

Support Daniel .org

Daniel McGowan, Anarchist Black Cross, etc.

2007-2015

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Main Page

Welcome to the Support Daniel site

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. Until recently, Daniel was offered two choices by the government: cooperate by informing on other people, or go to trial and potentially spend the rest of his life in prison. His only real option was to plead not guilty until he could reach a resolution of the case that permitted him to honor his principles. Now, as a result of months of litigation and negotiation, Daniel was able to admit to his role in these two incidents, while not implicating or identifying any other people who might have been involved (for details, go [here](#)).

Daniel grew up in Rockaway Beach, Queens, New York, and is a much loved member of the community. He has worked on projects such as the demonstrations against the Republican National Convention, counter military recruitment efforts, organizing free markets in his neighborhood, and supporting political prisoners such as Jeff "Free" Luers. Daniel was also earning a Master's degree in acupuncture and was working at WomensLaw.org, a nonprofit that helps abused women navigate the legal system, when he was arrested by federal marshals on December 7th, 2005.

Daniel McGowan's arrest had come in the context of a well-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 while way more serious crimes go ignored. Many of the charges, including Daniel's, were for crimes whose statute of limitations were about to expire.

We continue to support Daniel completely. He and his family have been through an extremely difficult time and deserve to get through this with the best possible outcome.

Family and Friends of Daniel McGowan will be raising funds to pay his legal defense, setting up public events about the Green Scare and providing financial, logistical, legal and emotional support to Daniel throughout his sentence. He will be earning a Master's degree and will hopefully complete a book about his experience while imprisoned.

Write to Daniel at:
Daniel McGowan
#63794-053, Unit I
FCI Sandstone
P.O. Box 1000
Sandstone, MN 55072

While letters are always appreciated, please keep in mind Daniel will not be able to respond to everyone. To send a letter, see guidelines on this page.

On behalf of Daniel, we thank you for your continued support.

Note: Following sentencing, we put up some information regarding the background of the site here.

Contact FriendsofDanielMcG@yahoo.com with any questions. www.supportdaniel.org

Family and Friends of Daniel McGowan, c/o Lisa McGowan, PO Box 106, New York NY 10156-106

Who is Daniel McGowan?

Bio

Daniel grew up in Rockaway Beach, Queens, New York, youngest and only brother to three older sisters. His father was a transit officer for the New York Police Department (NYPD) and his mother worked in an elementary school cafeteria. As a teenager he attended Christ the King High School and was active on the cross-country and track team. After high school, Daniel attended SUNY Buffalo, double majored in Business Administration and Southeast Asian studies, and graduated with a Bachelor's degree in 1996. Following his graduation, Daniel spent several months exploring Thailand, putting into practice the language he had learned as a student and getting a better understanding of the region's history and culture. After his travels, Daniel returned to New York and began working in both paid and volunteer positions for numerous environmental and non-profit organizations. In 1998, Daniel moved out of New York to live in the beautiful Northwest and was an asset to environmental and social justice projects in every community he spent time in. He spent several months in Canada, visiting friends as well as spending time with indigenous people in hopes of learning about other cultures firsthand.

In 2002, Daniel returned home to New York. He had missed the East Coast and was looking forward to being closer to his family and spending more time with them. He also returned to be with Jenny, a woman he had met on one of his visits home, who continues to be his loving wife and partner. In New York, Daniel has held a number of professional positions. He had worked as a full-time web and office administrator for Rainforest Foundation US (founded by Sting and Trudie Styler). Daniel has been active in projects to educate people about rainforest preservation, national forest protection and biodiversity. He also worked on a temporary basis for the Brooklyn Museum of Art, assisting in their Development department.

During the Republican National Convention in NYC in 2004, Daniel publicly organized events in protest of the convention. His efforts included fundraising, event planning, web design, and publicizing demonstrations, forums and meetings of progressive grassroots organizations. He was interviewed and photographed for a number of national publications, including *Rolling Stone* and *The New York Times*.

In the fall of 2005, Daniel entered a graduate program at Tri-State College of Acupuncture in order to earn his Master's degree. In recent months, Daniel devoted countless hours to studying for his courses, he received outstanding scores on all of his tests and quizzes, and he often shared his excitement about medicine and healing the human body with friends. In just a few months, he had established strong bonds with his fellow classmates and much of the faculty. Daniel's endless desire to help people has

driven his success in school. He wants to be able to provide medical care for anyone, regardless of their financial abilities. His goal is to be able to practice acupuncture on a sliding scale, or even for free, to those in need. If you know Daniel, he has most likely talked to you about coming into the school's clinic for free or affordable acupuncture sessions. He never left home without brochures from his school's clinic in hopes he could help out someone he came across that day.

In addition to attending a full-time graduate program, Daniel was working part-time at Womenslaw.org, where he was arrested. This non-profit organization helps women in domestic abuse situations to navigate the legal system through extensive on-line resources. Daniel was responsible for updating their website and solving technical problems.

With whatever time Daniel had left in his week, he also contributed to helping out with events around the city, such as the "really, really free markets" set up at a church in the East Village where people could bring and take anything they wanted all day long.

As busy as he has always been, Daniel took time to hang out at home with a movie. Some of his favorites: *Young Frankenstein*, Abbott and Costello flicks, *Office Space*, *Cruel Intentions*, *Lord of the Rings*, and any movie with a super-hero in it. He watches the animated *Legend of Sleepy Hollow* every Halloween, and listens to the *Charlie Brown Christmas* soundtrack every Christmas. We were saddened that last Christmas he was not able to do so, let alone hear any music.

One of the most cherished people in Daniel's life is his niece (the cute little girl in a number of pictures on the site). He loves her more than anything else in the world and was the second person to visit her in the hospital when she was born. Daniel even created a website for her so that friends and relatives who do not live nearby could see recent pictures of her easily. He always made a point to visit his niece when he had time off from work and school and is excited when asked to baby-sit. In fact, the day he was arrested he had plans to go visit her after work. She is truly the light of his life.

Daniel is one of the most wonderful, expressive, caring, thoughtful and compassionate people in this world. His compassionate nature had driven him to do support work for political prisoners, and his dedication to this work makes it all the more moving that we have been called to provide the same support for him.

Photos

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Testimonials

I know Daniel as a caring and comforting partner. There have been so many times he has gone out of his way for me and done things that he did not want to do, but did them simply because I asked. After a full day of attending classes, reading hundreds of pages of a textbook and cooking dinner (despite the fact he was utterly exhausted), he would stay up and tickle my back in bed until I fell asleep. All I had to do was ask. I knew it was probably the last thing he felt like doing, but he always put me first.

He is always there for me when I need him. As silly as it sounds, because I am terrified of insects, Daniel has become my personal bug catcher. Whenever he hears my shriek, he will come running in to help me out. Most of the time he just brings them out into the hallway and let them live elsewhere. He literally wouldn't even hurt a spider.

Daniel is also a wonderful cook and has always gone out of his way to please people through his meals, myself included. I can't even count how many meals he has made for me, it's got to be in the hundreds. He is always thinking of other people, always looking out for things someone else may want. It used to drive me crazy when he came home with another odd thing - most recently a 3-hole puncher - that he came across on his way home. He had so many stacks of things set aside for different friends and family members that used to fill up our apartment that I used to give him a hard time about taking up so much space. Now I feel bad about being so critical about such a thoughtful thing and not realizing how much giving these things to people makes him feel good.

He is true to himself, never superficial, and he stands up for what he believes. He is a very public organizer and social justice activist and is always willing to help out humankind. His beliefs are what make him who he is, and I love him for that.

