were caught up with all different kinds of things, and there's a lot of stuff that's been going on locally to support folks and things like that and so, but there's also. You know, just due to the how national even international things were going on during the flood uprisings, there's like so much stuff and sometimes it's in. Like also these little podunk districts and things like that where you know it's so it's really good that somebody's trying to kind of, you know, collate all that information and make it accessible for folks.

DANIEL: I mean, it's been very challenging. You know, one resource that I found was a friend did a project called the Prosecution Project. I'm almost certain that's the Name of it. And it's a bit. It's like an academic. Project that like was cataloguing all the different cases. I'm almost certain that's the name of it. And it's interesting, but it's. Also overwhelming right? Because you look at like. Spreadsheets of people's names and it's like the uprising support is a little better. It's like I had actually, you know, it's funny the show a little bit behind the curtain is like our friends were working on this project and we were like bugging them for updates on the uprising like how have we got like? I did the update. Action page in the calendar and. It's like one page, right? And we. Have a picture of usually a recently released. Person it's super challenging to write 700 words and like I was like, we have to like. We have to acknowledge the price. Like how the hell do? We like not. Talk about that like you know, and it's a huge deal like massive protests. All these like arrests and indictments and I don't want to happen. What happened with the with the? Ferguson situation, which is like people to tell people. They're doing time right now, right? And like a lot of them just got bad advice, and we're not well supported. And we're like cut it in the system. But like you know, I feel like a. BCF kind of like missed the. Ball and that, like you know. I mean, I will say that like you know, friends of mine in the BCF world have like written Josh Williams asking, you know, do you want to be listed and. Josh, never read. Back, you know, and you know not. Writing back as an answer. So like, I respect that. You know, and you know, I understand that maybe not everyone's going to go. Understand what the anarchist Black Cross Federation is, you know and maybe that's on us. Or maybe

that's on them. I don't really know, but I definitely knew like this is what waiting in the service. And then I didn't want us like miss the boat because once you like don't understand what's going on and like how do you catch up with that right? So I think these like anti repression crews and different. There's like there's one in Puget Sound Seattle area. There's Tucson. It's Atlanta like those groups have been really good about keeping up with like what's going on. It's been very challenging. I mean, we've sent a lot of them calendars. Some have been turned, and you know, it's just people get transferred very fast, right? So you know doing that transition from jail to prison. Or sports talk. And I think everyone's having their own.

JAY: Yeah yeah, and it kind of cuts to this point you were making earlier, which I think is right on both of you. Kind of talked about this as like there's a definitely a decision that a prisoner has to make in terms of whether they even want to be seen as a political prisoner, right? And want to be on these different lists. And because you know, obviously it means a certain amount of support it also. Means the kind of awkwardness that you were talking about, Daniel, and like potentially you know repression as well, right? And so, like, there's all that to sort of consider, but at the same time, I think the basic question of movement, defense, right like demands something of us in terms of, like you know, how are we going to show solidarity with all these people who caught charges? Over a social movement, right? And so I think that that's you know, an incredibly important project for people to be trying to work with and figure out how they can support this kind of. You know that anti repression work as you were saying so. Right on, I'm glad that that's happening. Well, I do want to give you guys an opportunity if there's anything else that you wanted to add. Anything else you wanted to plug or just talk about the floor is yours.

DANIEL: We have some shout outs. If you want.

JAY: Alright shout out.

DANIEL: And you'll have Sarah and Amy *****, burning, Brooks, Leslie, and Teresa, David Goobers and Ashley Gary. and we wanted to shout out. Jason and Jeremy Hammond. He just released their new Twin Trouble podcast, which I'm a huge fan of. And those are. Two guys doing some really great stuff in Chicago. Both haven't done some time themselves. Jeremy and Jason both haven't done time for. That's our fastest and hacker stuff, so we love that podcast where we get a shout out to Josh. You got anyone? I'll just kind of add to what we had said before, you know, check out the political prisoners and prisoner contributors to the calendar this year there's comments. See here is amika Eric King, Honey Bay, and the Virgin Island. 3 There's a new website there. Also Blanco. More we move ship for. There's some really great people checking them out. Write to them, listen to their podcasts and. Yeah, it could change your life. It's really amazing.

JAY: Right on? Well, I appreciate you both taking the time to talk to us. Look forward to share this with everybody. I think it's been a great conversation, you know, really been able to touch on the calendar, which is amazing, but also talking about

these issues of you know anti repression, political prisoners and just you know prison abolition and all of kind of where these things are at. Right now so. I appreciate that.

DANIEL: Now thank you Jack. I appreciate it.

03/29/2022 - From Environmentalist to "Domestic Terrorist" with former Earth Liberation member Daniel McGowan (G&R 150)

Synopsis

Green & Red: Podcasts for Scrappy Radicals

<https://www.certaindays.org/order/prisoners>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c0VII4tdNBg>

March 29, 2022

ABOUT THIS EPISODE

In the past ten years, we've also seen state repression of movements coming out of Occupy Wall Street, the Ferguson uprising, Standing Rock, Line 3 and various anti-Trump movements. Green and Red has had numerous episodes on radical movements and state repression of political movements from antifascists in Portland and Austin to water protectors at Line 3 to DAPL saboteur Jessica Reznicek.

But, before that, we had the era known as the "Green Scare," where radical environmental and animal rights activists were targeted by the "state" (corporations, politicians, law enforcement) for its anti-capitalist politics and escalating tactics that included sabotage, animal liberation, property destruction and arson. The FBI called their operation to stop these radical movements "Operation Backfire." After 911, they labeled people taking action "domestic terrorists." Congress passed corporate lobbyist written legislation, such as the Animal Enterprise Terror Act and the Patriot Act, to stop them.

In our latest episode, we talk with Daniel McGowan (@thetinyraccoon), an anarchist organizer, Earth Liberation Front (ELF) member and partisan during the Green Scare era. He was part of two ELF actions in 2001. After another ELF member turned informant, he was arrested by the FBI and charged with arson, property destruction and conspiracy. In June, 2007, McGowan was sentenced to seven years in federal prison

and given a "terror enhancement" for his actions. Most of his time in prison was spent in a secret prison unit called a Communication Management Unit.

Daniel tells us about his journey as a radical environmentalist, actions with the ELF, time in federal prison and, now, supporter of political prisoners.

Daniel McGowan is a former political prisoner and former member of the Earth Liberation Front (ELF). He spent 48 months in experimental Communication Management Units operated by the federal Bureau of Prisons during his seven year sentence. Daniel has been involved with political prisoner support and prison struggles for most of his activist life. He is currently a member of the Certain Days collective, NYC Books Through Bars and the Anarchist Black Cross Federation (ABCF). Daniel works on the campaign to defend and free anarchist political prisoner Eric King and is an advisory board member of the Civil Liberties Defense Center (CLDC) & the Coalition for Civil Freedoms. Daniel is a lifelong New Yorker and grew up in Far Rockaway, Queens, NYC. He works professionally as a paralegal and consults with people preparing to go to prison and their family & friends in setting up defense committees.

Outro// Catharsis "Arsonist's Prayer"

Links//

- Daniel's Linktree: <https://linktr.ee/tinyraccoon>

- G&R: Dakota Access Pipeline Saboteur Jessica Reznicek Sentenced to Prison (<https://bit.ly/FreeJessRGandR>)

- G&R: The Story of SHAC (<https://bit.ly/StorySHACGandR>)

Follow Green and Red//

- <https://linktr.ee/greenandredpodcast>

- Check out our new website: <https://greenandredpodcast.org/>

- Join our Discord Party: <https://bit.ly/36hqx7X>

Donate to Green and Red Podcast//

- Become a recurring donor at <https://www.patreon.com/greenredpodcast>

- Or make a one time donation here: <https://bit.ly/DonateGandR>

This is a Green and Red Podcast (@PodcastGreenRed) production. Produced by Bob (@bobbuzzanco) and Scott (@sparki1969). "Green and Red Blues" by Moody. Editing by Isaac.

Transcript

INTRO: Welcome to Green and Red Scrappy politics for scrappy people. A regular podcast on radical environmental and anti-capitalist politics brought by Bob Besanko and Scott Parker.

SCOTT: Welcome to the Silky smooth sounds of the green and Red podcast. I am your co-host Scott Parkin in Berkeley CA. And as always, I am joined by.

BOB: Bob Bosenko in Houston, TX and please share subscribe rate and review. Couple of quick things before we get started on Monday, March 20. 8th I debated James de Eugenia, who was all over stones writer on the recent documentary. I can revisit, and Scott, I've had a lot to say about that, so make sure you look it up. We should have it here on green and red. Well, but it's Noam Chomsky's useful idiot, which is what he called me versus Oliver Stone's writer, thinker versus the Eugenio. Two Italians I'm sure it'll be very calm and quiet and you know, silent.

SCOTT: There'll be no hand waving like there'll be none of this, and hey.

BOB: It's a good thing we're not. It's a good thing we're in the same room where it could get like, really. Vociferous and in Addition to that, check out the green and red medium page because Scott and I are starting something new. It's an idea that others have used, including people like. Stone and Emanuel polishing. And now if you follow him, Adam Twos, we're gonna start putting out commentaries on an intermittent basis which are gonna be shorter pieces than we do on our blog or than we do in podcast. Just kind of our thoughts on something that's kind of going on at the particular time, so start. Looking soon and we will obviously put notice out when we go and start looking soon for green and red commentaries. The green and red. Media Empire is getting like damn big and I think Murdoch is starting to get a little worried Murdoch. They're starting to look over their shoulders at.

SCOTT: Us so yeah. And if you wanna support that media empire, go to our webpage. Our new and improved website at Green Red Podcast. Org and hit the support button or go to ourpatreonpage@patreon.com. Back slash streamed podcast.

DANIEL: But it's not silky smooth.com is that what? You're saying it should be, yeah. Little Lou walls.

BOB: Already had that.

SCOTT: Fair enough, right? And so today we're going to be talking with Daniel McGowan, who is joining us in from New York today. Welcome to Green and Red Daniel.

DANIEL: Thank you so much for having me. It's great to be here.

SCOTT: And I'm going to get. A little bit what we're talking about today, so. You know the 80s nineties, 2000s, all period of growth and like radical environmental and animal rights movements. It was a period marked with an anti-capitalist politic around corporations that were destroying the Earth, people, animals. It also saw an escalating. It saw also saw escalating tactics, included, property destruction and arson. Government and industry worked to crack down on those radical movements. The FBI actually had operation that they. Operation Backfire in today's environment, no pun intended. We're also seeing government and industry repression of movements coming out of, you know, for the last 10 years around, Occupy Wall Street Ferguson uprisings, which has morphed into a larger movement for black lives, Standing Rock. Which included last year's fight against the Line 3 pipeline in northern Minnesota and various anti Trump movements. And we've actually had a number of episodes on radical movements and repressions of organizers and activists, most notably our friend

Jay. Conroy, who was one of the Shack 7 who's joined us. We've also talked twice with folks who work with the Free Jessica Reznicek. Team and we'll probably talk a little bit about Jessica's case as well, but you know, currently Jessica Reznicek at Dapple, the saboteur of the Dakota Access Pipeline, and serving seven years for non violent sabotage actions against that pipeline, and her by her sentence included as terrorism enhancement, which is another thing probably be talking about. So to be joining us today. We're going to be joined by Daniel McGowan. Daniel is an environmental and social justice activist from Queens, NY. He was part of two Earth Liberation Front actions in 2001 and was arrested as part of Operation Backfire. He was charged in 2005 with 15 counts of arson, property destruction and conspiracy. Related to those two actions. And then in June 2007, Daniel was sentenced to seven years in federal prison in order to pay almost \$2,000,000 in restitution. And then the other thing that we want to discuss, but which is actually an important part of the story, is that Daniel served part of his time and his secret a super secret prison. Going to call the communication management unit or CMU, we actually did a show last fall. Also on Daniel Hale, who is actually being currently held in the CMU. So obviously here on green and red. We are very interested in discussing. State repression and then also the what's happening with political prisoners. People who are resisting the state, and so Daniel I think maybe the first thing we'd like to kind of get into, since we'll have a little bit more of a long form conversation today is maybe start off with telling us a little bit about yourself. Tell us about your bag. Story how you got involved with environmental work. Just like kind of let's just briefly kind of talk about that kind. Of kick.

DANIEL: Off sure, start from the beginning, right? So you know. I grew up in Queens, NY like sort of in this little peninsula called Rockaway. It's just like a little peninsula juts out into the Bay and the ocean. It's in the southern part of Queens, sort of working class neighborhood, but I don't come from a a very political family or I should say a, you know, a left family family. If they're, you know, political, they're they're more like conservative. My father was an NYPD transit cop. My mom worked at McDonald's for most of my most of my life and was then like a New York City, like lunch Lady for middle school. And so yeah, I didn't really get much politics from from home, or I mean, the politics I got were not, you know, it wasn't great. Basically, I grew up in the 80s. Crack was huge where I grew up. The drug war was popping I just like learned a lot about like you know, good people and bad people and drugs and all this like system. Nonsense unfortunately, and I didn't really have much of any kind of like environmental upbringing. I mean, my parents were really great about encouraging me to educate myself to be good in school to learn about. Things I cared about and be serious about that, but also, you know a love for animals. My mom in particular was a huge animal lover and it's you know, in the context of, you know we eat this animal. We pet this animal obviously, but you know, you know. Grow up in a house like that where it's you know important to be, you know, kind to animals. It's probably a a pretty instrumental thing in terms of then getting politicized later. I had

no camping background. We didn't go to national parks. We had nothing like nothing going on like that, but I did grow up in a pretty polluted area and as a teenager I remember. Thinking how strange it was that you know, I lived essentially on the flight path of the Concord and how the Concord would drop fuel, and now I've never felt that. But clearly the fuel was dropped in our neighborhood and it always got. Me thinking like. How come that doesn't happen other places and how come we had, you know I? I lived in the 80s when we had algae outbreaks, you know this. The red or green slime that would close the beach. That was like a pretty avid. Boogie board and wannabe surfer and skateboarder and you know there be time so we just couldn't really go there. We got kicked off the beach. I was also there when the medical waste washed up in in the 80s and that was really a result. Of hospitals illegally dumping their hazardous waste further down the peninsula. And so it really impressed upon me like. Blow out like somebody can do this here and then it's going to go downstream, like, literally, metaphorically and really go downstream and that you know ruin, like my 10 year old summer basically. Because my mother was like incensed that I would even think about going in the water because there's hypodermic needles and this is also 19. 8485 we're talking about, like the height of, like you know, AIDS like paranoia coupled with a, you know, a refusal on the part of Reagan to do anything about AIDS to even talk about it. It was still three years away from even mention. And then HIV or AIDS. And, you know, is the time where we're just pushed on like you know, as like a homophobic thing like oh that's a gay disease or it doesn't affect us or it's people dying. Elsewhere, right? So you know the idea that I would go to the beach with needles and the water was just send nothing much to my mother. So yeah, that was, you know my background. I got I went to high school as a normal whatever normal means, but I was a your average kid being concerned. About you know baseball comic books. Chasing teenage girls and, you know, just being I used to run track. I did a lot. Of stuff like that got to college. And I really wanted to get involved. I had, you know, it was like these moments where when I was growing up. I would see. I was very much impressed by what Greenpeace was doing back in the early days. Not not, not, currently, or in the last 30 years, but you know, when they used to get in the way of whaling, right? And these images were burned into my into my skull of. You know, like the early Greenpeace missions and putting themselves in the way of whaling, and you know, but at the time, even as late as college I, I didn't really. I think I was. My life was very small and parochial and really I went to school in the same state that I grew up in but it was very. It was pretty much as far away you can get. In New York State and I went to school Buffalo, it's like 400 miles from New York City. It might as well be 400 million miles, and you know, obviously, that process opened up my mind and I wanted so bad to find some outlet. For environmental activism, it turned out that there really wasn't anything. I mean, they have these Earth Day fairs where they like there'd be a bunch of hippies hacky sacking and wasn't really interesting to me. I got flipped.