Daniel is the most caring, compassionate, selfless, generous and thoughtful person I have ever met.

Thank you to everyone who has been here to support Daniel, Daniel's family, and me.

Jenny Synan

Daniel's wife
New York, NY

Daniel McGowan is my brother. Through the course of our lives Daniel has shown himself as honest and trustworthy in 1000 ways to me. In September 2004 I had a child. Daniel was there for me. He was the first person I saw when I opened my eyes after a terrible ordeal in the hospital. He is one of the few people in my life that I trust with my daughter.

My brother is very active in the community, always helping the less fortunate, conducting free markets where folks can give items away to others that they no longer need, and working to help better the lives of battered women. He has always worked for not-for-profit companies. This summer Daniel needed to find a job knowing that he would be starting school in September as an acupuncture student. He refused to be dishonest to a prospective employer and told everyone that when school started he would have to quit or go part time. He missed out on some job opportunities but Daniel will not lie, that is the caliber of person he is.

My brother Daniel is a great asset to the community. He is deeply connected to his family. I have posted all that I own as a bail package, several properties worth over 1.5 million dollars, as I have every confidence in my brother's actions and intentions.

Lisa A. McGowan Daniel's sister New York, NY

I know Daniel to be the best brother anyone would want. He is my younger and only brother and I wouldn't trade him for the world. He is a kind and caring person who is also very dedicated to the environment. We are so proud of Daniel returning to school and pursuing a career. We have a great relationship. Now I see him more than ever. It's cute to see him with our niece Lily. He chases her all over the apartment and she squeals. He truly is a great uncle. I will stand behind Daniel 100% through this ordeal. I am certain he will come out on top and rise above.

Thank you to all the people who have helped support my brother. We are very grateful to all of you.

Nancy McGowan

Daniel's sister
Sunnyside, NY

Daniel McGowan my son-in-law and husband of my daughter Jenny. I have known Daniel for about 4 years now. My wife and I have visited in their home in New York, and he has visited our home in Houston.

Daniel is a kind, thoughtful, loyal, tender and loving friend to my daughter. From a father's perspective, who always wants to protect his "little girl," Daniel has treated her in an exemplary manner - with a love and respect that is wonderful - what any father would hope for his daughter! Daniel also treats us with kindness and graciousness, and we enjoy being with him.

I have been present with Daniel when he is together with his sisters and his niece. Daniel is kind and thoughtful and loving toward his sisters. He treats his niece with tender loving care, gives her special attention, and clearly delights in her.

Daniel is a loving person, who is concerned about others and their welfare. He is concerned about society, the earth, and humankind. He has a commitment to making the world a better place for all of its inhabitants.

Joe Synan

Daniel's father-in-law

Houston, TX

During these past few years, we have shared good times with Daniel in our visits to New York to see our daughter. On two Thanksgiving holidays, he prepared a wonderful dinner for my husband and me, which exhibited a lot of preparation and caring. I have also observed on many occasions, the way Daniel respectfully and lovingly treats our daughter. Daniel also visited our home in Houston, Texas a couple of Christmases ago. At that time, he became more like family.

I see Daniel as a kind individual and very loyal and committed to his family members. He is also kind and generous to people in general. I am aware of numerous occasions when he would give away or share his belongings with people in need.

Daniel is a person who possesses the important values of honesty, loyalty, and integrity.

Susan Synan

Daniel's mother-in-law

Houston, TX

Since I met Daniel in early 2002, I have known him in many capacities, and he has consistently shown himself to be a hard worker, a loyal friend, and a wonderful roommate. When I first met Daniel, it was at work: he was hired to work for the Rainforest Foundation in New York City, and I was working in the same office for an organization called WomensLaw.org. Though we worked for different organizations, our desks were right next to each other with nothing but a clear Plexiglas divider between us. Needless to say, over the year or so that we worked side by side, we got to know each other very well. He is an incredibly hard worker, and was always the first person in the office each morning, and always had a pot pf coffee brewing for the rest of us by the time we stumbled into work. A longtime vegetarian and environmentalist like myself, Daniel was committed to serving free trade coffee at the office, enforced a strict recycling policy for everyone, and was always on the lookout for the best vegetarian spots to get take-out lunch with the other vegetarians in the office. It was a joy to have him in the office with me!

In late 2003, WomensLaw.org moved its offices to Brooklyn, and at around the same time I moved in with Daniel, where I became one of several roommates at a cooperative house in Brooklyn, New York. I lived with Daniel at that house for 15 months, until I moved to Washington, DC, where I am today. During those 15 months, I saw Daniel virtually every day. Unlike so many other friends-turned-roommates situations, my friendship with Daniel only grew while I lived with him. I was consistently impressed with his commitment to making our household as healthy and supportive as possible. He spearheaded a campaign to revitalize our vegetable garden and compost pile, instituted a strict recycling policy not unlike the one he had set up for our office while I worked with him, and was vocal about everyone pitching in to do the chores. We each cooked dinner for the house one night a week, and I often sat with Daniel as he cooked and chatted with him about how our days had gone and what we were doing at the time. He is an incredibly positive, happy, and enthusiastic person, so whenever he found a new recipe, movie, or song that he liked, he would always be sure to share it with me that very same day. Some of my best memories of my 15 months in that house are of Daniel and myself, in our pajamas on a weekend morning, reading the paper and relaxing together in our kitchen.

Besides being a wonderful colleague and roommate, Daniel is an incredible friend. In April 2004, while I thought I was alone at home, I got a phone call telling me that my longtime boyfriend had died suddenly. I cannot put into words how devastating this news was to me at the time, and still is. I remember screaming and sobbing and then Daniel, who had been home all along unbeknownst to me, coming out of his room to see what was wrong. Not only did he comfort me, but he also called all of my friends and told them to come to our house to give me support. I don't know what I would have done without him that day. He stayed with me that whole night, got me and my friends food and water, set up the guest room for them to stay the night all without making a fuss or asking any questions. Daniel was a tremendous support for me for the weeks and months which followed. He cooked the meals I was scheduled to cook for the house, went grocery shopping for me, and did my chores. He was always ready to listen if I needed to talk, or just be there in the room if I could not be alone.

Daniel McGowan is, put simply, an incredible person. He is kind, humble, trustworthy, hardworking, dedicated to helping his friends and family, and committed to making this world a better place. He is a constant source of inspiration for me, and has influenced the way I eat, shop, and recycle, how I treat my friends, and how I think about my role in this world. He serves as a model for me of how to be a compassionate person in every aspect of my life. Daniel is a person of extraordinary character, which he has demonstrated to me every day in many different contexts since I met him in 2002.

Iselin Gambert

Law Student
Washington DC

I have known Daniel for several years. We first met when he worked at the Rainforest Foundation in Manhattan, and my daughter Iselin worked at WomensLaw.org. The two organizations shared office space, and a very open and friendly relationship.

My daughter was right out of college at the time, and had a difficult time finding a living space she could afford. Daniel, very kindly, arranged for her to rent a room in the house he lived in with several other roommates, in Brooklyn.

My husband and I were very grateful to Daniel for finding this solution to our daughter's housing problem. We enjoyed visiting her at the house when we came to N.Y., and also enjoyed spending time with Daniel during those visits. Several times I stayed at the house with my daughter and got to know Daniel, who is a kind, helpful and thoughtful person. We enjoyed cooking together, and spent happy hours talking about books, friends, ideas of all kinds.

While she was Daniel's roommate in Brooklyn, my daughter's boyfriend died, very unexpectedly and tragically. I am forever grateful to Daniel for his kindness and support of her during that horrible time. He showed her and everyone involved kindness, support and much practical help, at a very difficult time.

After my daughter left Brooklyn for law-school in D.C., she has remained friends with Daniel. As a family, we all support him. Daniel has a large network of family and friends who loves him, and who he loves and cares about. He is a loyal and devoted friend.

Gry Gambert
Baltimore, MD

I am writing in support of Daniel McGowan and to attest to his excellent character and standing in his community. I have had the privilege of knowing Daniel for a number of years since my daughter graduated from college and came to New York to work in a non-profit organization. Daniel worked within the same office and was very helpful and caring when she was having difficulty finding a place to live. He was instrumental in helping her move into a large brownstone in Brooklyn where several working adults lived cooperatively. It was in this way that I got to know Daniel and to appreciate his humane qualities and caring personality. I visited many times, shared meals with Daniel, and had numerous opportunities to witness his true personality and interaction with others.

A year later, my daughter's boyfriend died unexpectedly. Once again I was able to see Daniel comforting my distraught daughter and providing comfort and understanding in a most difficult time. I had the opportunity once again to visit with Daniel and to spend many hours discussing issues relating to life, human frailty, and crisis. I believe this tragic circumstance brought out everyone's true feelings and personality.

He conducted himself with dignity, honor, and compassion at all times earning the respect and admiration of all.

As a physician for over 30 years and Professor of Medicine at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, I believe that I have had a great deal of experience in judging individuals and being able to see their inner thoughts and motivations. I hope that you will grant Daniel every consideration for release. I believe strongly that he is an asset to society and if allowed, will continue to conduct himself with honor and respect and be a productive member of society and benefit others in many ways. He has a strong network of individuals who value him as a friend and colleague and I am proud to be counted as one of them.

Steven R. Gambert, M.D.

Professor of Medicine
Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine
Baltimore, MD

I have known Daniel McGowan for sixteen years now and am proud to call him my friend. He is, and continues to be, an intellectually curious and sensitive person who has always inspired me to pursue excellence in my personal and professional life. Since meeting at the age of fifteen in high school, Daniel has been a thoughtful and trusted advisor to me over our many years of friendship. He has always exhibited a sincere and passionate concern for his community; in high school, Daniel was an active member of Students Against Drunk Driving, a member of the National Honor Society, accomplished student athlete track runner, and a popular, charismatic presence in his neighborhood of Rockaway, Queens.

Daniel is stalwart in his selfless commitment to his fellow human and has always worked to be part of bringing about a greater social justice for the unseen, be it abused women in search of a way out, or the underprivileged. I consider his present work as a social activist both laudable and needed, and a continuation of the spirit which he exhibited when we first met. Daniel takes great pride in his family and enjoys spending time with them. He is a loyal brother, son and partner. I know Daniel to be extremely in love with Jenny, his longtime partner and best friend.

As an adjunct professor of English at LaGuardia Community College for two years now and a current graduate student at St. Johns University, I see Daniel as a committed student of acupuncture with remarkable ambitions that will no doubt benefit our community's health. Lastly, I am most proud of Daniel for all his myriad accomplishments, and my greatest wish is that he is released as soon.

Mary Linda DeWitt

Jamaica, New York

I am writing this letter to attest to the remarkable character I have witnessed in Daniel McGowan over the past fifteen years. I have come to know Daniel through my daughter, Mary Linda DeWitt, who has been a childhood friend of Daniel's since they met at Christ the King Regional High School when they were 15 years old. I have had the pleasure of watching this sensitive, intelligent young man grow into a civically minded, responsible adult who is an important part of not only our lives but of the larger community. Articulate, funny, respectful and responsible, Daniel has touched my life and countless others with his deep commitment to the betterment of the community.

Daniel has always demonstrated through his actions to have the greatest integrity. Through high school and college at SUNY Albany he was academically successful, constantly receiving recognition from his peers and teachers. I believe he has shown this same remarkable consistency of character by embarking on a graduate degree in acupuncture.

I am a 64 year old, retired St. John's University administrative assistant who belongs to numerous religious and civic organizations, including Catholic Widows and Widowers Club of Queens, the Confraternity of the Holy Passion at Immaculate Conception Church, volunteer visitor in the Caring Calls program to the elderly and homebound for the Greater YM & YWHA of New York, and an active member of my local parish, Immaculate Conception Church, in Jamaica Estates, Queens for about 30 years. On more than one occasion, I have observed that Daniel has a deep, close, and loving connection with his family. Moreover, I consider him an asset to our community and a true reflection of the Catholic education that he has received.

I will continue to support Daniel through these trying times.

Mrs. Carmen DeWitt

Jamaica, New York

I have been a police officer with the New York City Police Department stationed at the 33rd Precinct in Washington Heights, New York since October 1997, and I am currently a member of The Holy Name Society, The NYPD Emerald Society, and The National Association of Dominican Officers. Daniel has been a friend of mine since 1990, and I consider him to be a most respectable, kind and family-loving individual.

We met over a decade ago through our mutual childhood friend, Mary Linda DeWitt, when I was attending St. Francis Preparatory High School in Fresh Meadows, New York. Through the years, we shared many enjoyable times together; Daniel and I visited one another during our college careers when he was a student at SUNY Buffalo, and I was attending SUNY Albany. I always found Daniel to be sincerely helpful, conscientious and loyal. Presently, he exhibits the same pursuit of excellence and integrity which I first witnessed many years ago by studying for a master's degree in acupuncture.

Moreover, I consider Daniel to be an exemplary role model in the community.

Linda R. Doherty
Flushing, New York

Daniel and I were housemates for 4 years in a cooperative house in Fort Greene Brooklyn, where I still live. When I tell people I live in a "cooperative house" it seems to conjure-up images that frankly, just don't apply to us. We are a politically, and socio-economically diverse group of 6 people. Some vote Republican, others vote Democrat. Professions range from computer programming, TV production (that's what I do), and library archivist, to landscape architecture. We range in age from 57 to 26. In the evenings, our kitchen table is often the site of lively, but tolerant debate – and a cheap bottle of merlot. I see our house as a microcosm of civil society at large, and Daniel was a remarkable, thoughtful member of our community. He always took a strong, positive leadership role.

He always challenged the group in important ways—to reduce household waste and recycle, for example, despite our laziness. Small things that add up in a household of 6 people year-after-year. Daniel is one of those rare people in my life that keeps me inspired to be more than an armchair liberal. I always thought Daniel would make a great lawyer, and often encouraged him to become a high school social studies teacher because kids need independent thinking role models like him. His words are the tool he uses to re-shape the world, and nothing more.

Daniel is not a terrorist; he's a scapegoat. He's is an activist, and an effective one, and as such pose a real challenge to the status quo. But that's not a violation of the law.

Sarah Foudy
Brooklyn, NY

It is a great privilege to write a letter in support of my friend and former coworker, Daniel McGowan. I came to learn of Daniel's exceptional character, kind spirit, and goofball charm while sharing a cubicle with him at my old job at WomensLaw.org, a domestic violence nonprofit in Brooklyn, NY.

In a field that attracts mainly women, Daniel has no regard for such boundaries. Within days of joining WomensLaw.org, I learned of Daniel's sense of fairness, generosity, and quick-wit. I was impressed by his loyalty to his family and friends, his sharp-eyed view of the world. Daniel's presence at the office was refreshing, a guy who's quick to laugh and quick to percolate another pot of coffee. When Daniel wasn't around it seemed like the rest of us were relating stories about his hilarious antics or jokes. He soon became one of our anchors.