SCOTT: That was, that was my college experience too.

DANIEL: Oh was it? I mean, it seems to be a very common thing, right? Like you go to. I remember going to this Earth Day fair and just being and this was before the corporations really took it over. You know, like in New York City, Earth Day is like held in Grand Central Station and it's sponsored by Con Ed. That's our like local horrible polluter, you know. Monopoly, electricity, coal? Cerner but before that it was just like. Kind of, you know, after the initial Earth Day it just went into this kind of like flat line. And it was just like. People selling like pipes and like hacky sacks and like one person getting signatures for a petition. I remember thinking this is so tepid and just so whatever you know. I don't know. So I got politicized mostly because at the time the Governor of New York, Pataki, was cutting the budget, and you know, I mean, I got involved through self-interest. And it like literally affected me because I was like on student loans and I was like I'm not gonna be able to go to college anymore. And I was already having hard enough time like budgeting. You know, like I'm a kid, I'm not really. Financially savvy in any way. There's never a lot of money around to like even have that be an issue and then suddenly. Have a student loan check. So I got involved. I started going to Albany lobby in I got involved in the student. Senate of some kind and you know it was. It was interesting but kind of. My first really experience with that sort of stuff and like dealing with these 22 year olds 21 year olds that were like pretty much like politicians in waiting. I mean they were politicians in school and like to be honest, some of them I can't. Imagine where they are now, but I imagine I guess it's like Wall Street or you know, whatever doing horrible things, I'm sure. So I got involved that way and then you know, I just couldn't find an outlet for that. After I graduated I took a trip to Thailand. I intended to study at a university there and the study abroad office just completely messed up my paperwork, but I went there on a student visa. Took a few classes anyway. And spent a bunch of months. Traveling the country and I was in a city called Kitchener Barrie it's actually where. The River Kwai Is you know like the famous movie? And the POW. OK, and I met a guy. His name is Tyler. I always want to look him up but he worked for a group called Earth Rights International and they were doing they were like a group that was hard for me to understand because they were doing environmental and human rights and they were concerned with me and more which was just me and more for a few years at that point. The Army of Burma took over, renamed the country their name of their group was like SLORC. It's like state law and order ruling committee something. Absolutely fascist and they were liquidating the old growth Forest of Myanmar and also really shining on and oppressing the hill tribes of Myanmar or Burma. And it was interesting to me because I had not really seen this like confluence of social and. Environmental stuff and it really. It appealed to me because I was like, wow, that's fascinating. They're not just going in there. Saying like don't cut big trees and you know this ancient forest they're going in and talking about the impact on the indigenous people of Myanmar. So it was inspired me when I. Got home to. Seek out, you know something. To find something I didn't know. I mean like it's hard for me to overstate how like small my world was. I grew up in like. Basically, just like. The back backward like bum ****

Queens, you know, like Rockaway people like will always say that's New York like I'm like I know it's like this weird peninsula with just like not a lot going on. People have it in island mentality there they're like oh I'm not leaving the peninsula like that's said so often and I would like desperately like. Just like I wanted, I knew there was something else out there I. And no, I couldn't. There was no punk scene. The metalheads were * ***** and like, you know, just a bunch of bullies, and there was no alternative. I just couldn't find. I had to literally go to Buffalo and then go to Thailand to come home and really see that like there. Was a. Way out of this, live in and Rockaway doing doing the. Rockaway thing.

SCOTT: How did you? How did you end up in the northwest?

DANIEL: Uh, there's a I'll get. I'll get to that but there's a another thing so So what happens is I get back I and just I go to I go to I'm supposed to meet a friend at a club it's on Ave. B and 3rd St. had like no name whatever it was just like I didn't have money for the cover I left. Need to use the bathroom and I went into blackout books which was like a small. Infoshop on 50 Avenue B and I you know, I wasn't always an avid reader and I was like looking at the show. I was going what the **** is this? What is like libertarian? what? Anarchy like I had no idea. I was like what did I stagger into? I didn't have a lot of money on me at the time so I went to the this new concept. They had a free pile. You know just a free bin. And I grabbed the copy of the Earth First journal and I used the bathroom and I peaced out and went home and I was looking at the Earth first journal and it was incomprehensible to me. There was a man on the cover in. Like fatigues like he was called a Freddy and I was like what's what is. It's like and I kept looking for like a glossary and. No idea, no. Framework it was super exciting and I went to the directory and I found out that they actually had a group in New York City. Based out of a club a bar in the on the West side of Manhattan in Tribeca, called Wetlands Preserve, and.

SCOTT: Sounds like some of the founders of Earth first I. Know so yeah.

DANIEL: And I went there and I showed up at this meeting and they had a. They had a thing they called the Eco salon. So it was like, Oh no, I'm sorry it was Salon saloon saloon. Sorry because it was like the concept is you'd be drinking a beer and listen to like what was going on and each each Tuesday night they had like a different topic. I showed up on like the animal rights night and like I literally show up in. Again, people are talking this ****. They're saying is so incomprehensible to. Me, they're like. Well, Captain Paul Watson is stuck in Denmark and he's going to get and I'm captain who military like what? Are you talking about? And it was just, you know, the founder of C Shepherd was being held by the Netherlands and he was under danger of being extradited to Iceland, for, you know, sinking of a ship or some kind of, you know, so-called crime in their mind. And I was fascinated, and so I just I just jumped into this world. I just was fully immersed for like 2 years. I got arrested like a million times at protest. We did campaigns with Rainforest Action Network and like Home Depot, Mitsubishi and I basically got involved in the Animal Defense League which was doing anti fur campaigns. Did a few little actions on my own, those. Slingshot stuff

just. Putting my foot in the in the pond, so to speak. and I decided, you know, I got. I was working out a mainstream environmental NGO. It was my politics of radicalized, very fast. But it was sort of like I was ready. It was like 23. I was like I'm going to go. I'm going to go to California. And I'm going to go. Go to Northern California and try to save the redwoods. I had went to a A gathering that brain for section that work had back in the day that I. I can't remember. The name. Of it, but it was in Occidental, California, and I met a bunch of people that just came. Back from that campaign. It was called. Shataka, it was like their gathering. They used to have.

SCOTT: Right, they used to be reinforced. Groups or rags and they were basically like they were basically like chapters and then the shataka would be where they would.

DANIEL: Yeah, right, that's right, that's right. Sorry click.

SCOTT: Have an annual.

DANIEL: Gathering, yeah we were. We like one of the one of the meetings that we had at wetlands was the rainforest action thing. And so it was the rag that was doing. I mean, we campaigned and nobody beats the Wiz and Mitsubishi and it was. It was pretty amazing. And so yeah, I went. I met people at this Chautauqua and I was like I gotta get out of New York. And exhausted what I wanted to do there in terms of activism. And I decided I want to go to Humboldt County to save the redwoods with. Earth first. Basically Humboldt County Earth 1st and I was like one week away from going and the news came down that the A logger had killed David. Gypsy chain had fallen a tree right on him and it was literally where I was going. I had a Amtrak ticket that. I had saved up to it was. Like it was like an economy. I would never travel like this now it was like an economy non sleeper. 4 day Amtrak trip and I bought I had I remember had a the Howard Zinn reader. I have. I mean this is pre cell phone. I didn't have, you know. Obviously it's a long time ago and I had like one book that was what I had for the whole trip and I was thinking this makes sense and I show, you know, they tell me like don't come the campaign's over. I show up in Northern California. I mean in San Francisco and I'm just. Like what the **** AM? I supposed to do, now, you know. So yeah, I got. I got involved. I had some really really random encounters with people and ended up getting involved. In this group that was politically pie throwing like I got involved in the Biotic Baking Brigade, I ended up paying the President of the Sierra Club and the President. Of the the. The director of Novartis at UC Berkeley when they did just signed a deal. I got very involved with like the anti GMO campaigns there. And eventually you know I was. I had some friends that I met in. Again, pretty random ways and we decided we were gonna do a bunch of anti GMO. Crop actions and so I spent. That was like on pretrial release for this, like paying thing. And it was like considered an assault for some reason and I was like going around to the Central Valley with a bunch of people and essentially just destroying these GMO test plots. And like Davis and Sacramento and Northern California.

SCOTT: How did you end up further north of northern?

DANIEL: Sure, so like he's got adjudicated, I got smacked on the wrist. I like political lawyer that was like super helpful. We had done a lot of these actions, but

like I kind of felt like, you know, I had a few. Close calls and my research capability of figuring out where these plots were. They were all very secretive. was pretty much at Max. And it was about six or seven months before the World Trade Organization protests in Seattle, and I had a bunch of people going there. I mean, again, it's like one of those things that every single person I knew. Was on the West Coast, was going to Seattle for this protest and I showed up in the summer the summer before and met up with a bunch of local anarchists and friends that I had. Some of the people I was doing these actions with and we started squatting these empty buildings in in Seattle, getting ready for that. I was involved in the protest. I was, you know, involved in the black bloc. Part of the protest. We had two people get arrested, so I stuck around Seattle for a couple of weeks because we got attacked by undercover cops and people were accused of fighting back and cops got punched. And so these people were charged with assault. And at the end of it. I was kind of like at this point where. I could have gone to Neah Bay to join Sea Defense Alliance and you know, Jake and Josh Harper and Jonathan Paul who ended up being my Co defendant and my and old roommate of mine were involved there. Or I could have gone to. Eugene to get involved. The Earth first journal and also meet up with some of the people that I was hanging out in Seattle, who I had a feeling were interested in bringing me in to something you know more than what I was doing. And so I went with the second choice and I ended up moving to Eugene and I. Was a short term editor at their first job. But then, really, I had contacts that I had made in Seattle that ended up being basically Elf people. So I moved to Eugene.

SCOTT: And and, say, say, what ELF? Is what's the after you send this?

DANIEL: Oh, I'm sorry. EF stands for Earth Liberation Front, sort of. I guess. More of an idea or a name that people use with actions and like I would guess you would could consider it a decentralized network of different groups or cells that did not communicate with each other and have complete autonomy. I, I suppose it's the idea that anyone could use that name as long as they're like abiding by some pretty basic. You know I would say leftist or life preserving principles so at the time there had been a series of the of actions around the country, most of them centered in in the West and the northwest. I was sort of invited to I can't. Remember the exact series, but I met a you know was brought into this group with some of the other folks that I was that I ran with in Seattle and we sort of. Were you know living people were living in different cities and at that point we commenced to basically take in more. Actions and so I was brought into group, and I mean there's a lot to say there. So you know, if you have questions or you can focus. Me that would be great.

SCOTT: So you know you get involved with a group that's part of the Earth Liberation Front, which leads up to some ELF actions that you participate in. 2001 could you kind of just like briefly tell us a little bit about what leads up to what happens in. 2001, sure.

DANIEL: Well, you know. It it truly was a decentralized. No matter what you know, the government or whomever would assume or say, and so you know actions

came about in interesting ways. Sometimes it was the strength of the personality of somebody pushing for particular things to be addressed. I was definitely. I had engaged in a lot of sabotage actions at that point. 20 or something like that. Maybe 15, but uhm, you know I had. I think what one thing that? Happens like psychologically is, uh. People can sometimes get on a little bit of treadmill in terms of like you put a lot of time and energy into something and then it doesn't. Nothing really changes and so there is a tendency to ratchet up. Tactics, as opposed to stepping back and looking at strategy. It's the it's the downfall of sort of getting really in solar and. I wanna say radical but tactically focused. Right so I I. Had you know, looked at like OK, so how much can my hands do in this certain amount of time? Like how hard is it to cut down GMO crops, right? Like that is to say slow process even with tools, right? And so I think that out at that point I was sort of interested in, you know, using fire using arson. I mean, arson is the crime. The actual legal term, but using fire to destroy things is, you know, to destroy property, not to destroy people and not to harm anyone. Realizing that it's a dangerous proposition and risky, but also seeing you know, having seen actions that that took place in which like a place could literally be reduced to rubble. In one night there were some early EF actions that I found were instructive on this level, and there was a a arson of a horse slaughtering plants in Oregon that never was rebuilt after that, and so that was very like. That said that idea, like, well, you can actually stop these places if you try. Hard enough, I realize that that's potentially a little. It's actually lazy, lazy, but at the time that was where my brain was going as well, as you know, really bold actions that got an intense amount of media and hopefully a deterrent effect like veil like the arson of veil, which was essentially all legal efforts had failed. And the expansion of the Vale Ski Resort was going to happen. It was presumed that there was Canadian links there. No one actually knew, but it seems now years later there was because they're fighting, you know, **** of Canadian links. But you know it, that one was always felt to me as an outsider as a bit of a bit of a **** you, right? But these actions were interesting to me and I thought like, well, we can. What people can do in six months could be done in one night. And so I had the issues that were important to me or this sort of genetic genetic modification. Genetic engineering and old growth forests. I mean, I moved out West to protect the old growth forest. We don't have a lot of them on the East Coast, so very few if any, and so you know. When I came to Oregon and California and Washington, I was blown away by what it was like and I you know. Really had a. Cathartic moment where I was like I want. To do what I? Can just to save this shred this 4%? That we have, or whatever the horrible number is.

SCOTT: Quick quick question when you're talking about some of the sabotage actions you did before leading up to 2001 where the targets you know they were, they were private property. They were corporate targets. And is there anything like GMO crops, but were there other sabotage actions as well besides targeting?

DANIEL: Yeah, I mean. Most most of them had to do with genetic engineering and they were they were crops. I mean you know it's been so long, but I would say

like I have like slingshotted first or windows and. And there is a business in New York City that sold just a really grotesque kind of curio shop that that sold animal bones and ridiculous things like that the man actually went to prison for trading in in exotic or endangered animal body parts, which is ***** grotesque. Yeah, but most. Mostly mostly it was mostly it was. Crops, you know. and then everything that took place in Seattle, which was essentially just destroying the windows belonging to these multinational corporations. We were very clear that no one was trying to trying to harm a mom and pop or some small business. We were looking for maximum like symbolic and media effect. You know, and so the names of the companies that were growing the crops are all the you know, the famous people you might expect. Tea cow, plant genetics. Monsanto groups like that. You know that. All avantis you know just organized, uh, calling them organizations, businesses that were involved in mainstream and genetic engineering crops basically so I like, I said I really wanted to work on old growth forests. I wanted to find, you know, we the one I ended up being involved. In was called. Superior lumber they were. A garden variety company, for the most part, family owned by this one family and you know the reason I took issue with them was they were logging old growth forest. They were they were logging hard to find spots because you know, it's the same thing with oil as oil becomes harder to find, you know there's some oil, but it's like. Hard to find or it's expensive. It's the same thing with any commodity I believe, and so with old growth trees you have these ones on the top of mountains that are just like financially not feasible for you know they're there and the companies know they're there, but they're like it cost too much money to get them so.

SCOTT: Like the script in the bottom. Of the barrel like we've seen that Friday. Coal they go from coal mining to surface mining they go.

DANIEL: On top, removal to tar sands. I mean it's just, it's just like it's absolutely.

SCOTT: Fracking, it's all just like the as it as it as we approach things like peak oil and peak oil and peak oil growth, they go for like what's the lowest common denominator? Just and just for like what happens in 2001 that that's related. More to sort of the forest work, right? And so, like who? Who were you looking at? Who were you all looking at?