Days before his arrest, Daniel and I spent hours preparing end-of-the- year letters for a fundraising campaign. We stuffed envelopes together - no duller tas

Supporters

Marlene Ågerstrand, Stockholm, Sweden
Animal Rights Hawaii
Michael Ashanti Alston, Political motivation speaker, Estacion Libre, Jericho Movement, Arverne, NY
Mischa Altmann, Consulting Engineer, London, UK
Elizabeth Amesse, Student/barista, Brooklyn, NY
Mia Andersson, Nurse, Stockholm, Sweden
Bruce Andolfo, Northport, NY
Jen Angel, Editor, Clamor magazine, Toledo, OH
Moriah Arnold, Baltimore, MD
Ignacio Echeverría Arroyos, Photographer, Madrid, Spain
Douglas Bacon, Legal secretary, San Francisco, CA
Alexis Baden-Mayer, Esq., Lobbyist, Mintwood Media Collective, Washington, DC
Kristina Baker-Garcia, Student/Nurse Assistant, Warren, MI
Courtney Baldo, Student, Montréal, QC, Canada
Teprine Baldo, Educational technologist/communications specialist, Bleu Rouge Productions, Montréal, QC, Canada
Renata Balev, Waitress, bartender, New York, NY
Hilary Barlow, Student, Activist, State College, PA
Mildred H. Barnet, Santa Rosa, CA
Mark Barnsley, Campaign Against Prison Slavery, Leeds, UK
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Dr Paul-Francois Tremlett, Lecturer, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, UK
Marilyn Truell, Librarian assistant, Chester, PA
Antonia Tsangaris, Student, Boston, MA
Patrick Tubridy, Ft. Lauderdale, FL
Dean Tuckerman, Paralegal, Berkeley, CA
Luke Humphrey Peter Turner, Coventry, UK
Max Uhlenbeck, Civil Engineer, Editor, Left Turn Magazine, New York, NY
Peter Urban, Disability insurance analyst, San Francisco, CA
Deborah Uzurin, CUNY Student/proud sister of an activist, Queens, NY
Matt Van Asselt, Student, Croton on Hudson, NY
Kevin Van Meter, Graduate Student, Team Colors Collective, Brooklyn, NY
Katie Vasquez, Student/Farmworker Alliance, Immokalee, FL
Rebecca Vaughan, Teacher, CUNY/SUNY, New York, NY
Evan Villegas, Student/political activist, San Antonio, TX
Camilo Viveiros, Community organizer, Fall River, MA
Eleni Vlahakis, Actuary, New York, NY
Voices for Animals of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, PA
Antonios Vradis, Postgraduate Student, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, UK
Timo Vuori, mysterious occupation, Helsinki, Finland
Alanna Wade, Student, Purdue Calumet, Saint John, IN
Matt Wade, Brooklyn, NY
Chief Tom Big Warrior, Red Heart Warriors Society (RHWS), Allentown, PA
Sarah Wald, Phd Candidate, Department of American Civilization, Brown University, Providence, RI
Jenny Walty, Researcher/artist, Open Ground, Brooklyn NY
Sami Wannell, Student, Warwick Uni, UK
Rolanda Ware, Animal rights activist, Exeter, UK
Angela Wartes, Organic farmer, Covallis, OR
Jessica Wartgow, Preschool substitute teacher, Madison infoshop, Madison, WI
Storm Waters, Earth First! activist, Rising Tide North America
Phil Weaver, Community Organizer, Eugene PeaceWorks, Eugene, OR
Roger Weaver, Independent bookstore manager, Seattle, WA
Johannah Westmacott, Brooklyn, NY
Laura F. White, Guilford, VT
Kat Whitehead, Vice President, Community Alliance for the Ethical Treatment of

Youth

Rich Wilson, Librarian, Chicago, IL

Angela D. Lilly Wilson, Writer, Grundy, VA

Jeanette Helen Winsor, Industrial Workers of the World, Decatur, GA

Liz Wolf-Spada, Public school teacher, San Francisco, CA

Emma Wolin, Student, Wishing Well collective, Maplewood, NJ

Kevin Wyckoff, Musician, Baltimore, MD

Crystal Yakacki, Brooklyn, NY

Cody Yelton, Boulder, CO

Scott A. Yoos, Student, Olympia, WA

Susanne York, Photographer, Houston, TX

Zoe Young, London, UK

Mickey Z., Writer, Astoria, NY

Dennis Zarelli, Printer/owner, Tsunami screenprinting, Victoria, BC

Magdalena Zawodny, Regional Centre of Social Policy, Cracow, Poland

Howard Zinn, Professor, author, activist, Newton, MA

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Here are a few questions and answers we put together to help people that are not familiar with the legal aspects of the case understand what exactly went on.

What happened? What were Daniel's original charges and the proposed sentencing? Was anyone hurt in any of these actions? Why was he charged on the federal level, not state? Does the plea agreement mean Daniel is guilty? Can I read Daniel's plea agreement? What exactly did Daniel do? What sentence was Daniel facing? Why did Daniel agree to a longer sentence than Ms. Savoie? Why was it important to Daniel to not cooperate? Did it really matter? Didn't the government already have all the evidence? Did Daniel talk to the government at all? Why did the government agree to a reduced sentence if he would not cooperate? What was the agreement with the government about the NSA motion? When was Daniel sentenced? What is "eco-terrorism"? What kind of activist work has Daniel done? What can I do to help?

What happened?

On December 7, 2005 federal agents went to the offices of WomensLaw.org to arrest Daniel. No one understood what the charges were initially and did not know what was to happen the following few months. Daniel was taken in handcuffs from his job and brought to Metropolitan Correctional Center [MCC] in lower Manhattan.

That night, while he was in custody, federal agents raided the East Village apartment of Daniel and his wife. They turned most of the place upside down and walked out with many of their possessions including computers, personal photographs, tax papers, all of Daniel's school textbooks and homework, videotapes, DVDs and more. Because no one was home at the time, neighbors of Daniel's demanded to see proper identification and paperwork from the federal agents to OK the search. The agents told neighbors they were investigating a "domestic terrorism" case. Although government officials and media have carelessly used this term, this is not a terrorism case. (Almost a year into the case, the prosecution announced their plans to fight at sentencing for a "terror enhancement" at the change of plea hearing in November, 2006.) Despite this, while jailed at MCC, Daniel was not allowed to use the phone and he was held on what guards called 'the terror wing'.

On December 8, 2005, Daniel appeared in the federal courthouse in Brooklyn. Dozens of friends and family were there in a show of support and sat in on the hearing. Objections raised by Daniel's attorney at court extended the hearing to an additional day. A judge in Oregon had signed off on Daniel's search and arrest warrant under a provision of the USA Patriot Act. Despite Daniel's family offering to put up a significant amount of money and property to secure his release so that he could fly to

Oregon unescorted to face charges, the judge ruled in favor of removal to Oregon and he remained in federal custody. Completely unlike what one might see on TV, Daniel was unable to communicate a single word to anyone aside from his lawyer in court.