DANIEL: I mean, I, you know I was looking at my idea. I can really speak for myself. Was going after companies that are engaged. Old growth old growth lumber, but there's a lot of there old growth logging. There's a lot of things to consider. Like you know, I mean proximity to a city. Is it a place we can actually get to? Is it? Is it a fortress? Is it like you know, accessible is it? Are we able to do something there and not have it be super dangerous? Or you know? I mean, we're talking that. There's a level of danger, but. Wanted to try to attack a building that would like somehow spread and harm people in any way. So a lot of different factors. There's the personnel like I was living in Oregon, so get into Southern Oregon was a lot easier for me than getting to like the Puget Sound area, so that played into it. I don't recall exactly how it was picked, but we picked this place for its on spectacular. Nature, I mean, it did

engage in helicopter logging and stuff, but it was. It was pretty unspectacular like it was. It did logging. It wasn't well, particularly well known it wasn't like I don't know Boise Cascade, which others in the group had targeted prior to that. Or, you know, warehouse or GP or any of those well known ones. So I was essentially a lookout for the action. You know, I never went near the building, it was Recon many different times because that again, that was like part of the process was making sure that people are not harmed and yourself and others. You know, I don't really. I know you're asking, I really love to get into specifics, but I was. A small action. Maybe four or five people. I mean everyone in this action is was indicted for it. And you know, I was look out, and I was basically in like a. Little bit of a like not a ravine, but like a a pull out a pull off almost and I had a a really good view of what I was supposed to watch. And you know, I was supposed to radio. if there were problems it. Was over. Very quick and then you know we were like 40 minutes away before we got, you know the police scanner was calling the engines out. Because it all everything operates on a time delay in order to allow you. To get out of there, right?

SCOTT: And a lot of this, a lot of. This story is also documented in the Marshall curries of a tree.

DANIEL: It is yeah it is. And if a tree falls, I mean there's a lot I've just never talked about because I don't see the point. You know in in like I'm not. I'm not trying to do a how to right? It's more just like what color is interesting to this. But you know, I guess my point is just. It's a thoughtful process and I know people would find that laughable. Some people at least.

SCOTT: But not.

DANIEL: Not our friends but Umm you. Know it's a. It's a very like. Attenuated and thoughtful process. Because we.

SCOTT: Are at our.

DANIEL: Heart we're all a bunch of hippies that didn't want to hurt anyone and wanted to just have the maximum effect. Stop the company, not not have the people be unable to sleep or have PTSD, but you know there are. Unfortunately, as I heard later, there were. You know people there are personal. Acts of these actions, and they're they're not necessarily intended. The government would say that's what makes you know this terrorism, right? It's like it feels like terrorism, right? But you know? No, no, you know, if you're not going after individuals and threatening them and this and that, I don't understand how that that would really qualify. So that was one you know there was. Always a concern of. Mine that, like it was obvious to the to the people that were investigating. It was like the same group of people, right? So we tried to switch it up a little bit. And I had the boneheaded idea in retrospect. Like, let's send these statements to like, Umm, some like local forest defense groups, right? Cause they'll be supportive even though there have been no real evidence that a lot of the groups were supportive. I mean, you know, I'm sure you guys know better than anyone that there's a lot of groups that like they're really good on this issue, but like. They're pretty normal in terms of like their social politics, or like their view towards the police or

law enforcement or social relationships or anything, right? Like they're great on trees or great on you know, and that goes both ways. That's obviously social. Activists can be really horrendous on issues of about ecology or what. And you know some of these people. Went in they took that. Communicate they put it in a bag and. They called the FBI. You know my mistake. Luckily enough, that never came of. That the goal. Is clearly not to stress these people out. We we had this idea that like we would be building allies that like if we're if we're attacking the company in your region, that is like making your life hell because they're logging all over the place and they can't do that for a while. Wouldn't that be perceived as a positive? Gesture, but it's you know in in light of not being able to communicate that other than through a freaking communicate and the superior lumber communicate was not was not good. It was super ridiculous and over the top and I wrote most of it I believe, and you know, it's one of those cringe when I read it, which I have like once or twice in the last 20 years. Like cringe at the like. Trying to be ***** funny. Uh, I think we take Che Guevara's Bob, just Bob, just like is excited to hear this. We take chase. One too many vietnams and turn it on its head and just, you know, make some kind of statement that the government insisted was a threat, not a threat. But you know, I understand if you burn down someones business anything you. Say at that point sounds like a threat. And it was right around. It was right around the new year. I believe it was right after the new year, you know. Wake up the next day and you hear people in Eugene OR talking about it by my roommates, for instance. And having no ***** idea that was you. It was pretty interesting to be a fly on the wall for that. The local anarchists of course, were like Rah Rah RAH, the. Single issue ecologists were like, uh, you know, wringing their hands, and it was it kind of played out like that, you know?

SCOTT: Are these actions? What triggers operation backfire or is? That already in motion.

DANIEL: Oh no. Well, I don't know when the name operation back for it was technically attached to it. I feel like it was later, but there was. An investigation from day one. And the reason and this this is wild. I mean the historians, you know, not that there's many that care about this issue, but there are a few. They will say the first, the first elf action is like the gluing of locks at McDonald's in Cottage Grove OR 1996, and that may be. True, the first real EF action. The real by. Of note is I believe it is. Two of them within a short period of time and it's in 96. They're both claimed by EF. One is the Oak Ridge Ranger Station which is the Ranger station attached to like the Willamette National Forest and literally the group of people that were like log getting ready to Log Warner Creek. the Warren Creek is featured in that movie pickaxe quite well. It was a successful campaign. It was a essentially like. I don't know if it was a lightning strike or an actual arson, but Warner Creek was burnt by fire and then started regenerating, and the Forest Service was like ohh. These are burnt sticks. We have to log it. We have to salvage it. I don't know if it was actually. It was technically a salvage sale, you know, approved by you know Clinton and the salvage rider and these people you know got on the road and dug through and just stopped

it right? And so the Ranger station in Oak Ridge. And then I think two to four days later. Cars or Forest Service trucks at Detroit Ranger Station. So this is like literally federal property is being attacked with the first actions, and I think early on like if it was a Ron Wyden or some of the Congress people or senators. They were like banging the drum on getting federal involvement early on. the fact that it's a federal facility is what is what immediately implicates the feds in this right. Either the ATF or the FBI and then later the Joint Terrorism Task Force, which is their little coalition of all the different law enforcement. So I think very early on it's a priority because the people that are complaining are politicians and government employees.

SCOTT: Right? Absolutely, and so as we're seeing as back to 2001, where we're seeing BLF actions. I'm assuming that you thought that you knew that the FBI was investigating from day one, probably even before you did the action. Y'all probably knew how active they were at watching environmental communities in the northwest, and I'm just.

DANIEL: Yeah, absolutely.

SCOTT: I'm wondering, you know what? what was your you know? Obviously, you're operating with like a high level of like security consciousness like was there a point where you thought they were getting close or where they were aware? Or they were like looking into like people in Eugene that sort?

DANIEL: Yeah, you know, my my tactic was one that was like thoroughly disapproved by most of the people in my crew, which was I was fully immersed in the local scene and I think part of it was. I had this desire to do these actions and I also had this desire to live in Community with other anarchists and like be dealing with like all the other things I cared about because I obviously care about more than than forest, right? Like and there's like a lot of anti police sentiment in Eugene at the time. That's part of the local. Community there like anarchist community in the Whitaker neighborhood and I was involved in projects like Earth 1st and green anarchy and things like that. So I and I actually thought it helped me keep an eye on what was going on, and so that's how kind of how I sold it to people like. Well, I was like well I'm not independently wealthy right? So I have to have a job and I have to like and I have this desire to like I don't know. Not like have. Relationships with people. Whether you know like romantic but also like literal friends, right? Like some of the. People in my group were sort of cut off, you know they just like cut. Off from the world and I feel like cutting yourself off from the world can create really like it led to some like real big like theoretical mistakes and. And like not even theoretical applied mistakes that we made because we were cut off, we were. Like we're out of touch. Right? So that was my thing, right? And so I was around all of this stuff that was going on and there were some other people that lived in Eugene and were sort of in the scene too and like it was. It was quite interesting to see them and like not interact with them because. You know it was just would be weird, right? You know, unlike the accidents in California, some of which were just done without a communique, and some of which were done with like kind of jokey statements. A lot of that was attributed to be like vandalism or

kids, or like they no one they didn't really understand what was happening there cause people have destroyed crops and done crop circles. That's not like really controversial. the actions in Eugene in the northwest were definitely like perceived as such like these are, you know, and so they were investigating and there was a time where. I mean, Eugene, I mean, there was an active grand jury, the grand jury that eventually probably returned my indictment was active. It's something not the same people, but. They was active. And people in that community were being called to the grand jury. I mean, there was. There's a. A really ridiculous story where a personal conflict between a woman that I knew in the community and one of the people that guy who ended up telling on all of this. Jacob Ferguson a random conflict that they had basically resulted in him coming before. There scope and then being seen as a person of interest in our case so they there were people, including this person who got called before a grand jury. Testified, you know, probably you know, I don't know what they testify because they're alive and you know, grand jury testimony secret, but I testified and then kind of refused to be debrief with us and to me I. I just felt like you know, you're not like I didn't. I never felt like I was a person of interest because they were like let you know what happened is you had. Like people that were like. **** talkers and like. Loud and like braggarts that were like getting implicated and stuff. And I'm actually loud and this should talk about somehow never really like I never talk. Talk to people about like Elesh ship like oh, that was a cool action like and then like solicited them to say yes and then deep down I got some kind of satisfaction. I was just very like low key about that kind of stuff. And I, you know, I don't. I don't know like the cop. And if a tree fall says they knew who I was. But I don't believe that for a second I was just another. Young, late 20s. Anarchist guy doing my thing with you know, hanging out at the info shop and food not bombs and that kind of. Stuff you know, and so the sort of Jake Ferguson.

SCOTT: Part of the story is actually pretty important to your story, so he has a conflict with this person who believe this is like ex partner.

DANIEL: No, actually, but he was living.

SCOTT: Oh oh.

DANIEL: He was subletting from this person and I I I it's been very hard to figure out exactly what it was that the conflict was about, but he behaved poorly.

SCOTT: Ah, see.

DANIEL: I don't know he wrote something and she just, I think gave him the business kicked him out. He like wrote on her window with like lipstick or something, took his stuff and left. She called the cops and then that just led this whole and it would happen to. It literally was the same night of an action that he had nothing to do with, but people in my crew did have something to do with. And I mean this just like that. I think it was. March 15th you know 2001 or something. So they did this action in town. People that were not living in Eugene, ***** off all of us. And she called the cops on the day after the action. And the coincidence is what?

SCOTT: And the important thing here is that they use this conflict. What comes out of it is that he becomes a confidential informant for the what for the feds.

DANIEL: Yeah, that's at the end of Rd. But it's a long process because during this time you know this woman goes to the grand jury, her partner goes to the grand jury. I'm sure they were like what's the deal with Jacob Ferguson. Is he you know? They ask questions. At grand juries that. Are like fishing. Like is he the kind of person that could do the action like that's the kind of **** they say I was dragged before grand jury and held in contempt. And that's the kind of ***** they say to you, you know. And So what happened is Jacob in the early days resisted that he didn't show up. He ripped up famously ripped up a grand jury. Working in a health food store and just walked away for whatever reason, they let it. They just let it go. They just let it go for a while. And then I would say what happened is. 9/11 happened. And when 9/11 happened and joint terrorism task forces were established between Oregon State Police Eugene Police, Portland Police ATF, like all the different law enforcement they were like. I mean Oregon, like it's like what are we going to use this money on so they Oregon prosecutes 2 cases they prosecute the Portland 7. Who are like Muslim men that tried to get into a training camp but were rejected at the box? And they send these people to prison for this **** and I would did time with one guy he had 20 years for this for trying to get into a train Al. Qaeda training camp. I was just like that's got to be less harmful than what I did and how the hell did it's? Not like I wanted 20 years, but how the hell did he get 20 years and then our case and what happened is I believe the money money essentially just buys staff time. And when you put enough of these heads on a case, they go back. They go. Ferguson always kind of he was. He was something's. Monkey. He gets the cops called on him the night of this Romania action. Something's wrong here, right? And they go back. And at this point then again, famously, he goes in. He meets with he meets with them with his attorney. They leave and they come back 5 seconds later with the proffer he actually proffers to them. I can give you this, I can give you that. I can give you this, I can give you that. And the way it's told, and I have no way of knowing if this is true, is that Jacob's father did 30 years at Folsom State Prison. He had just gotten out as an old man. Jacob observed, this did not want to do the same to his kid. And cause of I believe some tensions that he had with members of the group and made it. Easy to just, you know. To do it to save himself and turn in an enormous amount of people. And he wore a wiretap, and he tried to get us all on wiretap. He definitely got me on wiretap talking with him about **** that I had done. And you know, the. Grand jury would then tie a ham sandwich. is the term that a New York lawyer or a New York judge once said? You know him saying I did this with this guy and then given details. You know he didn't know my. Name at the time. Is enough and he he went at one point. He went through his I. I was really good about you talked about security precaution. I have like one photo taken of me while I mean by accident. The whole time I was there and he actually found that photo and he gave it to them and he was like this guy's name is Jamie which was a nickname and they ***** figured it out and they figured

it out because I was in New York and I gave a ***** interview with Robin Film Magazine and they put them both together like oh same person. This guy's name is Daniel McGowan actually and there he goes and that was that was the end so.

SCOTT: You are listening to the. Silky smooth sounds of the green. And Red podcast.

BOB: And as always, we thank you for listening to us. We really appreciate it. And then, as always, we would like to ask you to subscribe to us on whatever format you listen to, whether it be on podcast or on our YouTube channel. You could follow us on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. We are on linktree. Slash green and Red Podcast and we now also have folks. And if you have a coffee house or a library or bookstore or someplace like that in your area, that might be a great spot to put some of these. Just ask, that's what. We will send them to you free of charge. To spread the word.

SCOTT: And you can e-mail us a green red. Podcast at Gmail. To get a packet of your of your postcards. And then if you really like us, you can donate and you. Know we we are very happy to get. The donation and have the small base of small donors. So we have and so you can either become a patron at patreon.com back slash Green Red Podcast, or you can make a one time donation. At greenandredpodcast.org and just hit that support button, it's also on the postcards, and so you know. Thanks for listening and enjoy the show.

DANIEL: So, So what happened is, you know I, I ran into Jacob in Oregon when I was visiting a friend of mine at Oregon State Penitentiary. Actually, an eco activist named Jeff Flowers, who had at that time gotten 22 years in prison for an arson. And I was in town and I ran into Jacob and little did I realize I was probably under like serious surveillance starting from the time I got there at Eugene Airport. I didn't know that I didn't see anything and then I ran. He showed up at a conference that I was at in the northern tip of Manhattan and Anna Markets Conference in 2005, and it was weird. And he was weird, and I felt something was weird and I had nod on me and nod at me and nod at me. And then I went to work. One day it was December 7th 2005 and I was like helping with like holiday card. And I'm getting ready to go. I have the holiday cards in my hand and I stand up and there's these two guys in the entrance to my queue and they say my name and they're like they literally close the gap in like a second and I'm handcuffed and they literally say to me, you're going back to Oregon. Like law and order style and I I. Was like oh, gosh and then. That sort of began the legal process and I.

BOB: So you didn't have any. You didn't have any vibe about it in the intervening period like never thought about going going for the underground, or anything like that, or.