Daniel spent the next 14 days in transit across the United States at various federal detention centers. His family and friends did not know where he was or when he would arrive in Oregon. He was flown across the country in stages, first to Oklahoma, then to California, and finally to FCI Sheridan. He was shackled at the ankles and wrists throughout the flights. On December 21, he was arraigned in Oregon. From December 21 to January 3, he was kept on suicide watch because of a co-defendant's suicide in jail. Daniel was designated Maximum 1 status for much of the time he was housed at Lane County Corrections in Eugene, Oregon. The jail refused to provide a vegetarian diet despite many and varied attempts to request food he could eat. On Christmas Day, Daniel spoke to his wife on the phone for the first time since the morning of December 7th.

Daniel's detention hearing was on January 25, 2006, in front of Judge Aiken. He was granted release on \$1.6 million on bail which was put up by his family. The judge received over 75 letters in support of Daniel's release on bail. Because of bureaucratic procedures and paperwork, Daniel waited until February 8th before he was released from jail.

Daniel was on house arrest for seven months in his sister's NYC apartment, which he shared with her, his brother-in-law, his niece and his wife. Last summer he was allowed to attend a few short classes which will count towards his Master's program in acupuncture.

On November 9, 2006, after months of negotiations and consideration, Daniel, along with Jonathan Paul, Joyanna Zacher and Nathan Block, pled guilty to some of the many charges. He was sentenced to 7 years in prison on June 4, 2007 and began serving his time on July 2, 2007. Daniel has been accepted to a liberal arts graduate program at an accredited university and intends to complete a Master's degree in Sociology while imprisoned in order to be in the best possible place upon release from prison. He has been designated to a low security level facility in Minnesota.

For more information on Daniel's background, please go [here](#).

What were Daniel's original charges and the proposed sentencing?

He was charged with 2 counts of conspiracy to commit arson, 14 counts of arson (each carry a 5 year mandatory minimum) and 2 counts of use or possession of a destructive device. If he went to trial and was found guilty of one of these two latter charges, Daniel faced a 30 year mandatory minimum sentence. If found guilty of two, Daniel faced a MANDATORY LIFE SENTENCE.

Was anyone hurt in any of these actions?

It is important to note that no human or animal was injured at all in any of the incidents. There is absolutely no evidence that the incidents were intended to harm anyone.

Why was he charged on the federal level, not state?

Daniel was being charged on the federal level because the incidents took place at corporations that engage in interstate commerce.

Does the plea agreement mean Daniel is guilty?

Daniel has admitted his guilt in the two arsons he was charged with – the fire at Jefferson Poplar and the fire at Superior Lumber. The government dropped the charges that he used destructive devices.

Can I read Daniel’s plea agreement?

Yes. You can download Daniel’s Plea Agreement here. This document was made available to the public right after the plea hearing on November 9, 2006.

On November 9, 2006, after months of negotiations and consideration, Daniel, along with Jonathan Paul, Joyanna Zacher and Nathan Block, pled guilty to some of the many charges. We cannot emphasize enough what an extremely difficult decision this was for Daniel and we will continue to give him our full support.

We do not want there to be any confusion about Daniel’s plea agreement so we have posted it on the site. Daniel agreed to plead guilty with the understanding that he would not implicate or identify anyone at all other than himself. The other three remaining co-defendants entered pleas with the same terms. Daniel has done everything possible to maintain his integrity, and he wants to be as open about his agreement as possible. You can read Daniel’s statement to Judge Aiken and Daniel’s lawyers’ statement here.

What exactly did Daniel do?

Daniel was a lookout on one of the incidents, and he helped set the fire at the other incident.

What sentence was Daniel facing?

Daniel’s lawyers asked for a sentence of no more than 63 months, or no more than 18 months higher than what Daniel’s co-defendant, Suzanne Savoie, receives, whichever is less. Ms. Savoie has entered pleas to the same charges as Mr. McGowan. The only difference between Ms. Savoie and Mr. McGowan, in this case, is that Ms. Savoie is cooperating with the government, while Mr. McGowan is not.

On June 4, 2007, Judge Aiken sentenced Daniel to 7 years in prison.

Why did Daniel agree to a longer sentence than Ms. Savoie?

Daniel recognizes that because he has chosen to honor his principles and not cooperate in the government’s investigation, he will probably serve more time than some of the defendants who agreed to cooperate. Whether or not this is fair is a question for a different day. Daniel accepts it. He agreed to terms with the government that essentially include a premium for his decision not to cooperate.

Why was it important to Daniel to not cooperate? Did it really matter? Didn’t the government already have all the evidence?

For Daniel, this is a matter of principle. It is a matter that goes to his integrity. He walked away from these kinds of actions a long time ago. He made a decision that even if he ever chose to talk about what he personally did, what he might know about other people would go with him to the grave.

Did Daniel talk to the government at all?

Yes. As part of his agreement, he told government investigators about his own personal role in these actions. He answered questions about what he, personally, did. He did not disclose any information that would identify, or tend to incriminate another person, whether directly or indirectly. This is spelled out in the plea agreement, which is available to the public.

Why did the government agree to a reduced sentence if he would not cooperate?

The government agrees in many cases to reduced sentences for defendants who do not provide full cooperation. In this case, what the remaining four defendants did was to help the government resolve the entire case by all coming forward at once and agreeing to admit to their personal responsibility. This was of enormous benefit to the government in resolving this case without a trial and perhaps sparing the government from sharing information it did not want to share with the defense.

What was the agreement with the government about the NSA motion?

The government made dropping the motion and abandoning the request for any kind of a response an absolute condition of resolving the case without a trial. We have no more information about the existence of NSA surveillance of Daniel today than we did when we requested the information originally.

When was Daniel sentenced?

He was sentenced to 7 years in prison on June 4, 2007 and began serving his time on July 2, 2007 at MDC Brooklyn. He was designated to a low security prison in Minnesota, quite far from home.

What is "eco-terrorism"?

This is a term that was created by 'Wise Use' founder and extreme anti-environmentalist Ron Arnold of the Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise with the intention of turning people against environmentalists. Ron Arnold, along with creating the word 'eco-terrorism' has also stated, "*We want to destroy environmentalists by taking away their money and their members,*" [New York Times, December 1991] and "*Our goal is to destroy, to eradicate the environmental movement ... We're mad as hell. We're not going to take it anymore. We're dead serious - we're going to destroy them,*" [Toronto Star, 1991]. Calling someone an "eco-terrorist" is like the former use of the word "communist". It is not intended to spur debate on the topic but instead to scare potential supporters away from the case.

As many supporters of Daniel are New Yorkers, many feel this is a horrible insult to the victims of the real terrorism that many witnessed on 9/11 and affected them very personally. While Ron Arnold and the corporations that fund his reactionary form of public relations use the word quite liberally, Daniel's family and friends abhor the use of the term as it cheapens the very real terror that exists in this world whether it is fundamentalists targeting people or governments bombing people.

What kind of activist work has Daniel done?

For the last 8 years, Daniel has been involved in many different campaigns struggling for social justice, protection of the environment and human rights. He has worked for non-profits that focus on national forest protection, rainforest conservation and the rights of indigenous people. Most recently, Daniel worked on counter-recruitment as a proactive response to the government's wars. He helped organize a picket of a local military recruitment center in his old neighborhood in Brooklyn and passed out literature to high school kids that explained many non-military options for paying for college. Daniel also helped organize 'really, really free markets' in NYC which are markets where everything (food, clothes, services, books, etc) are free and available to all. In 2003-4, Daniel was one of a group of people who created and maintained a website, which was a hub for organizing against the hosting of the Republican party convention in Daniel's hometown. He attended many meetings, hosted fundraisers and conducted media interviews with national and international publications. When he was arrested, Daniel was employed as a webmaster for Womenslaw.org, an organization that operates a website with resources on domestic violence. Daniel's activism has been very public, and demonstrates his deep commitment to human dignity and environmental protection.