DANIEL: I had a *****. No, but I kept thinking to myself God, it was ***** weird to run into. Like and he was weird and he said some stuff that was like red flags. it's actually kind of funny. I was going on like days pretty much days of like no. I was battling insomnia and I went to this conference. I had to get up there at like 9:00 AM. It's at 180 9th St. I. Lived in Brooklyn it took. Me ages and I remember getting up

there. Really early I had heavy bags. And I was tabling all day for Jeff Luurs, and he came up to me and I remember just feeling like this is too ***** weird man and I don't know if it was social grace, that or some kind of social ***** that prevented me from just pretending I didn't know him, which is probably what I should have done. I would have been indicted, but at least I could have. I told myself well, you weren't an idiot and we went for a walk. He mentioned a few sketchy things I played dumb. Didn't matter at that point because they were there, and so you know they got their photos and you know he tried to. He actually brought up that he had run into a a guy that I do know, which I didn't let on that I knew and I asked that guy later and he was like I don't know who you're talking about. And I was like wow and it you. Know, so there was some dread. I remember watching the Weather Underground documentary. And there were people in there that were in prison and I remember just feeling kind of like I wanted to. Throw up, you know, and.

BOB: Was your was your phone tapped or? Were they like looking at your? Emails or.

DANIEL: I don't know, presumably. Yeah, I mean this is post Patriot Act, so they had a lot of as soon as they said the word terrorism it was pretty. In discovery all I was able to find was what they called trace. What do they call? I can't remember the name. It's a funny term key trace or key key, something it's when they. They can get a record of any number, any numbers that call any number. So any number that calls this one house, they had a record of that, but I never saw phone transcripts. I mean that is the that's the juicy discovery that you only get right before you go to trial. It's called Brady material and they love to hold that **** back. So I they're not really. They weren't very keen about. Hearing that a lot of the discovery I got from the lawyers from the other side. Was just *. Like, there'd be like a gem in. There, but it'd be in a page. Of like a. 1000 pages and I religiously went through it so I would be like oh that's the smoking gun, but for the most part you didn't know I was never able to figure out if I was phone tapped. I was never able to figure out if my e-mail was ***** with like he found me, but then again I also if you just follow my social media. I was saying I'm going to grassroots. No more rights conference. So I wasn't living necessarily underground. I was living a normal life with this ***** huge secret.

SCOTT: And so when after. You get arrested. What are you charged with exactly?

DANIEL: So I'm arrested. They bring me to court in Brooklyn. They housed me, but they weren't ready for me, so my arraignment was gonna be the next day I got a. I gave the name of a lawyer that had represented my friend. He came to see me at MCC New York, the prison that Jeffrey Jeff Epstein killed himself in. It's closed now. And I went to court the next day and they told me, you know what I was being charged. With arson. It was the New York Times I. Figured out who you know that it must have been Jacob. We put a cop on the stand to just get more information about where like how were they actually going to grab me in New York and bring. Me back to. Oregon to remove me from that federal district, the local judge had no idea.

I didn't sign anything. The warrant was signed in Oregon. Patriot Act allowed them to come get me. And you know, I knew what it was, but I was. I had no idea, you know, I knew it was gonna be arson. It ended up being for 2/2 arsons. It was arson counts related to every vehicle up in at the place that I helped burn down it was like 15 counts about and it was conspiracy to commit arson and there is no terrorism. Charge terrorism terrorism. Federal crime of terrorism is an enhancement that is put on you later. I presume that it was gonna happen because I've been paying. Attention to the wise use movement and the government's rhetoric and they had already after 911 been really ratcheted up the idea of domestic terrorism. I believe it was Don young, the Alaskan senator or representative on September 12 said these could have been those eco terrorists and he literally said that in Congress when they were all going crazy. Staying at the moon. You know when?

SCOTT: We just started this.

DANIEL: I saw ohhh.

BOB: Week it it got on an airplane, yeah?

DANIEL: That's a shame.

BOB: May may he rest. May he rest in distress.

DANIEL: Horrible person, I mean the senator from Alaska. I mean, are you just not the biggest robber Baron like just like sucking the oil out? I mean just what a horrible person.

SCOTT: I think he was the Congress, the.

DANIEL: Congress yeah OK. Well he he was dreadful.

BOB: The longest serving Republican congressman maybe? Ever yeah.

DANIEL: He was, he was dreadful, but you know, when I saw that rhetoric, I was like there was a certain part of me that was.

BOB: Yeah yeah, really horrible, yeah.

DANIEL: Like wow, my goose is cooked, you know. This this is *****, right? I thought of the money thing right away when I heard about, you know we had a joint terrorism task force in New York and actually on the wiretap with Jacob. They read this part in court and you know, without affect it really comes. Makes me look like an A hole. I said something like he was like, oh you living in New York, why I was like, well, you know my family's from there and you know they only care about. Arab terrorist here and I say it like joking, but when you read it, you're just. Like I'm like in prison years later, having to, you know, explain. To my Arab friends like you know I was ***** joking, right? And they would. Like be mock outraged. How dare you call, you know. Anyhow, my point is like you know, I did at a certain point, look at it like they don't give a **** about me. They don't take this **** seriously, ELF. They look at that as like child's play. It's not, it's not. Putting a plane into a building right? I mean it's like any else.

BOB: Well, there's something a bureaucratic imperative to people have to justify their jobs, and we saw this out because so much money was spent in. So many agencies were created and people you know like they have to go searching for stuff to do.

DANIEL: They had to find people Lackawanna Lodi, CA.

BOB: To specify to find people, yeah.

DANIEL: They just create. They find these terrorism cases based on one rat going. Yeah I think that guy is. I mean just at one point they had said that the number 2IN Al Qaida lived in Lodi. I mean that's just. like what?

BOB: I follow the mob and you see a lot of that where they'll get some like kind of small town gangster, you know, and some you know and they'll they'll turn them into the Godfather just because they have to justify, you know, justify their paychecks.

DANIEL: Yeah, absolutely.

SCOTT: Mm-hmm so you.

BOB: And their appropriations.

SCOTT: You were sentenced to 7 years. How much did you serve the full? Seven years.

DANIEL: No, in the federal system you get good time and even though they were short, changing us at the time I ended up doing about six years in prison. My sentence was six years after the good good time. That and the good time is just like you don't get in trouble and you they just give you this 48 days at the time 48 days. A year good time. And then I did six months at the halfway house, so I did 5 1/2 years in prison. Six years in the halfway house, most of the time I spent in prison, whereas in these communication management units, which ironically I knew about because preparing for sentencing. One of the things we we we actually excuse me not sentencing. We had a huge hearing about the terrorism enhancement and one of the arguments was so was using this Washington Post article to say if you call him a terrorist, he's gonna end up at his unit. That's essentially like non contact visits and phone calls are, you know, listen to and restricted and it's a small tiny group of people. Kept away from everyone else and we argued. That the judge said, sorry. You guys have to argue this case by case. I got the terrorism enhancement I went. To a mainline.

SCOTT: And that just came that just came down to sentencing, right? the judge? Give that or.

DANIEL: Yeah, the judge the judge gave. That it's not found by a jury. I chose to not appeal it but one. Of my Co defendants did. It was affirmed by the higher court, which is in the legal world, what's known as creating bad law. So creating bad precedent I didn't think I was. I don't want to say I was satisfied with seven years, but having What I'll what I'll say about the sentence is what I was facing in the beginning is out. Just it was life life plus some insane amount of time and the reason is I was charged with arson and conspiracy. But I was also charged with this thing called use of a destructive device 924 C. It's just. It's a it's mostly a gun charge or an explosive charge, but when you say the word terrorism in a with a terrorist crime that. The first charge is a mandatory 30 years and the second one is mandatory life. So if I was found guilty, if I went to trial where the jury cannot know about. The consequences of the of the the. Sense right? And they found me guilty thinking I'm gonna get stopped in the wrist or 510 years I would have mandatory life. So like 7 going into sentence and

being allowed to argue for five and the government argued for 10 and I got 7 was like OK so I I didn't appeal it even though I obviously had great issue with the terrorism enhancement. But I had seen the writing on the wall that like. All these attempts to get rid of the higher courts were just smacking it down so you know, I, I just learned to live with the with the stupid. Table so I did 5 1/2 years in. Like I said most of at CMU. I did 26 months at Marion CMU and then I was put in general population and I was on the call with a friend and I said. Something about, well, if the lawyer wants me to see that article, she'll send it to me and that got construed that I was telling the person to send me something through legal mail, and then they just broke me off right away, but me right back in the other scene, you and I did the other 21 months before I was released in 2012.

SCOTT: So so you did. The almost the entire time in the same year.

DANIEL: Yeah, like 48 out of 50.

SCOTT: Over 5 and. 1/2 years.

DANIEL: Five, probably I did a little time in Brooklyn a little time in transit. Time at the county jail. When I was held in. Contempt of court. And then seven months at sandstone, which is a in it's actually near where Jessica Rosen check is. It's in north northeast Minnesota.

SCOTT: And the being in the communication management unit. I mean, I've I've read stories I've read will Potters. Green is the new Brad which talks about your experience there, but can you just tell us a little bit about that?

BOB: Yes, for sure.

SCOTT: About that briefly.

DANIEL: Sure, so I only did a little bit of. Time in general population.

SCOTT: and this is where Dan for folks listening. And this is where Daniel Hale is being. Currently held and we've talked about on the show.

DANIEL: Yeah, that's right. So yeah, I you know I had been in general population. I had known that like you know you have a controlled movement every hour. You have to get to where you're going, but like you go to the library, you go to the dentist. You go to the doctor, you go to the track. I played pickleball, I did karaoke. I played floor hockey. I mean, it's just a totally different world. You know you go to visiting, you have. Contact visits you. Can hug your friends. Have an ice cream bar? Never, and then I go to the CMU and I had known of the CMU's existence. So as soon as I'm put in transit, they tell you I'm like. Where am I going man? I've only been here seven months out of nowhere I get transferred. Oh man, you're going? To marry him. And I'm thinking, Marion, I'm starting to think like Marion used to be the Super Max. So I was. Like and he's like, no, you're going. To that new unit, and I was like Oh my God.

SCOTT: And so the.

DANIEL: Yeah, no, it's actually not about Marion IL.

SCOTT: Marion, OH.

DANIEL: It's the southern tip of yeah there is.

BOB: There there's a. There's a Marion, they're the prison in Marion.

DANIEL: Yeah, and there's a prison there too, but it's the southern tip of of Illinois.

BOB: Oh yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah, let's let's. Say that yeah, I'm from Ohio, yeah.

DANIEL: It's it is like I mean, for instance, the guards root for the Rams. They don't root for the bears. That's how S it is, you know, like and also the bears like. They're all racist. So like Chicago is like scary, right? So they're they identify more with Saint Louis or Paducah KY. That's how it's just. Like the triangle. So I show up there and there's a a friend. I know a friend of mine is. There and this guy Andy. Stepanian and he's Jake Connor's Co. Defendant from from New York. And so that was good just knowing. Like Andy's here, but like there's like 18 dudes there. We occupy 1 range. The phone you you are not able to use it like at a normal institution. You can use the phone 300 minutes a month. So in 15 minute increments, right? Pay for it but. it's not that bad. You can call whenever whenever you can, whenever you are your. Cell, you can just go and. And call here you have to schedule it. There was like a clipboard. You have to write like your your your friend's information, your family's information on that clipboard should just sit there. It was like very sketchy and you had to do it like a week in advance. So if you funky up and like were sick and didn't go out there to like schedule your call you didn't get a call that week. We found out later why that. Was and I'll. Get into it the. The visits were horrendous, they were like. You went from having like a. You know plain Uno, eating, eating, Snickers, and hanging out with, you know, taking photo photos like old style Polaroids to like basically at Marion. I remember going in this in this unit or in this vision booth and putting my arms like this and touching the wall, and then it was through glass with like a phone. And the reason this was all like that? The reason the phone call was a week in advance. The reason is because literally, they have an agency in Virginia. West Martinsburg, Virginia. Listening like you have intelligence analysts that are set up to listen to you right? And so it's outrageous. And then the other thing is that everything you do in that. This in that unit. So like we were, we were, uh, we had like a tiny yard with a bunch of razor. Wire and cages. And we essentially lived in what was the former segregation? Unit at Marriott. So it's like not designed for long term habitation. We had bars. Bars are really tough cause you hear everything on your range. It's echoing, it's very hot, it's you know it's cold in the winter. It's hot in the summer. I mean, it's just a miserable place. I went there. I had a serious sense of dread. I was claustrophobic, I mean not. Like badly so, but enough that I was like Jesus. There's nowhere to go and occasionally, like on like July 4th and stuff, you'd hear the. Hard and it was. Just like wow like you'd hear. You know people get really hyped for like just essentially the burger and fries, right? It's not the holiday. And you would just hear the games and people playing and you're just in this like I remember walking around this like tiny yard. The handball wall is like is like made out of wood so it thumps every time. The ball goes off it. The basketball cage is tiny. You're hitting like the roof every time you shoot with an arc, it was a miserable place and I, you know, my goal was like let's shut

this ***** place down. Let's get out of here. I got sent there without a head. Thing because they say oh, it's a general population unit. But no, it's not. It's a complete punishment unit. It's a they want to bury you there and so they take people who had access to the media like myself, mostly through just connections or just being in New York and having access. And they just want to bury you. So we were a bunch of people with high profile cases, some of. The people in my in my. You know, had written books and were you know professors and really interesting group of people. Multinational, multi generational and they stuck us there and there was mostly Muslim men and then there were some randos like one older Nazi. You know some guy from Louisiana who was? Considered like a. Called the Dixie Mafia, he had Andy, you know, like a animal rights activist, you had a a crazy American Indian native man who was threatened the Court of Appeals with a bomb that. You had a. Just a random. You know you had like a random sex offender. You had this like religious, you know. Fundamentalist dude. It was just a wild group of people and very interesting place through time.

SCOTT: I'm kind of curious about what your support looked like on the outside. Like we you know to move in radical political spaces in particular, you see a lot about prisoner support and or just political support, or liberation political prisoner support. Just wonder if. You could like comment on that minute.

DANIEL: Yeah, sure, my support was amazing. It was we essentially the reason it was good. It was. It's just like built on what had come before and so like we were just lucky to have a a whole bunch of former political prisoners and a lot of people that have done time in New York. And so like one of my quest. It was like I talked to all pretty much all of them before I went in to try to figure out like how to do my time. But we were like learning from people that came before us. I was involved in prisoner support, but like getting indicted. It's just like the people around me. My my close group of friends and comrades just like really up their game. I mean, we did everything really big. You know, like we sold like 3000 T-shirts like that those that T-shirt money and we had an amazing design so everything we did was like big. It was just like we did. We did an art show at ABC No Rio, my friends raised like \$30,000 in like a day. They got like. I mean, Banksy donated art. It was it. Was Eric Drooker borf. I mean, it was all these. Amazing like this was before. Just seeds existed it. Was groups that were you know, the same people around making beautiful art, but you know we just like they were? They were amazed and honestly, from the time I was on house arrest, my friends will come see me all the time. They'd bring me food, they'd bring me to court. They show up. For court, they'd wear court like real court clothes. Look trying to, like, you know. Look good and whatever normal, so the judge wasn't freaking out and you know I had placed this to stay when I was out in Oregon they I mean just raised an enormous amount of money. I was able to pay my lawyers. I mean, not pay. All of it, but you know, just contribute money. Man, it's hard to say, but my support was amazing. When I was inside. I got books whenever I wanted. They spoiled me with money on my commissary and I, my way of doing it was like I want to maximize everything I get. I want to be able to like help as many people as I can,

so all my books were like donated or loaned around I. I helped out my Co defendants with commissaries. Some of them didn't have the same level of access to. The benefit money. I mean I. Just did whatever I can to help people. Realizing that I was just like super. Lucky to receive. This this and you know no it's OK.

BOB: Of everyone in. Your crew were you kind of singled out and got the most severe punishment.