What can I do to help?

Get more information about setting up outreach events, donating to Daniel's legal and education funds, and spreading the word about the case here.

We hope that this helps answer any questions you may have had. Thanks for the support.

News & Updates

December 2012: We're having our very last December 7th event! NYC area friends, join us Friday December 7th from 7-11pm for a Holiday and Homecoming Party!! More info here!

September 2012: The OMFG Daniel McGowan is Coming Home Benefit Book-sale!!! NYC, Sept 29. More info here.

April 8, 2012: New stock of t-shirts in - all colors and sizes! Get some now here!

April 5, 2012: Attention all friends and supporters! Please help Daniel find a job when he's out! Thanks! Go to his recent blog entry - <http://supportdaniel.org/blog/?p=43>

January 24, 2012: The documentary *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front* about Daniel and his time leading up to prison was nominated for an **Oscar for Best Documentary Feature!** While Daniel has yet to see the film, we are all excited that now more people probably will. See its page on the Oscar site here.

October 23, 2011: Last week, Members of Congress wrote to the federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) with questions and concerns about the policies and practices at the Communications Management Units (CMUs), and the circumstances under which they were established. The Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) and the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) released the following statement in response:

"We are pleased that Representative Scott and Members of the House of Representatives have issued this Letter of Inquiry to the Bureau of Prisons outlining their concerns regarding the extraordinary communications restrictions, the lack of due process, and the disproportionate number of Muslims in the CMUs. The Center for Constitutional Rights and CAIR met with members of Congress to brief them on the issue, and we commend them for standing up for justice. We look forward to seeing the BOP's response to this inquiry, and we will continue to hold the BOP accountable as long as they isolate prisoners in experimental units."

For a copy of the letter, go here. Then tell the Department of Justice to uphold due process and fair treatment at www.ccrjustice.org/cmucmu-action.

September 11, 2011: *If a Tree Falls* will be on TV, has been released on DVD and is still in theaters.

TV

IF A TREE FALLS will be broadcast throughout the US on the PBS series POV, starting Tuesday, Sept. 13. Different cities will broadcast it at different times. Check the POV website and enter your zipcode to find your local station listings.

DVD

DVDs, with filmmakers' commentary, deleted scenes, extra interviews and "where are they now?" feature, can be purchased from Oscilloscope.

IN THEATERS - NATIONAL

Most of these are **one week** runs, but check with the theater for details. And new theaters are being booked every week, so check in here for updates.

9/8, 10, 11 - Ogden, UT, - Art House Cinemas 502
9/09 - Tacoma, WA - Grand Cinema
9/15 - Buffalo, NY - Squeaky Wheel Media Art Center
9/15 - Albany, NY - The Linda - WAMC
9/20 - Garrison, NY - Depot Docs
9/23 - Phoenix, AZ, - Valley Art
10/07 - Ellensburg, WA - Ellensburg Film Festival
10/12-16 - Flagstaff, AZ - Flagstaff Mountain Film Festival
10/13, 14, 16 - Saratoga Springs - Saratoga Film Forum
11/9 - Rehoboth Beach, DE - Rehoboth Beach Independent Film Festival
11/9 - Milwaukee, WI - University of Wisconsin Union Theater

INTERNATIONAL (check websites for specific screening dates)

9/29 - Mexico City, Mexico - DocsDF
10/14 - United Arab Emirates- Abu Dhabi Film Festival
10/20 - Bergen, Norway - Bergen International Film Festival
10/22 - Tokyo, Japan - Tokyo International Film Festival
9/28-29 - Victoria, BC, Canada- CineCenta/University of Victoria

July 10, 2011: Anyone either coming from or going to see *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front* can download, read and distribute flyers on Daniel and the CMUs. **Get them here:** Daniel McGowan Info Sheet CMU Fact Sheet

UPDATED DATES / LOCATIONS:

7/14 - Huntington, NY - Cinema Arts Centre (one night)
7/15 - Berkeley, CA - Landmark Shattuck
7/15 - Denver, CO - Landmark Mayan
7/15 - Los Angeles, CA - Landmark Nuart
7/15 - San Francisco, CA - Landmark Lumiere
7/15 - Santa Rosa, CA - Summerfield
7/22 - Corvallis, OR - Darkside Cinema
7/22 - Portland, OR - Cinema 21
7/22 - Minneapolis, MN - Lagoon Cinema
7/22 - San Diego, CA - Landmark Ken
7/22 - Seattle, WA - Landmark Varsity
8/05 - Asheville, NC - The Carolina Asheville
8/05 - Boca Raton, FL - Living Room Theater
8/12 - Washington, DC - Landmark E Street
8/24 - Norfolk, VA, - Naro Cinema
8/12 - Tacoma, WA - Grand Cinema

June 2011: *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front* opens nationwide.

Most of these are **one week** runs, but check with the theater for details. And new theaters are being booked every week, so check in here or here for updates.

06/22/2011 - New York, NY - IFC Center
06/23/2011 - Eugene, OR - Bijou
July (date TBD) - Portland, OR - Cinema 21
07/9/2011 - Olympia, WA- Capitol Theater
07/15/2011 - Berkeley, CA - Landmark Shattuck
07/15/2011 - Denver, CO - Landmark Mayan
07/15/2011 - Los Angeles, CA -Landmark Nuart
07/15/2011 - San Francisco, CA - Landmark Lumiere
07/15/2011 - Santa Rosa, CA - Summerfield
07/22/2011 - Minneapolis, MN - TBA
07/22/2011 - San Diego, CA - Landmark Ken
07/22/2011 - Seattle, WA -Landmark Varsity
08/12/2011 - Washington, DC - Landmark E Street

February 26, 2011: We are writing with some bad news. Daniel was moved back into a CMU this week, this time at Terre Haute. We aren't really sure why at this time, but we are sure we will fight the move. Daniel's holding up as well as can be expected. He's stressed out, of course, and he would appreciate your letters, especially at this time. Please write him at:

Daniel McGowan #63794-053
FCI Terre Haute - CMU
P.O. Box 33
Terre Haute, IN 47808

We know people will have a lot of questions about this. We do, too. At this moment, we don't have any answers. We will update you again as soon as we do.

January 21, 2011: *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front* premieres at Sundance Film Festival. All info on film and screenings can be found here. Find the film on Facebook here.

December 7, 2010: Dinner and a movie benefit in Brooklyn

October 19, 2010: Daniel was moved out of the CMU and into general population at USP Marion!!! Hooray!

September, 2010: 5th Annual Benefit Book Sale for Daniel: Saturday, September

25th, 2010 [rain date: Sunday September 26th] More event info here.

May 7, 2010: All colors and sizes of t-shirts are in stock again. Get yours here now!

April 6, 2010: Over three years after opening secretive Communications Management Units, or CMUs, the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) took one step toward correcting its illegal and discriminatory segregation of Muslims and political prisoners by opening its actions to public scrutiny.

Now is the time to voice your opinion on the illegal creation of the CMUs. PLEASE GO HERE to learn how you can make a difference NOW. Info on our site here.

March 20, 2010: The Center for Constitutional Rights files lawsuit fighting the CMUs. *Aref, et al. v. Holder, et al.* is a federal lawsuit filed against Attorney General Eric Holder, federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) officials, and the BOP itself, challenging policies and conditions at two experimental prison units that are being operated in Terre Haute, Indiana, and Marion, Illinois, as well as the circumstances under which they were established. Daniel and his wife Jenny are among the handful of plaintiffs in this suit.