DANIEL: No, that's what's weird. I didn't. I was like a medium in the conspiracy. There were people that were engaged in, uh, you know. So, like, we like to compare it by splitting down the people who cooperated and the people who didn't cooperate right? And so, like the person on the other side, the person that cooperated, I got 84 months and she got 48. So they all got like a benefit to like telling, you know, in this case, like 33 months, right? But there were some people, including, well, Jacob. Definitely got slapped on the race. He got like probation. He got like five years probation and he was involved. In a lot of major actions and sort of like one of the founders, right? So like he was super involved but there were like 2. Or three people who got. Like 13 to 15 year sentences. I mean I was involved in two actions and I got, you know 2 arsons and I got. I got 7 years but there were people that were all like 11:50 and they got like 13 years. So this you know the they definitely these people that cooperated got a got a bit of a benefit for selling us out and you know like I said, like the person on the other side. I didn't get a major role enhancement, which is just another way they can **** you at. Sentencing, but my Co defendant who had the same exact behavior, so to speak. She got a minimum role enhancement, which was, I thought, just very gendered and weird because this is not a person that was. Just like they tried to act sentence and make it look like the women. Involved were like. Along for the ride and. It is completely not true. I mean. Like everyone in our. Group now nobody was anybody's girlfriend. These were all like self actualized people, adults and like fully involved. But you know, when the time came, it's the same thing as pointing the finger. People will will say. Anything to get out of? Trouble, including you know, blaming **** on my dead Co defendant my Co defendant who killed himself. That's a really easy thing to do, you know. And it was done by some of the rats in my case is super *****. Tacky so you know.

SCOTT: I'm a bit curious, kind of hearing. All of this. And maybe like to hear a little bit about. How you feel about all? The about the actions, now just in retrospect and in 2022.

DANIEL: I mean, it's hard to. I'm a really critical person and probably like most critical people or should be critical myself more than anything. So like I, I like to see them in context of like where we were at the time and the issues that we're still facing, and so morally speaking, I don't see a problem with it. I'm. Certainly happy that. Nobody was ever harmed. I mean, the only person that was ever harmed. Umm in in any of these actions it. Was some I believe somebody burnt their eyebrows off accidentally and it was. One of us. So you know, I'm really glad that that happened, but we live in a world where there's danger, so I. I don't think. We can ever, you know, and we live like very close to our. Lives right in. America, for the most part, right?

Like we're. Not like dealing with like. ***** horrible situations. I mean, even even prison is like way different than outside, you know. And so I, I don't know like there's a certain part of me that's like. Well, you know the world can be dangerous and you do your best and keep keeping yourself and your loved ones safe. And obviously, like I don't want, I want people to be. They want people to be harmed, I mean. If we wanted to. Like hurt people, we would have hurt. I mean, this is like it's it was not like we were not able to and there were. You know, obviously like you know, theoretical discussions about all kinds of different tactics. But you know, so I have a mixed bag. I I'd like to. At some point, you know, it's 20 years later and I went from every single person I knew my life. Knowing about this and even be recognized by strangers randomly like I've had some funny moments where people have read my name and be like, oh, I saw a film about you and it's super like. You know, I just wanna you know I'm not a very shy person but boy that gets me every time I'm like Oh my God but I like to I like to think that history will think kindlier kinder of us than the judge or then the FBI. I mean, I don't know like faced with like what we're dealing with and what we were dealing with, which is the same thing, but. Maybe not as bad. What are you supposed to do to? To combat this, you know, like this is like even making contact with you. Scott, I realized that I, uh, I'm now remembering and dealing with the idea of what the **** are you doing with in this world, like how? What are you doing? to fight climate change or the ecological collapse like and it's a tough one for me, honestly. I feel you know fairly distraught.

BOB: So make you feel when you see like the guys on January 6th who stormed the capital and they're getting like 3-4 years.

DANIEL: Ohh I mean it's hilarious. They whine like crazy.

BOB: You know, kind of. we're trying to.

DANIEL: You know, like.

BOB: Yeah, yeah, they're they're snowflakes, right? But you just they're trying to like guillotine, the vice president that yeah, yeah, yeah.

DANIEL: Yeah, they whine like crazy. Yeah, they're well. I think they're super soft and I think it kind of like is really connected to their ideology, which is like our ideology is like Super Snowflake. It's super sensitive, unable to deal with like the change in world we live in. And like all the white man is not, you know, like, uh, paramount, it's like. Well, that's because that's oppression you know, like so. I don't know. Watching the way they act inside is horrific and I've been researching it a lot and finding out that unfortunately a lot of the. Rules not the January 6 people yet, but a lot of the right wing people are making their way into the CMU's, which is obviously an issue that concerns me. But what will happen is these January 6 people. They'll go into general population. Prison and then. They'll take pictures with swastikas and the counter terrorist people will break them off and send them to the. CMU, I mean it's sort of like. Like what I see happening.

BOB: One last thing, because I know we're getting close here and it's really kind of more at the beginning. One of the first things you said where you talked about.

I think I don't know if it was about the left generically, but how you kind of delve more, prioritize tactics over strategy and how we're not really good at strategy. And this is something that I know Scott and I have talked about a lot. The left is kind of. Sometimes immune to strategic, you know, kind of considerations. I just you know you want to kind of talk a little bit about that more. Just kind of as an organizer, as an activist it. It doesn't have to. Be specific to what you did.

DANIEL: We were getting addicted to the bang, so to speak, and the instant stuff really took over. There was aspects of our group that were quite adventurers. And it's interesting because at the time my role in the group was researcher and wordsmith so to speak. I was a strong personality and I was able to, as a newer person, shift the focus onto topic area, so I was really good at that.

I felt the way to do it is; what do we want? How do we get there? Not what are we going to do about it? What I mean we were backwards.

This is a group of people like there was a small core of us that were like super fucking students of past movements. So I was one of the people in my group who went to Evergreen. I remember there was a room in the house that just had like 100 books taken out from the library; Red Brigades, Red Army Faction, Direct Action, Black Panthers. Everything we could find to... we don't want to recreate some of the mistakes, like how can we learn from that?

So at some levels we were really good, we didn't go down some really predictable paths like 'let's rob banks'. You know like that could be a real disaster for a group like us. You could have ended in one action right? Someone gets killed and whatever.

But we were so bad in terms of well if we wanna stop old growth logging, if we wanna stop these things, how can we? We were literally like 'well if we put them out of Commission, they can't log'. Well OK, true, but like how hard is it to put a group out of commission. I mean, it's like Jake has talked about SHAC (Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty), eventually the US government stepped in to prop up Huntington. We didn't get to that point with logging, we didn't get to that point with GMO stuff,

And some of what we did backfired in that we had a little element of pranking-ness, a little sarcasm, and some of the things we did. I don't know if that served our goals and I think if you would have asked us all separately 'what was your strategy? What's your goal here?' We might have had different answers.

We met a lot, it's not like we didn't meet. We have these little sessions, these school shares the government called the Book club, but nobody called it that and we should have really been talking about what did we want to do in this year and where can we get if we really stretch.

We wanted to get more people involved, yet some of the things we did pushed people away. We released a highly technical manual about how to do these actions which I think allowed people to go 'Oh, they got it covered, look how technical these people are, I'm not technical'. I probably made devices that didn't work, so there was room for people that were not technically involved. So we did things that were against our own interest and disconnected from the movement and for security reasons were

disconnected and it ended up with us making some bad decisions security wise, but also just trusting the wrong people for expediency. I trusted a few people because I wanted this shit to happen. And in order to do so, I had to trust this person, and even though I had like little Ding Dong's going off of and that's problematic.

I mean, easy to say in 2005, but when you're in the business it is messy. I mean any kind of organizing is messy, we're humans, we make mistakes. Sometimes we take shortcuts and some of what we did was taking shortcuts. We could have slowed down dramatically and been much more effective.

But then again, I don't know, easy, I don't. I don't blast the path right? It is what it is. And I am here now, right? So I'm not gonna. I'm not gonna kill myself. I said some I did some dumb dumb things about getting wiretapped and for years it would. I would think about it and I'd feel my ears go red and at this point I'd like try to just forgive myself and be like you know what dude you were doing your. Best like. Let's just calm. Down like, I'd rather make the mistake than not. Try and not make any mistakes right so?

BOB: I think. Now it's just kind of my last comment really. Is that? Like I think by Jake, who's one of my favorite people and you have a lot you know, even if you're not into you know your issue is an animal rights or or. Logging or go forest or whatever you do. You know, like there's a lot to learn from the kinds of experiences and organizing you know, whatever, whatever you're you're dealing with that that Jake and you and you know, I I, I hope that people understand that that you know, they may not really care even about your.

DANIEL: Yeah, yeah, that's true.

BOB: If you know there's a lot there.

DANIEL: Yeah I do. I do a little bit of talking to classes and stuff. I'm going to be speaking to some high school students soon, and it's always a little scary when I'm talking to minors. Yeah, nice. I don't wanna like be perceived as like rah rah and anything. I also don't. Wanna poo poo them? Because people used to do that **** to me and I was like relax old man. That old man was like 30 at the time. But you know, I was like, you know, kids are going to do what they're going to do, right? And let's hope they have the answers better answers than we did, you know?

SCOTT: My my only last question is if you want. To talk a little bit about what you're what. Some of your work looks like now.

DANIEL: Oh yeah, totally.

SCOTT: So obviously speaking to high. School kids, which is great.

DANIEL: Yeah, so I I'm doing a little speaking like I don't know if it's the spring like everyone's waking up but I did a webinar with CDC last night talking about supporting people in prison and when they get out. And so I I'm on the board of advisors of the Civil Liberties Defense Center. It's run by a good friend of mine. Born Reagan, who is one of the only people in any organization to support us when. They fell the list of people who would not say a word to us or you know is very long and Lauren was not one of those people and so I do what I can tell CLDC. They were

representing my friend, Eric King, who was just found guilty or excuse me, found not. Guilty at a. Trial by a jury no less for assaulting. A federal Lieutenant in the BOP. So I was working on Eric King's campaign since about 2016. I also locally work with New York City books through bars we send, we send books to people in prison and in about 40 different states. I'm on their board and I I'm a volunteer. I work with the anarchist Black Cross Federation and mostly help raise money for their. What's called their war chest program, which does sends small stipends of like \$50.00 a month to a list of about 20 different political prisoners. Most of the people have been in for decades and either their families are long gone or, you know they have no means to even buy commissary. And so I work on. That I am on the certain days collective which creates and produces an annual calendar. It's a like a calendar with 12 pieces of art and original artwork centered around a theme. The subtitle of the counter is called Freedom for political prisoners, and it was started by three political prisoners in New York State about 20 years ago. All three of whom are out. Right now, which is a. And I'm trying to think what else. So I also work on the Board of advisors of the Coalition for Civil Freedoms, which are is a group that works with Muslim people who are entrapped by the US government, many of whom I did time without the CMU's and so ioffer sort of expertise or guidance in their work. The most interesting thing I've been working on lately though is this kind of random thing that happens, which is essentially what you could call consulting, but it's not. I don't have any kind of title. People will reach out to me. Hey, my friend was arrested for blank in blank and I know that you've been through this. Can you help? And so I will often help a person. Accused of crime. Or a person getting ready to go into prison, especially if it's federal prison. And then I connect them to a lot of other people that have done time. So like for instance, there is a person that's going to be going into prison next week. They're going to maintain a little bit of low profile, so unfortunately I can't say much more than that. But I am connecting this person with my Co defendant, hopefully who did time at the prison that they're going to be at, right? So I do that. I help set up defense committees. I've been working a little bit with Daniel Hale support people right before he went in when he was in jail, and then I kind of gathered he was going to be going to the CMU and I kind of flagged that for them and now he is at the CMU and it is a depressing place and so Daniel, you know, Daniel Hell can definitely use some support. He has like probably close to three or four years left on his. The other last thing that I did is I did a little of this with Jessica Reznicek personally when she was out on bond like I was. It's a very rare thing to be out. On bond and you know I have. Connections with our her legal team and I asked to kind of be put in touch with her because I knew she was going to go to federal prison she. Got eight years longer than I got. I think a kind of drastic sentence she also. Has a federal. Crime of terrorism enhancement, which is appalling. She is held at Wasicka which is a low security women's prison, really quite close to sandstone. It's the existence. When she's told me about it.

SCOTT: Which which state is that? Which state is that in?

DANIEL: Minnesota, So yeah she is there. She's at a low security prison. You know it's just under COVID federal prison. Sounds a lot worse. There's a lot of lockdowns. Some of the people I support, like Jessica or Daniel Baker Baker. Excuse me, he's a. He's a. anti-fascist that was accused of threatening right wing people and in Tallahassee. He's at FCI Memphis. They're on constant lockdown over and over and over. You know throwing his books out and things like that, so I would say, like the consulting really is just like a more formal. A way of paying it forward of like trying to turn these lemons that you know I'm not a victim. In this situation, I mean I am a I. Was a partisan. I wasn't entrapped. I mean, unfortunately, I was wiretapped. I could have avoided that had I. Been a little more thoughtful, but you know, I'm not. I went through the system, it has greatly affected me. I struggle. With my own life. Personal mental health issues from that and prior to that and so. I do, I'm just doing what I can to turn those lemons into lemonade and you know, I see it as a act of solidarity, which is very in line with my politics but also just like trying to be a good person. I essentially am just like the same person I was when I was like 5 years old and I was like a little too good or like. Trying to save. Cats on the street, but like you know, obviously my friends are not cats. My comrades are not cats. But you know, I'm just trying to do my best to like you know, if you were the recipient of this like amazing solidarity and mutual aid like how can you not like just really try to make the same for other people. You know so.

SCOTT: Bob, did you have some?

BOB: Like yeah, I just know thanks. It's a. It's a an amazing story and I appreciate you talking with us.

DANIEL: I appreciate it.

BOB: Thank you.

SCOTT: Yeah, thanks for coming on and joining us and telling us your story folks. You've been listening to the silky smooth sounds of Daniel McGowan.

BOB: Talking about **** cracks me up sorry, sorry.

SCOTT: Talking about his experience as part of the Earth Liberation Front and as a political prisoner and work he's doing now a very important story. Much appreciation for you coming. On this is the Freedom Read podcast.

DANIEL: Thank you.

SCOTT: You can check us out on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. If you're watching this on YouTube. That subscribe button we're smash quickly growing we're growing we're growing fast.

DANIEL: I understand you could get postcards somehow too.

SCOTT: Yeah, if you wanna. A postcard you can send an e-mail to green and Red podcast Green Red podcast at Gmail and send us your address and a number we're running. We're running low. So we may be. Ordering some more.

BOB: Put them out at bookstores and dispensaries and libraries, and friendly bars and places like.

SCOTT: That, and thanks to all the people out there already been doing that. We actually have some a bunch out and give it a bunch. Out to be passed around and if.

You want to help fund the postcards. You can go to greenredpodcast.org and hit. Port and make a one time donation. Or you can become a patron at patreon.com. Back slash Green Red Podcast and basically to join the green and red crew. You just need to donate \$3 a month, which is less than the cost of a beer, particularly if you live in Brooklyn or Francisco or the Montrose in Houston, pretty much anywhere.

BOB: Horrendous, and anyway, yeah, yeah. Also, if you. Are on Facebook. Check out the green, red, green and red page and Scott's page because he is doing a fundraiser for both his environmental work and for our media work so you can also donate that way to Scott's birthday fundraiser.

SCOTT: Yeah yeah thanks.

BOB: That's going to. I think you're turning 40 this year, right?

SCOTT: Yeah, I'm 35.

BOB: 35 OK. Yeah, I don't look at the other 30.

DANIEL: You can find me at, uh, can I get my shout out? You can find me at the tiny.

BOB: Of course, of course.

DANIEL: Raccoon on Twitter. So it's the tiny raccoon, and that's on Twitter, and you can find me. Also one of my projects certaindays.org. And yeah, you can find from there I post. I tweet a lot about prisoner stuff, obviously.

BOB: We'll we'll put that in the show notes, too.

SCOTT: Including the show notes too.

DANIEL: Oh, perfect.

SCOTT: Yeah, folks. Folks, it's been great talking, great talking with you. Daniel, everyone else out there and make a lot of trouble and misbehave. And we'll talk to you again soon.

09/20/2022 - Dousing the BBC's Fake News Before It Can "Burn Wild" w/ Former ELF Member Daniel McGowan (G&R 182)

Synopsis

Sep 20, 2022

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cU8tzy0v2gk>

Green & Red: Podcasts for Scrappy Radicals

<https://greenandredpodcast.org/>

<https://www.youtube.com/@GreenandRedPodcast/>

Sept. 19, 2022

ABOUT THIS EPISODE

The BBC has released a new podcast series called "Burn Wild." It tells the story of radical environmental movements 20 years ago, the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) and the subsequent "Green Scare." There is much flawed analysis in the series to say the least. Other critiques include the juxtaposition of right-wing extremists and left-wing "extremism," the imbalance of law enforcement and industry voices in the series and platforming ELF member turned snitch Chelsea Gerlach (without discussing her cooperation with the feds).

In our latest, we discuss the BBC's series (or at least the first two episodes) with former ELF member, and return G&R guest, Daniel McGowan (@support_daniel). We discuss the series, how liberals make heroes of the FBI, the current media discuss around "climate sabotage and more.

About Daniel//

Daniel is an environmental and social justice activist from Queens, NY.

He was part of two ELF actions in 2001. And arrested as part of Operation Backfire. He was charged in 2005 with 15 counts of arson, property destruction and conspiracy, all related to two actions in Oregon in 2000, claimed by the Earth Liberation Front (ELF). On June 4, 2007, McGowan was sentenced to seven years in federal prison and ordered to pay \$1.9 million in restitution. He served part of his time in a super secret prison unit called Communication Management Unit, or CMU.

Outro- "Give the Anarchist a Cigarette" by Chumbawamba

Links//

- BBC: Burn Wild (<https://bbc.in/3dkP0wW>)
- Crimethinc: Green Scared (<https://bit.ly/3BnVHpM0>)
- G&R Episodes Related to this Episode//
- Leslie James Pickering on the ELF, the Green Scare and "Burning Books" (<https://bit.ly/3PX4Pb0>)
- From Environmentalist to "Domestic Terrorist" with former Earth Liberation member Daniel McGowan <https://bit.ly/3uKPlha>
- Follow Green and Red//
- G&R Linktree: <https://linktr.ee/greenandredpodcast>
- Check out our rad website: <https://greenandredpodcast.org/>
- NEW LINK! Join our Discord community: <https://discord.gg/ApQcg3ch>
- Support the Green and Red Podcast//
- Become a Patron at <https://www.patreon.com/greenredpodcast>
- Or make a one time donation here: <https://bit.ly/DonateGandR>

This is a Green and Red Podcast (@PodcastGreenRed) production. Produced by Bob (@bobbuzzanco) and Scott (@spark1969). "Green and Red Blues" by Moody. Editing by Isaac.

Transcript

INTRO: Welcome to Green and Red Scrappy politics for scrappy people. A regular podcast on radical environmental and anti-capitalist politics by Bob Besanko and Scott Parker.

SCOTT: Welcome to the silky smooth sound bring the red Podcast I'm your co-host Scott Parkin in Berkeley CA today and as always I am joined by.

BOB: Bob Usenko from the Montrose in Houston and welcome back Scott. We're back on kind of a more regular routine now and so we hope that all our listeners and viewers are happy to get more of us who who doesn't want more of Scott and Bob right?

SCOTT: It's true, it's true. It's true story.

BOB: And no. Absolutely, never mind. That's going to. I was going to say just ask my exes, right?

DANIEL: I would like more put my vote in.

BOB: Thank you, thank you. So you're you're climbing up the ladder. Favorite guest.

DANIEL: I love the patriot content that I'm getting.

BOB: Oh wow.

DANIEL: Go to the green and Red Podcast page and smash that subscribe. Button and also go. To Patreon and become a Patreon like give.

BOB: Big big big boss big. He's not getting paid to say that either, so, but yeah, thank you for following us. Continue to do so, go to the website, go to the Patreon page and we're in the process now getting some swag. We're going to have some green and red drip, maybe some T-shirts or hats. You know we got books, so there's just the people are demanding it, right? What can I say? We're catching up the Chapo and then.

DANIEL: Gonna give them what? They want for example, that's simple.

SCOTT: Yeah, yeah, and if you like what we say, you like what you hear and you like the guests that we have, like today's guest. Check us out at greenandredpodcast.org and hit that you can hit that support button and make a one time. Nation or if you want to become a regular supporter of the Green Red Podcast and go to our Patreon page. At [patreon.com back slash Green Red Podcast](http://patreon.com/backslashGreenRedPodcast) and shout out to the new, the two new patrons we've had in the last week or so. Very happy about that, and then also very happy to have a return guest today. A few months ago we talked with Daniel McGowan who is rejoining us today from the Big Apple. Somewhere up in that major. Right, Daniel is an environmental and social justice activist from Queens, NY. He was part of the Earth Liberation Front. He was part of two Earth Liberation Front actions in 2001 and arrested as part of Operation Backfire. You can listen to our interview with him back. I believe it was back in March. Daniel was charged in 2005 with 15 counts of arson, property destruction and conspiracy. All related to these. Two actions in Oregon and then. In June 2007, Daniel was sentenced to seven years in federal prison in order to pay \$1.9 million in restitution, and he served his time in the Super Secret prison unit called the Communication Management Unit. Daniel, welcome back to the Green and Red Podcast. Always happy to have you.

DANIEL: Here yeah, thanks for having me on. I appreciate it. I'm coming for Jay Conroy. I think he's. Up to four appearances, but I figure. If I could just. Throw myself into some. Drama or conflicts maybe? I can see. It coming on.

BOB: I think yeah, even with Scott Crow now, I believe right.

SCOTT: Yeah yeah, then there's that too.

BOB: Right?

SCOTT: Today we're going to be talking about a a very we're going to be talking about a I guess you could say a more specific thing. More specific topic. The BBC, The British Broadcasting Corporation, has released an 8 part podcast called. While which is the story of. Environmental radicals, environmental extremists as they like the term it, and this episode probably will be. A little bit of a. Of a history getting into a little bit, some specifics around some of the stuff that we talked about with Daniel and that we actually also talked with Leslie Picker in a couple of months ago. We get to some specifics on that sort of history of the ELF. But more importantly, this is going to be a bit of a a critique of the BBC and of mainstream media and how they take on some of these issues. And just to kind of be upfront about it, is that you know, we've we've

identified some problems with burn wild and we want to talk about some of those, some around the media narrative, and which, like the BBC, is creating with this series. But then the other thing I want to say to name a problem is that they talk about fugitives and one fugitive in particular. I want you to do what? And name the name and draw attention and raise awareness to that fugitive and we're not going to do that today because we don't want to raise further awareness about them and just we just want you to know that we're not ignoring it. We're just choosing not to talk about it and so just like kind of an important thing that we just want to put out there. And then the two episodes. Are out there if you want to check them out and after you've listened to us and hear our critiques so you can think about. It with a more. A more critical. Eye, but. I'm going to just kind. Of start off with Daniel. You know, Daniel, that the producers began by framing the narrative by talking about their own background. So the producer talks a lot about her own background about how she's like covered. She's always like I've covered domestic extremism, and it's mostly been right wing. And now we've decided to tell the story of left, environmental extremists. There's even, I think, mentioned about how law enforcement. Told them to do something on left wing extremists. But can you actually talk a little bit about how this framing and the two episodes? I've heard she frames it. As you know, almost comparing the two it's like it's some sort of balance between the two, but can you talk a little bit about how this distorts the story?

DANIEL: Well, you know I when I. Was approached by these two individuals. I received a a very nice e-mail pitch about. You know the project and how it was about assessing the impacts of the actions taken by. Myself and others many years ago and looking look into the future right and it's gonna be cross continental, intercontinental, whatever and. You know, obviously, like. When you're gonna pitch, they're not telling you everything, and also there's the. There's the obvious fact that projects change whether or not people. Want to? You know, projects change their pitch to, you know you have corporate bosses at BBC that impose their agenda and whatnot. But one thing I did know is I did know that one of the producers, or actually both of them have engaged in podcasts covering, you know, the far right, including. Bundy and the nature preserve take over and over again. Things like that so. It kind of gave me pause for a second. You know, I I listen to a. Little bit of it. I don't necessarily agree with the framing. I think the. Framing of extremism is a really strange one. It it's it it. Postulates that you are in. You know your default position is the center and then everything. To your right or to your left is extreme. The problem that. I have with that is one of perspective that the center is the nightmare that we live. The center is the status quo, it's the default. It's cops everywhere. It's homelessness. It's crisis related to the environment. It is disasters. I mean, it is just the normal day-to-day horror show that is, you know you say United States, but really the modern life, like modern industrial life where we like are going to our jobs and punching in and just. You know? You know, prisons, massive, massive prison populations, I mean this. This is the center, so if you were. I'm OK with not being a centrist. I'm OK with not being left-leaning or

liberal leaning. I mean I don't want anything to do. With the center. I wanna I? I have wanted to change the narrative of what we are dealing with my whole life, so the I guess on that level. Then if you know you want to say. That my thoughts and my actions are extremely related to that. OK, and the problem I have with extremism. This language is that it's very othering It kind of creates space between people and the subjects of the subjects. Being former members of the IT creates this process of othering, by which. Like when you. When you consider. People buy these labels. Domestic extremist extreme extremism Ecoterrorist uses that quite a few. It's just to me it obscures the reality. It it doesn't actually add anything to it. It just says I find myself firmly in the center and these people are very far away from me. So I. Saw you know the previous podcasts are you? Know to the viral individuals. Studying, you know, or assessing right wing activism if you want to call it that with the takeover of the. Preserve and all that and. You know? what bothers me is to suggest that. The left wing. Groups like ELF or the right wing groups like Proud Boys or Nazis or Atomwaffen Division or any of them are similar. While perhaps they're similar in that they're not near the center, they're not similar in the sense that you know when you look at like what ELF and Alf, for instance, have done it's targeted in. The behavior of individuals it's targeted and not even individuals as much as systems, right? Production of meat. Factory farming intersection log in genetically genetic modification development. So when I have been involved in actions, I did not say I want to target Mr. John Johnson because he's brown or he's fat or I don't like him for whatever reason. He's gay, it's therefore I don't so we don't target Pete. I mean, we don't target identity. We don't target people who they? Are I don't seek. And annihilation of people that have been employed. By the logging industry. Right wing people you know. Far right, you know extremists in the mind the producers. Do actually do that? and I take their, I take their rhetoric at face value. You know their blood and soil and killing people. I think that when you're the difference between us and them is that they are talking about whipping. People off the face of the planet or allowing them to live in subpar conditions. You know, or some kind of weird homeland thing you know. I mean, when you hear what the far right says, it's like that's kind of what it is. It's murder, but it's also. And just like, yeah, as long as you get away from me, you separate from me and we have access to resources, then we'll be OK. So I take offense that at the framing of the EFS extremeness or as like the left wing equivalent of Nazis.

BOB: Well, well, really kind of the one. Of the important things she said, which really got me at one point. You know, kind of when they do the dramatic music. Stuff she said. How far is too far to go when the planet is burning? And it's just, that's a. That's a gut punch, right? Like if the plant is burning. Then there's no. Nothing's too far to go right. I mean, we're talking about extermination of you know everything is alive, right? and so maybe.

DANIEL: Like, why ask the question if you then are going to castigate the people who chose direct action.

BOB: Which, yeah, well, it's implicit that there's there is a too far to go. So you know the plan. It's OK for the planet to burn as long as you don't, you know. If you if. If you can't go too far right.

DANIEL: But I guess maybe you could speak.

BOB: 'cause I think one of the things that that I didn't hear and I haven't listened to yet, but I'm sure they don't bring this up and it kind of follows up on what Scott you. That you're dealing with A to me, you know, kind of. I hate to use the word existential crisis because it's overused then it doesn't really mean what they. Think it means but. Climate change is an existential crisis, right? It could destroy you, know, all humans, animals, plants, you name it, right? So it's big, so in that regard, I mean, you're not out there trying to like stop drag queen reading hours or ban books or get rid of teachers who allegedly teach whatever critical race theory might be. Right, you're dealing with the environment, so I mean, could you make a a positive case that there is no? Remember, Barry Goldwater said there's no no extremism in defense of freedom, right? Could you argue that there's really no extremism in defense of actually saving the planet? Is there there? There is no no way to go too far when the planet is burning.

DANIEL: I mean I I'm. Not, I'm not totally sure if I. Agree with that because you.

BOB: Well, let's let's take out the idea.

DANIEL: Know but I understand your point. I understand your.

BOB: Yeah, I mean, because they do point out that you got you guys the movement made a point of not harming people right?

DANIEL: Point and Yeah, and

BOB: So I think that's that's.

DANIEL: I mean the that wasn't that wasn't because it wasn't. Available in the universe of options, it was because it was. It flew from our politics of. Not right? I didn't want to become a, you know somebody that goes out and kills people or kidnaps people and holds them hostage. Because you know, I obviously care about the ecological crisis. I just think that the cost like at at what point am I not even? Like I'm concerned about the world, I obviously don't want to just kill people because I'm concerned about the ecological crisis. And that's where I find. Like the use of extreme, really funny. It's like well, is it extreme? I mean there is one extreme like the most extreme thing, and property destruction is not. I mean not by far right, and so there's. A whole lot of things that people in the world. Have done and to call us the extreme. It's just, it's just kind of absurd, but I don't know, it's language of the government. It is language of the prosecution.

SCOTT: Well and the other interesting thing about the both both episodes do this is that one. They have a a much more sophisticated production than the Green Red Podcast, and so there's lots of dramatic music. And then they have like overtones of. People talking about the world burning, but then. they also have this. They do this a couple of times where they have like the overtones of things from the far right,

and so there's like footage and at least in episode 2 I'm most familiar with because I just listened. To that yesterday. But like you know, footage from like January 6th where you know this is an example of extremism, where you know, and that example of extremism. Is like a lot of. Islands there were, you know they've. They've uncovered plots where you know some of those right wingers were planning to like kidnap members of Congress and like 5 people died and things like that. And there's this sort of like juxtaposition of the two is off. You know what we're talking about here is that you know, doing something to save the planet and have inexplicitly we're not going to. Any living thing versus you know if you want to call. It a movement you know who's who's you know? They showed up armed at the capital that.

BOB: Yeah, yeah, I guess the ohh.

DANIEL: No, and I mean we. Sorry no, I'm. Uh, my my my guess is that like.

BOB: Given that the purpose of what, what? And the environmental environments do isn't a much broader array of tactics necessary, and I, through the word, extremism out there because that was what she said, right? How far is too far to go when you're when the planet is burning? And I guess my question would be, I mean the planet is burning is a big deal, it's as big as it gets. It's the biggest deal, so it doesn't that require. A much broader array of tactics and idea. Is that that? I would agree with you when you're when you're trying to save the world. It's not extreme, right? That's actually a very conservative idea, isn't it?