December 12, 2009: NYC Art Benefit Show and Auction, Saturday 12.12.09. Get all info here!

November 1, 2009: It's been a while since we posted some updates. A lot has happened over the last few months, one of them being Daniel's guest blog on The Huffington Post, we're also looking for artists for our art auction and show in December. Send art now!

May 24, 2009: Just uploaded an amazing article, "ECOTERRORISM?": A Critical Analysis of the Vilification of Radical Environmental Activists as Terrorists by Rebecca K. Smith. Download and read now!

March 29, 2009: There are a bunch of new updated pages! Check out Prison Life, Daniel's Blog, lots of new Related Links, and addresses to Write Letters to others.

February 3, 2009: Daniel was just moved back to his designated facility in Marion, Illinois. He is in the Communication Management Unit, a unit created to heavily monitor communications of its prisoners, and will be serving the rest of his time here.

We truly hope that his time passes as quickly as possible here.

Please continue to write!

DANIEL McGOWAN #63794-053
USP MARION
U.S. PENITENTIARY
P.O. BOX 1000
MARION, IL 62959

Be mindful of what you write. **All mail is assumed to be read and copied.** Do not use any initials or anything that can be construed as code. If you'd like to send pictures, he is allowed to receive up to 25 photos per envelope - no polaroids. If you are interested in sending Daniel a book, please contact us and we'll be able to give you a book title from his wish list. He can receive books from publisher and large online stores like Barnes & Noble and Amazon. As mentioned by a prison official, any materials sent to Daniel, whether books, photos or letters, should not promote violence of any kind in any way.

More info on CMU here.

January 15, 2009: Daniel was moved this morning, is now in transit and is currently in Indiana. Write to him at:

DANIEL MCGOWAN 63794-053
FCI TERRE HAUTE
FEDERAL CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION
P.O. BOX 33
TERRE HAUTE, IN 47808

November 17, 2008: Daniel has been moved again and is now in Columbia County Jail in Wisconsin. Please write him at:

Daniel McGowan
Columbia County Jail
403 Jackson Street
Portage, WI 53901

We can't know for sure, but our best guess is that he will be in Columbia County for at least a couple of weeks. County Jail is difficult and lonely, especially during the holidays, and letters can really help. Please write Daniel as often as you can.

November 2, 2008: Daniel has been moved to the Federal Transfer Center in

Oklahoma. This is a temporary move and most likely he will be moving to another temporary location soon. Being moved is always a stressful and uncomfortable situation for Daniel and he always appreciates getting mail when moving. Please send letters to Oklahoma as soon as you can so that they will reach him before he moves again. He will eventually be going back to USP Marion, but that won't happen for a number of weeks or, possibly, months. We will pass more information along when it is available. Address below:

DANIEL McGOWAN #63794-053
FTC OKLAHOMA CITY
FEDERAL TRANSFER CENTER
P.O. BOX 898801
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73189

August 24, 2008: Daniel was moved sometime this weekend to his designated facility in Marion, Illinois. Please write to him at:

DANIEL McGOWAN #63794-053
USP MARION
U.S. PENITENTIARY
P.O. BOX 1000
MARION, IL 62959

Please be mindful of what you write. All mail is assumed to be read and copied. Do not use any initials or anything that can be construed as code.

July 25, 2008: Daniel was moved yesterday morning and is now in transit. According the inmate locator on Bureau of Prisons website, he is currently in Indiana.

Write to Daniel at:

DANIEL MCGOWAN 63794-053
FCI TERRE HAUTE
FEDERAL CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION
P.O. BOX 33
TERRE HAUTE, IN 47808

July 16, 2008: On Monday, July 14, Daniel appeared in federal court in the Western District of Wisconsin (Madison) before Judge Barbara Crabb and was found in civil contempt for his refusal to answer questions before a grand jury.

Since he is already in custody for his existing prison sentence, this means that his clock of time being served has stopped. An appeal has been filed by his lawyer to the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals, as well as a motion for bail (in his case since he

wouldn't be released, to start his federal time moving forward again). Right now, until the grand jury is dismissed or other agreements are made within that case and things are resolved, his time will not count as time served. It is unknown whether he will remain in county jail for the full extension of this period.

So, for now, please continue to write to Daniel with positive thoughts, funny stories, and well wishes, as this has been a particularly stressful and difficult time. Letters are key to time passing quickly inside.

Write Daniel at:

Daniel McGowan
Columbia County Jail
403 Jackson Street
Portage, Wisconsin 53901

His federal ID number is not needed for letters there. You may send a few pictures in your letters (no polaroids), but he can only receive magazines from subscriptions and books directly from the publisher.

Thanks for your continued support.

July 2, 2008: Daniel is back in Portage, WI.

Please write him at:

Daniel McGowan
Columbia County Jail
403 Jackson Street
Portage, Wisconsin 53901

June 26, 2008: Daniel has been moved to a county jail in Madison.

Please write him at:

Daniel McGowan
Dane County Jail
115 West Doty Street
Madison, WI 53703

June 11, 2008: It's 10 pm on the east coast and a few hours ago we finally heard from Daniel. He called from the Columbia County Jail in Portage, Wisconsin. Daniel was woken up at 4 am and on a plane en route from Oklahoma City to Chicago by 6 am. Daniel and his supporters presumed he was going to Marion, Illinois, but once he landed in Chicago, he was put in a van and driven to Madison, Wisconsin. From there he was driven to Portage. Along the way, Daniel asked if he was being transferred

based on facing new charges, and the marshal flatly told him no. Daniel then asked if he was facing a Grand Jury subpoena. The marshal would not come right out and say yes, but he hinted at it and at one point said, "good guess."

If Daniel is called before a grand jury, he will not testify and is concerned about being held in civil contempt and imprisoned at the Columbia County Jail, where the time he serves will not count against his 7 year sentence.

At this point, neither Daniel nor his attorney have received a subpoena or any other paperwork to indicate that he will be appearing before a grand jury, but it's what he is preparing for and what folks would be best served to see as a possibility.

Over the past month, Daniel has been in transfer. And while the time he has served thus far has been without incident and even though he received a good team review before being yanked from FCI Sandstone, he tells us that he has been put in Segregated Housing Units ("The Hole") and treated differently for the duration of this transfer, all due to the application of the "Terrorism Enhancement."

For now, it is important to keep Daniel connected to the communities he is a part of. Please write to him and let him know we're out here for him*.

For now, Daniel's address is:
Daniel McGowan
Columbia County Jail
403 Jackson Street
Portage, Wisconsin 53901

Daniel wanted us to emphasize how important your support has been thus far and how truly appreciative he is.

* For guidelines on writing to Daniel, go to [here](#)

May 15, 2008: Daniel was moved from FCI Sandstone yesterday. We have no information as to why he was moved or where he is headed. Check back here for updates.

April 15, 2008: Good news! The Second Chance Act was passed last week. Thanks to everyone who worked to get this through.
Eventwise: NYC benefit show coming up this Friday - get all info [here](#).

January 6, 2008: Action Alert! Last Chance to Support the Second Chance Act! Right now, the US Senate is in session and deliberating on whether to vote for the

The Second Chance Act of 2007 (*Senate bill 1060, House bill 1593*). The bill has many reform-based provisions dealing with increased half-way house time, more money for re-entry, education, career-training, and family drug treatment for offenders as well as provisions to allow some elderly prisoners to be released earlier. Its written to give prisoners a chance. If passed it will make the following specific reforms:

- Expands provisions to provide expanded services to offenders and their families for reentry into society.
- Authorizes grants for drug treatment programs that are alternatives to imprisonment.