DANIEL: Yeah it is. I mean, I just what I find is that like they pose the question, but I don't think they're as of yet, given it a very serious consideration. I think what they're. I think they're posing the question, but then comment like this was too much. This makes me feel uncomfortable. You know the tone of the podcast is something we could. Talk a lot about. But yeah, it's. Just you know, the true crime vibe. You know, and the music the music is actually. Probably my favorite part. Although sometimes I'm listening and I go. Is that wood? Burning like what is that like? It's a lot of ***** sounds. It's some crickets and stuff like that and generally I find it fine but it is. Being used to amp. the drama, you know. I don't think you should worry that you don't have those sound effects, and I prefer this like more serious, thoughtful consideration.

SCOTT: Maybe, maybe we'll up our game someday.

DANIEL: Or maybe you could do like the shock jock thing. Like when I say something go like hit one. Of those you know, like.

SCOTT: Or like an audience gasping, yeah?

SCOTT: Yeah, yeah, you know the. The other thing about the about the.

SCOTT: Production about the podcast, not the production of it, but you know, there's a lot of different voices in which they give credence to and just to kind of start off with in episode one and episode two, they talk with a lot of cops and FBI agents, which is also, you know they talked to. They talked to Leslie. In episode one and they talked to another person, but we're gonna talk about a little bit more detail here. Second, but then there's like a number of cops and industry people also like, definitely

like. Put in their frame in their media narrative, which kind of feeds into this like extremism part the industry person in episode one, I believe referred to the ELF as.

SCOTT: A cult cult.

SCOTT: Yeah, episode 2, the title of it is actually called the family, which we can get into if you want to so that we have all. Kinds of flags that but yeah.

BOB: Just well and the cop said, you know, they're. A bunch of young kids they don't know. What they're doing kind of thing, yeah?

SCOTT: Young and confused young.

DANIEL: And yeah, I mean he wasn't confused. He knew he. Wanted to be a cop because that was a cop probably. And he's a cop. Now so you know, I'm glad. He's not confused, but yeah, it's so. I mean, episode one was pretty bad and one of the reasons it was bad. 'cause it was. Just like a preponderance of voices from you know, law enforcement or industry and you. Know I'm sure that they could be like. Well, that's different like. The difference between law from the industry. And the victims. But this to me, I just hear a bunch. Of people just saying like. You were wrong, you were. They talked to. Greg Harvey, who is an investigative. A cop from Eugene Police Department. If you recall from the picture you followed this a really funny scene of him with just like a wig on and he was he was undercover. He was one of the people that arrested me. They talked to Chuck Tilby, who. Is like published. Articles apparently like. Academic articles about like anarchism that like tactics and posits himself as a bit of an expert on understanding anarchists.

SCOTT: I'm sure he, I'm sure he. Shops himself out as a consultant for companies too.

DANIEL: Yeah, like you said, there is the there is industry person but there's not just that. There is. There's voices that have not. We have not heard from yet, but we hear in the background, right? You're the industry industry person, that's like. Yeah, they did this for a bunch of. Wood, you know? I mean, that was like his comment, right? So I'm dying to hear. Who that person is? But there's. A whole bunch of those people who are like. I think being posited as the victims of the, you know, the people that like extract stuff from the forest and they were upset that they were targeted. I don't know who it is yet, but. So there's just a lot right and. So then on the other side you have myself, you know former ER person Leslie James Pickering, former EF press officer. You have Joe Debe, who is a. Person under indictment and his lawyer. And then you know you have you. Have my cooperating Uber cooperating codefendant Chelsea? So the problem is, is just. There's just so much and there's other. Defendants other codefendants they could have talked to. There are advocates and supporters, including people that I tried to put them in touch with. You know, for whatever reason they did not. End up on the series, right so? You're just getting a lot of law enforcement vibe. You know they went and they sought out statements from the Bureau of Land Management about wild. Courses which in itself is not a bad thing. But just to read the statement verbatim. And kind of not like really analyze. they asked the FBI about the question. The FBI had a ridiculous answer for. It so yeah, I right now. It's just

feeling. It's like a lot of industry people. And then they discordantly will go across the pond. To talk to British activists who. You know, it's fine that people don't identify by their name, but it's a little. It's a little distorted when you're trying to listen, and suddenly they're talking to anti roads. People in the UK and not really even talking about like the campaign they're working. On so I find it a little. The Wildering and I wish they would have talked to more like actors on this side that are were involved in the case because the you know the podcast is largely about backfire, but there's lot of other cases and there are other people they could have talked to. So episode 2 to go on the family. The family in quotes as soon as I saw that I had been, you know, this podcast is over 8 weeks and you can imagine it's somewhat of a Band-Aid being ripped off. Having to confront some of the.

SCOTT: The family.

DANIEL: Again, and so I wake up at 7:00 o'clock and I see that title and I'm just sucking my teeth because the family is a fictional term used by the United States Attorney's Office to talk about talk about the defendants. In this case. I think in the. Podcast they refer to it as a.

SCOTT: Subset of the.

DANIEL: ELF and the family was a group of people. That would meet on like somewhat of a. Quarterly basis to discuss tactics and strategy. So the truth is that it was people that met regularly or irregularly to discuss strategy and tactics. But the idea that this group had a name and it. Was the family. Is and it's absurd about they introduced? I'm sorry.

SCOTT: Maybe hearing it just. It also alludes to other things which are negative.

DANIEL: I mean, I'll, I'll get into I'll. Get into that. The FBI has asked about it and says that Maman, Maman, using that name, aided did not aid them in their prosecution, which maybe it will spit my coffee up because the truth is that like what, when you say the family, what will come up for? Many people in the United States is the Manson family or the mafia. It is actually a trope that's being used before some of the people that were engaged in the robbery of the Brinks armored car in the 1980 in 1981. They were like people that were from the Black Liberation Army and the Weather Underground. They were also called the family by prosecution. So it's this thing where like people that don't really understand. AK The prosecution FBI ATF the media. We'll we'll just like. Try to figure you out. Try to figure out your countercultural, you know they don't know anything about the counterculture? They don't know anything about an underground group. They don't know anything about radical environmentalists. So they will just like read stuff. And then try to make sense of it. And so the how they make sense of it is that we were this group. And I suppose we have. Like a hierarchical structure, they had a leader. And at the top. Was a was a. Guy that knew everything and then we. Were the family. Because we were brothers and sisters and. So it's just, it's just. Sensationalist that the FBI blames the media. But I mean, as you know, I watched the press conference by Alberto Gonzales in 2006 and he says the family within one paragraph. So I don't really know how the media

made this up. I think this is the government said it. The media took it and ran with it because that's what they do and it's what they're doing now. And the reason that's that's. Obnoxious is who the hell would identify with Charles Manson and his family? I mean, we when you call us the family, you make it sound like we're a cult and like you said that industry person literally called us a cult in the first. Episode and that process is again. It's more other if you could just make these if you can make us sound as crazy and kooky as possible like a cult, nobody will care and so once you once you dehumanize people, you could talk about throwing them in prison for 1000 years. You can talk about giving them mandatory life sentences. You can call them terrorists. The terrorists and then you could throw the throw away the key when in fact like the reality is it's like we are. I was am normal ***** person that just give this **** you know and there's nothing culty and about that you know I recognize it's in opposition to mainstream society and but. The family is just such a fiction and it's just. Just used to. Hurt us and make us sound kooky.

SCOTT: You are listening to the silky smooth sounds of the green. And Red podcast.

BOB: And as always, we thank you for listening to us. We really appreciate it. And then, as always, we would like to ask you to subscribe to us on whatever format you listen to, whether it be on podcast or on our YouTube channel. You can follow us on Instagram. Twitter and Facebook. We are on linktree slash green and Red Podcast and we now also have. Charge and if you have a coffee house or a library or bookstore or someplace like that in your area, that might be a great spot to put some of these. Just ask us when we will send. Them to you free of charge to. Spread the word about being.

DANIEL: Red Podcast and you can e-mail, say green red.

SCOTT: Podcast at Gmail. To get a packet of your of your post. And then if you really like us, you can donate and you know we we are very happy to get the donation and have the small base of small donors that we have and so you can either become a patron at patreon.com, back slash, Green, Red Podcast, or you can make a one time donation.

SCOTT: Right, green and red.

SCOTT: Podcast.org and just hit that support button. It's also on the postcards, and so you know. Thanks for listening and enjoy the show. You know the other person who definitely dominates episode one, which is your Co defendant. We can call her that Chelsea girl. I wonder if. You could talk.

DANIEL: Yeah, well, technically unfortunately is my codefendant. Unfortunately, this is a person that I met. At one point. And trusted and who, when, when faced? This maintaining solidarity chose the path that about seven or eight other people, in my case, chose, which is to cooperate against the remaining Co defendants.

SCOTT: and to be clear.

SCOTT: This is left out of episode one. This part.

DANIEL: Of the story. Yeah, so my main problem with the podcast is that they do not ask her about cooperation. And when I press them about whether or not the cooperation would be a big part or any part of the story, I was told that that wasn't. The case, but that. They would be clear. That I didn't cooperate and she did. So time will tell. Well, I've been told I should be patient with the podcast and wait, and you know, obviously I I'm not psychic. I don't know what's going to be on the podcast, but it's probably going to be more. Of the same. Maybe it improves. Maybe it doesn't. The reason this is tedious for me is that when I signed on to the project I was, I really didn't want to take place in the same. Media work as my cooperative Co defendants, I don't really. Want anything to? Do with them. I don't seek them out. I don't send them messages like some of the cooperators do to people I know. I just want to be like I want them out of my life. It's a mistake I wish I never met them. So you can imagine my surprise when I picked up the New York Times a few months ago and there is two of the rats in my case. Gave quotes. Well, they talked to the reporter. There are no quotes attributed to them by name. But I guess this is part of the thing where. First, she did. That and now Chelsea participated in this and I don't know if that's some. Process trying to figure out what went on with her. Life or the decision she made? But if it is, then maybe they. Eat her pound. Gorilla, it should be addressed which is. I was this radical environmentalist who says that I cared about the planet and the people that I work with. The people I did. These actions. With and I was arrested on December. 7th and yet. By January 26th. Chelsea was in her first proffer session with the FBI turning in people, and she spent the remaining year or so in custody attempting to me with all the codefendants or their Co defendants lawyers to convince everybody that they need to rat after like seven months I finally relented and. Allowed my lawyer and my. Private investigator during my case to meet with Chelsea. And Chelsea gave her spiel on why everyone should cooperate and we should not become martyrs. Blah blah blah. So you can imagine. What I heard the trailer I didn't know who that voice was because I didn't know that they talked to Chelsea and now every week I'm basically listening to her with, you know. I mean, we radically disagree on things. I mean, there's there is always room for criticism, and I've been very critical and analytical of actions that I've taken part in and actions that others took part in. But I'm just not interested. In doing that with her, she is not a. Part of the movement. As far as I was concerned when she decided she wanted to. Telling everyone when she decided she wanted to go to the National Forest and dig up stuff that she stored there to turn in her boyfriend to turning her ex-boyfriend to lie in court. Things other people did I just. Thought she when you do that, you're you're just. Down in the. Movement and just go back go. Live your life. Go try to be happy she's a born again. Christian and DJ. Go do that. But stay out. Of this, this is not. It's not for her and most of the people. In my case that have cooperated have done that. I mean, a few of them tried to get. Back into the movement. Like most pumps. Righteously see them as as dangerous people you know. If you, if you're willing to sell out everyone at one point in your life, what why, why should you be as trustworthy individual? Why wouldn't

anyone want to work on? A campaign with you. So as petty as I could be, and tedious as it is to hear her voice and whatnot, I just don't. I don't even want to engage it. I don't want you know, I didn't know she was going to be in it. I agreed to be. On the podcast I'm stuck with that decision, but I just think that people. Should you know it is literally the. Story that they're not discussing. It's like you have this person on and you could talk to her about this massive thing that happened. And how does she live with herself and how does she make sense to the world, but instead you meet? Her in a cemetery. Describe her as bubbly and generally just kind of get along. You know it's fine that they got along that I think the producer and Chelsea probably have.

BOB: A lot in.

DANIEL: Common, but you know it's just. It was offensive.

BOB: Well, you know that speaks, I think, to a bigger issue because you know you can talk about the police and the FBI and the logging industry. But you kind of expect them to do what they do right? That's what they do, but I think this also speaks really importantly to this. Idea of kind. Of how liberals you know kind of look. That movements like the ELF. They use words like extremism and terrorism and the fact that she would make this this woman who added the key figure from the first, you know really says a lot, right? And so you know this this. That was kind of what got to me because I had. Known a little bit about her. And you know, I thought like they're just presenting her story as. If she's the expert on this. Right, she knows more about this than anybody. And you know, she kind of think you know it's kind of really kind of condescending. You know about it and you know, look at how those silly people acted. And I was like that once and. All that kind.

DANIEL: Of stuff, yeah I was only 16.

SCOTT: When I did it so.

BOB: Yeah yeah, and you know. I mean it kind of gets to the point where you know these capitalists do what they do. That's what the ruling class does, but it's these liberals. Who really provide them? You know this big huge buffer zone and there you know she kind of goes into this, I mean. By saying you. Know how far is too far to go. You know the assumption is that the real question is tactics, just not the issue, which is, you know, saving the earth or climate change or whatever. It's what are you allowed to do to do it right? And I think this is really kind of key. To liberals who just get so upset over. Form and tactics and substance and performative things.

DANIEL: I mean they want to, you know, they want to vote so hard. I mean look, look at the response to like the restriction on it. Motion, you know the all the memes about you said you were going? To riot, I mean the anarchists. Who to liberal memes on abortion are amazing because it's like you know you. What are you going to do? I'm going into the you. Know the midterm elections are coming. Up, it's like So what you know? Yeah, they I just find like the liberal perspective is like it's a pass for law enforcement. And it I mean, I feel like he has. Held under a microscope and. Anyone else is allowed to just say anything like just anything? And it doesn't need to get checked. I mean, I'm sure they have fact checkers, but there's just like a laziness

to like you're allowed. You know, Chelsea and the. Cops or there's? Just allowed to say anything without any pushback. Of course I'm hearing it edited version, but like that's on them like put put in put it or you challenge them. Put that in there then because like they should be challenged for the ***** that they are. They're, uh, putting out there you.

SCOTT: Know you have an interesting. And you know, we've done a couple of shows recently about ruling class versus Trump, FBI and Department of Justice versus Trump, where these institutions by liberals are being made into the heroes because they raided Mar-a-lago, you know, et cetera, you know, Mueller, during the Trump administration was. A was a. Was the hero because he was investigating Trump on Russia, you know? and it, it's interesting that these these institutions basically are what are protecting the status quo or what is standing in between. You know movements. Actually trying to make progress on issues like climate change and deforestation. And then you know the this. Liberal wing of our society like Heroes Hero makes them into heroes. I just jump with that word. But like. You know? Just even those heroes like.

BOB: One second.

SCOTT: But you know the you know. Just even go on Twitter and say the FBI is bad and some of these like threads and the ***** liberals are all over me calling me like a. A secret magnetrol you know **** like that.

DANIEL: Yeah, I mean over the years it's been painful to watch people like Robert Mueller get valeros. You know, it's kind of like. it's amazing how you. Can see in it like an. Enemy total enemy. This is the head of the. FBI you could. They could do something right, or they can attack your enemy. And suddenly, like there's redemption, I mean, Robert Mueller has a lot to. I mean, I'm pretty sure he was involved in the Leonard Peltier case. He definitely greenlit Operation Backfire made the quote in in my indictment. Press release from the FBI. Terrorism is terrorism no matter what the motives. FBI Robert FBI director Robert S. Mueller said during a press conference. There's a clear difference between constitutionally protected advocacy, which is the right of all Americans and violent criminal activity, and this man is not concerned with constitutionally protected. Obviously this is. He works for the he works for the group that gave us Cliental Pro. And killing Black Panthers like.

SCOTT: I don't I.

DANIEL: Don't have any any misnomer here misunderstanding here, but yeah. To watch to just. Watch the left the liberal let's. Go crazy over him thinking he was gonna say this me what? What did he have to? He was going to save us and then the IT. It flares up all the time when Mar-a-lago it's again. The FBI is not. Going to save you. They are the police. You should watch this like you. Watch two dogs fighting. Both of whom have bit you. You know that that's you're just kind of like you know, like just. Be wary because don't get too close to it because they'll be like Oh yeah, we don't care about this anyway. I mean, at the end of the day. The FBI is like it's. A promotion of the. Status quo, you know, and Trump Trump is just such an erratic force that he like did these crazy things that irk the FBI you know, or I mean, obviously hated on

the FBI. You can't. Does that make is Trump our friend now you know it's just so backwards, how? How the liberal sentiment is, you know.

BOB: And when you have Marjory Taylor Green selling defund the FBI SWAT. You know you're in trouble.

DANIEL: Amazing how fast it swings, right? You know the second, the second they do something that the right doesn't want.

BOB: It's just a spectacle.

DANIEL: It's just completely. They're just cast aside it's like love the FBI, let's let's stop you love them.

BOB: Oh Democrat yeah, and that's the Democrats should become. The party of. You know the FBI, the national Security state surveillance, the police?

DANIEL: They could say what they want, but they're still. Going to vote for that budget every. ***** year right?

BOB: Yeah, of course.

DANIEL: They're still going to just. Kick an amazing amount of money. It's their FBI. It's just it's. It's still Hoover's agency. It is the secret. Police, you know? They do what they do.

BOB: Let me let me ask. You something that I actually asked Jake regarding animal Liberation environmental liberation to the extent that you know you might destroy property or engage in some activities which are not typical right even on the left, that's a hard sell, right? I mean you will have people. Who not just. Liberal left the people on the left who say, OK, I can't do that. How do you and I said this to Jacob about you know people you know? Like they, they think you know puppy dogs are cute and kittens are cute and all that. But at. The end of the day they're going to. Be really reluctant to kind. Of go in on this whole issue. You know this. Whole kind of idea of animal. Liberation and I think. With environmental liberation, I think people you know they like to go out to the park and all that kind of stuff. But at the end of the day. They're going to say, OK, that's too much. You know what some of the stuff is going? How do you talk to? How do you explain that that?

DANIEL: You know, I'm not really. I don't find myself too many interactions where I'm like advocating what this is. What needs to happen, you know? I mean, there's a like I felt like what we were doing was not particularly effective after a period of time. And it's not because I think, like oh, people are worried, scared of arson and arson destroying the building. By fire, it's a very it's a very it's a. Dangerous thing and it. Would seem like that would be something that should be preceded with careful. But that that said, I I. Didn't stop doing what I. Was doing for that reason I. Was more about. Like I felt like we mangled our strategy and tactics and sort of got addicted to the most bang. You know, so to speak, and so I don't find myself in too many conversations about. I mean people that Blanche. That that the idea I will always say well. Please please tell me what are we to do? You know what are? What are we to do because we know what doesn't work. But I I'm still searching for. The things that do. Work is sabotage. Part of that is. That I mean, is voting. I mean,

I'm pretty sure that like a lot of the government stuff is worthless, but I don't know what the solution is, but. So the difference? That we always had with the OS stuff is, you know, we don't have cute cuddly animals. I mean, sure, we there were actions taken regarding animals from, you know, the EFF perspective, whatever, and some of the people that I was in this group with also did animal. Options, but you know we couldn't like. Open up a cage and let a tree. Run away right? So it's just it was. A little different and a little harder and a little more. No, about twos, but a little harder to generate sympathy right? We mostly there's no liberation aspect of it. It's all just pure damage, right? And so, like, is it a media thing is it? Is it designed to actually stop people from what they were doing? I mean probably. A little bit of both. I mean I was. I was concerned about getting the environment. Get in the forest breathing room. Just buying time right? And that's a rearguard battle. I guess you know you're fighting from a perspective that. Like not particularly strategic, you know you're just like, well, if. I could put these people out of business for a short period of time maybe.

BOB: OK.

DANIEL: The forest have. A chance, but like it, it just didn't. It didn't go that way right, so? Anyhow, it's easy to be, it's easy. To be critical of it. But I don't find myself getting into too many conversations about like advocating for like these kind of tactics. I feel like people need to have those conversations or struggles within themselves about what they want to do with their lives. I'm a little wary of, you know, defending it, but I'm also not demonizing it.

SCOTT: This whole idea of sabotage is actually around. Environmental issues has been back in the media, right? We've you know, Jessica Reznicek, we did a show on Swedish professor Andre's mom or a book called How to Blow Up a pipeline and has done a you know. A blitzkrieg media Speaking of Blitzkriegs. He's done a blitzkrieg media for himself and seems like what part? And the BBC the This this podcast actually even references some of that. And I'm and I'm kind of curious. You know, this is coming back into the conversation. And you know how do you think your story and the way it's being told through the BBC and maybe other outlets? There's a lot of. There's a lot of. You know other shows where they're talking about sabotage and climate sabotage, and I mean like there was media last week about people.

DANIEL: You know letting.

SCOTT: The tires out of 600 cars around the world. You know the tire extinguishers is what that group's called. I'm just kind. Of curious about. How you think your story kind? Of plays into that, and it seems like it's being distorted at that. And my other question is like it seems like there's a level of distortion coming from things like this podcast and how you would respond to that.

DANIEL: I mean, I do think that it's having a moment, and it's probably because the environment is getting worse. It's getting hotter. We we're experiencing real effects of climate change in the in the moment, not just like oh in the future it's going to be like this. it's bad. Right now, so I think youngsters and others are asking themselves what are. We supposed to do. And people have gone and. Take a direct action like

you said, Jessica resend check. I find moms with kind of disingenuous because I'll be honest, I read. The last 20 patients, and it was because people told me that the last chapter was like a takedown of like ELF, and so I found it really funny about like the book that you know how to blow up. A pipeline would. Have such a like strong objection to EOF and what we did when I didn't, you know. Again, I'm not going to comment on something like it. But like 20% of the book. But I just. I've seen some of these interviews and I'm just like I just find it's a. Provocative title and I don't. Know what he's adding to the mix. If he's going to spend the last. Bit of this book just taking down everything that's been done that he's claiming he wants to be. Able to do. But I think it will continue to come. Up and I think it's. it's likely that there will be other people that will learn about this tactic and replicate it. Or maybe they'll make it. I would hope they would do it better, do it safer or do it in a way that like is more meaningful or part of a collective movement and less isolated than we were. You know, I'm definitely an observer and I watch this and I'm curious about it. I wonder what I would do if I was. 20 years old now. So yeah, it is having its moment and it's interesting to see. I think the podcast could, I think, go a lot could be used as a cautionary tale and say, like you know, I mean if you listen to the subtext of what she's saying. It's we ***** ** everything was. I mean, maybe that's slightly exaggerated. And I think it's a little more. Complicated than that. But just because what you did wasn't perfect doesn't mean that it was a mistake, and it certainly doesn't mean that it can't be improved upon. And it doesn't mean that people can't take your lessons and kind of like evolved. Come up with better tactics and strategies, make better decisions that we made. And I was I was just I'm a huge student of history and. when I was? Involved in this and I still. I mean I still read some honestly, but like when I. Was involved we were like study it. All kinds of resistance. Groups and in fact a lot of what we did. More of what? We didn't do is where the influence was like. I was like firmly like. It is the trend. I saw what I was. Reading was when these folks decided that they. Wanted to lob money. Things went S very very fast and very bad, and that could be that was replicated amongst many different resistance. Groups on the underground. And otherwise, in the 7060 seventies. Please, that's all I said to myself. Well, why like as soon as you add guns to the mix as soon as you add robbery. Anything things go in. A different direction. Your enemies will come at you in a way and you start to potentially become different people, because now you're trying to acquire capital. And what is the capital for to do more actions but? You know it's I. Just think it was a slippery slope. So I was, you know, greatly informed. The mistakes and the successes of groups that came before me and I would just hope that like we're part of that mix, that people can read about it and then like decide how they want to engage the world and change and. Try to change the world and fight. Back versus some kind. Of like thoughtless replication or thoughtless need you're. Kind of oh that's. Bad and I just feel like the BBC is pushing people. More towards the like. You know Chelsea's redemption, you know?

SCOTT: I mean, I think there are a.

BOB: Fair number of. People who think that you should go and you know, like unless you're like assured of success, then you you shouldn't be doing this or you know you fail. You know, like you have to figure out something ahead of time that's going to work and you know it and it's safe and you can go in and do it. And if not, I mean you know it is a. A long process and you study radical movements. Of I mean, for the most part they don't succeed. You know, especially in the United States. It's not a long history of.

DANIEL: Immediately, right?

BOB: Success, you know?

DANIEL: I mean, there's a contribution.

BOB: It's trial, it's trial and error, and it's.

DANIEL: There's a contribution, but it's hard to. Be like we did. This and it was perfect or it is?

BOB: Yeah, I mean there is a left. Romanticization of that and you know. And I kind of becoming like I get trouble a lot when I point that out, but. Yeah, I mean. You you gotta do it because you have. To do it. Because you know Pakistan is underwater because. Place all those all. Those things that sound trite. And silly to liberals, but they're true, right? And so you have to do it. But yeah, I mean. Success is far. From guaranteed and the.

DANIEL: Yeah, I mean you know in.

BOB: That's countless strategies. Yeah, I'm sorry.

DANIEL: Resistance is a means to an end, but it is also the end. I mean, we we do it because we're like at least I engage in this because I am trying to fight for things I care about and for a better world, you know. And so, like you know I will. I will you know when it's my time to go I I aim to be OK you know of course I always want to do more. I you know I regret some of the mistakes I made. I mean I'm only 40. 8 years old, so I'm not done yet. I you know, I aim to you.

BOB: Your chair.

DANIEL: Know to leave this world at it and feel like I did my best. I would see you stop. and I made mistakes. I mean the thought that we would like only act when we had things perfectly lined up as such a such a mistake. it's a paralyzing. That's right.

BOB: I think it's huge, a huge problem. On the on among liberals. People like that. It's huge you. Know like oh this. Will never work, you know, yeah, so I mean.

DANIEL: You really do have. To try to do impossible things, you know.

SCOTT: Yeah, I also think that the especially study more radical, more recent radical, sort of. Movement stuff like the elf and Alf and other things is that you know people today who are thinking about taking a different pathway, not necessarily this pathway, but like a different pathway. Need to go into it with like eyes wide open about what will happen like success. Failure all that, but then also like if. You get caught what's? Gonna happen to you. You know or you know. Especially talking about like

guns and robbery and things like you know you could get killed in a shootout. I mean, that's what it's having the right wingers.

BOB: You could be.

DANIEL: Paralyzed in a shootout, what?

BOB: You know someone you trust can turn on. You you know, yeah.

DANIEL: Nine people you trust could turn on you. I mean, I think. About you know my, you know. Before Scott, you said that my actions were in 2000. One they were actually in 2000. The ones that I was convicted of and the reason that's relevant is, you know, I didn't. I didn't anticipate 9/11, shockingly. And so the way the world changed had a very direct effect on the case. I mean, they that money that went to the Joint Terrorism Task Force was well, which used to do a cold. Case investigation, I mean you don't. They did have, you know, as you know these cop departments they don't just endlessly investigate, right? And so this. Was kind of cold, it was dead. It was four years old. They had nothing. You know the. Precautions we took were enough to like make it so it wasn't easy until they. Activated, you know a source which was a disgruntled person with a drug addiction that you know how was nursing a grudge and decided to unburden himself and get out of doing a lot of time in prison. So, but there's. No way to. Know that right so that there's no way you. Can know that and you don't know how. The world's. Going to change right? So you think about the changes. Like DNA and things like that, not changes to DNA, but how they're processed. How like these websites are being used now to like investigate familiar DNA and stuff. it's shocking.

SCOTT: Or that we. Carry around devices which are continually monitor all of our movements and actions.

DANIEL: Yeah, we did. You know I'll be honest, I didn't have a phone. People had phones but you know very few people had phones at this time that these actions were happening and there were. There were considerations like tolls and like cameras, but the amount of cameras have. Proliferated the devices that proliferate.

SCOTT: You know, and not to and not.

SCOTT: To juxtapose the two like the BBC did. But like it's. How they're getting a lot of the January. 6 defendants, right? It's like stuff from their phones.

BOB: Oh yeah.

DANIEL: Well, it also took a lot of like. Here's me in the capital, you know, like.

BOB: Not not a brain type operation.

DANIEL: Yeah there is. I mean, it's really hard to watch it and not. Just like crackle, you know. I mean, it's like wow. How did you think that? But I wouldn't even take my I wanna take my phone to anything much less like you. Know I'm not addicted to. It I can leave it at the door. My my partner, my wife might think otherwise. I am actually on a costly but if I was to go to a protest I wouldn't right like. The it's stupid, right?

SCOTT: But yeah, it's easy to laugh.

DANIEL: At them for. That they're. They're like a a generation of people that are just like cannot like. They have to document what they're doing. It's like you are literally going into the capital like you are like. 40 like that was a shocking. Kinds of those, like Pearl clutters in there, you know.

SCOTT: Hey I want to I want to ask you to talk about one. Give us some information about one other thing and then we can like wrap. But like with this notion of going in wide eyes wide open, there's also, you know, a population of political prisoners out there. You do a lot of political prisoner support work. You want to. Just throw out a couple of like resources that. People you have.

DANIEL: Oh yeah, absolutely thank you.

SCOTT: Whatever path whatever path you decide, just let me say this to the audience. Whatever path folks decide to choose, you should always figure out how to support. People who have. Chosen that path so.

DANIEL: So yeah, hopefully the podcast will be out by then, but this weekend there'll be. It's the national running down the walls, events that will be happening in in it's eight different cities this year. They're already 2 events in Philly and Chicago, but there'll be 5K fun runs in. They go for Portland, Austin, New York City, Lowell, MA. Los Angeles, I can't remember, but a bunch of them, and so there are these 5K runs in which people get sponsored and then donate the money to what's called the Anarchist Black Cross Federation War chests so you can find out all the information on that event and the war chest essentially gives \$50.00 a month to about 18 different political prisoners every you know every month. So that they can buy the essential things they need from commissary. Or you can find out stuff on a BCF .net, but yeah, I also recommend the. Illustrated guide to political prisoners. I'll put out by New York City anarchist Black Cross. Their website is New York City or NYC abc.wordpress.com. It's a nice little PDF that you can download to check out as addresses. You can find out how to better support people in prison.

SCOTT: Awesome Bob, do you have any?

BOB: No thanks. It's always good talking to you. Be realistic, demanding, impossible. Exactly in May of 1968 and go Yankees. that's where I'm.

DANIEL: Let's go bad.

BOB: that's where I'm an. Imperialist I'm a baseball imperialist.

DANIEL: Yeah, yeah, I like how you snuck that in. That's good.

SCOTT: Folks, folks, you've been listening to. Daniel McGowan on. The green and red. Podcast back in action you like what you hear? Check out our social media, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Also check out our rapidly growing discord community and. The how to get how to get on our discord. The invite will be in the show notes and then if you like what you hear, make a donation. Go to greenredpodcast.org and hit that support button or become a patron at patreon.com. Back slash green. Red Podcast great talking. Everyone should go out there, make trouble, and misbehave because we're all about the misbehaving. We'll talk to you again soon. Daniel, it's been great. See you soon.

DANIEL: Thanks so much. Take care.

SCOTT: Alright, bye.

The Ted K Archive

Daniel McGowan, Amy Goodman, etc.
Daniel McGowan Lectures and Conversations
2016-2022

www.thetedkarchive.com