- Requires implementation of a program to improve academic and vocational education for prisoners.
- Requires grants to provide technology career training to prisoners.
- Requires grants to nonprofit organizations for reintegrating offenders into the community.
- Requires a prisoner reentry program to prepare prisoners for release and successful reentry into the community.
- Requires a pilot program for the early release of nonviolent elderly offenders (age 60 or older) who have served prison terms of the greater of 10 years or 1/2 of the term of imprisonment.
- Allows the Bureau of Prisons to place a prisoner in home confinement or in a community correctional facility for up to 12 months prior to release.
- Requires the Bureau of Prisons to ensure that each prisoner in a community confinement facility has access to necessary medical care, mental health care, and medicine.

CALL your senators and urge them to support the Second Chance Act, Senate bill 1060. We recommend that you do this by telephone if possible - it's an opportunity to immediately make a real difference in the lives of offenders, prisoners, and former prisoners by giving them a chance to live outside of prison walls.

Go here for All State Senators and use the Choose a State drop-menu or click Sort by State link.

January 3, 2008: Thank you to everyone who generously donated to the families of Pine Ridge reservation and participated in the Leonard Peltier Holiday Gift Drive. Go here to read about the project's success and to take a look at photos of all the toys and clothing.

December 30, 2007: If you haven't seen it already, take a look at Daniel's blog here. The blog is updated regularly, with some entries being added from earlier dates, so

take some time to scroll through them all.

November 4, 2007: Donate now to the Leonard Peltier Holiday Gift Drive!

Also, just a few site updates: Download and read the May 15, 2007 Terrorism Enhancement hearing transcript, most recent half page flyer found on the More Ways to Help page, *Independent* article on Daniel on the Media page.

October 31, 2007: *From Jonathan Paul's supporters, October 31, 2007:*

Early this morning Jonathan was interviewed by Amy Goodman on Democracy Now. You can read the transcript at: <http://www.democracynow.org/article.pl?sid=07/10/31/145201>

At approximately 1:45 this afternoon, Jonathan reported to FCI Phoenix accompanied by his sisters, Caroline and Alexandra. He was informed that he would be in the Annex for awhile and would not be able to call out for a couple of weeks. They would not let him bring in important legal documents, nor commissary money which he had been told he could bring. They also told me the commissary money I sent in earlier would not be credited to his account because he wasn't in custody yet. Kind of a pain, but easily remedied, which I will take care of tomorrow.

One guard actually told Jonathan and his sisters that FCI Phoenix seems like a camp compared to other medium security facilities in the country. I guess we will just have to wait and see. Jonathan walked in strong, with his head held high and in good spirits. As Jonathan told me just before he went in - "this is way bigger than us, this is for the animals and the planet, we will never suffer as much as they do."

The first month is usually the toughest, so please write to Jonathan often. Feel free to post this far and wide. Jonathan has been a great warrior for the animals and the environment for over 20 years. Let's not forget him now! And please remember to keep writing Jonathan's co-defendant's and other political prisoners. As a photographer, Jonathan is very visual, so he would love to get photos. You don't have to print them on photo paper, you can just insert them in a letter (if you are typing it on your computer).

Please feel free to contact Jonathan's support group at friendsofjonathanpaul@yahoo.com. If you are interested in organizing a fundraiser or a letter writing event, please let us

know.

We plan to get a support website up for Jonathan very soon.

Jonathan Paul
#07167-085
FCI Phoenix
Federal Correctional Institution
37910 N 45th Ave.
Phoenix, AZ 85086

September 12, 2007: Daniel has finally reached his designated facility - FCI Sandstone in Sandstone, Minnesota. This is his final destination, as far as we have been told the last few months. Please send all your letters you've been holding onto and resend ones you've just sent! Note - Unit I has been added to his address. Letter writing info here.

DANIEL McGOWAN
#63794-053, UNIT I
FCI SANDSTONE
P.O. BOX 1000
SANDSTONE, MN 55072

September 1, 2007: Daniel is already on the road again. He's at FCI Terre Haute in Indiana, but there's no way to know for how long. If you'd like to write, his new

address is:
DANIEL McGOWAN
#63794-053
FCI TERRE HAUTE
FEDERAL CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION
P.O. BOX 33
TERRE HAUTE, IN 47808

August 30, 2007: Daniel has moved to FTC Oklahoma City. His new address is:
DANIEL McGOWAN
#63794-053
FTC OKLAHOMA CITY
FEDERAL TRANSFER CENTER
P.O. BOX 898801
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73189

August 25, 2007: Daniel in 2008 Certain Days Calendar. Get it now!

August 17, 2007: Daniel is still in at MDC Brooklyn, Sept. 1 we're having a benefit in NYC (info here).

July 28, 2007: We're currently working on adding a new section to the site, but in the meantime go here to read Daniel's most recent letter from prison.

July 26, 2007: Daniel is still at MDC Brooklyn. See below info on where and how to write.

July 3, 2007: Daniel is now at MDC Brooklyn beginning his prison sentence and can begin to receive some kind, supportive letters.

Please use the following address:
DANIEL McGOWAN
#63794-053
MDC BROOKLYN
METROPOLITAN DETENTION CENTER
P.O. BOX 329002
BROOKLYN, NY 11232

When sending a letter, it's best to keep it simple. Write or type on blank notebook or copy paper no bigger than 8.5x11 and don't use any special colored or gel pens or pencils, stamps, or stickers. Don't write anything on the outside or inside of the envelope except the prisoner's address and your full name and return address in the upper left hand corner of the addressed side of the envelope. Use plain white envelopes

without a clear plastic address window, or any special decorations. Most prisons also REQUIRE a return address on the envelope.

Please take a minute to read the following VERY IMPORTANT guidelines.

- Write on both sides of the paper, since the number of pages he can have may be limited. It is also totally acceptable to type your letters. More will fit on a page.
- Write your address inside your letter/card if you think he does not have it, but DO NOT put an address label anywhere inside or on the letter/card. Address labels are ONLY OK to go on your envelope.
- Do NOT send him stamps, envelopes (self-addressed or otherwise), blank paper or notecards. He will not be able to receive them and he will be denied your letter.
- Do NOT send him any form of currency, whether cash, check or money order.
- Do NOT send photographs larger than 4x6. Do not send polaroids and make sure the content is appropriate.
- Do NOT include any paperclips, staples or any extra things in your letter.
- Do NOT send a card that has glitter or any 3-D objects in or on it.
- Do NOT send cards with paper inserts glued in them.
- Do NOT tape your envelope shut.
- Do NOT ever write "legal mail" or anything implying that you are an attorney unless you are
- Please use your common sense; don't write about anything that is likely to get a prisoner in trouble in any way.

Daniel does not receive the envelope your letter is mailed in, so write your return address and full name in the letter as well. Also, number the pages like "1/5, 2/5,3/5..." so that a prisoner can tell if some pages are missing.

If you send Daniel a letter and it gets returned to you, please let us know about it so we can add any other restrictions to the guideline list.

Please do NOT send in any books to Daniel yet. We are in the process of getting a system going for him to receive books. If you would like him to receive books we would prefer you donate money and we will make sure to get him a book on his request list and let you know about it.

June 12, 2007: You can now download the latest Green Scare tri-fold pamphlet [here](#) and read the text of the flyer [here](#)

Daniel was on Democracy Now! yesterday. You can read the transcript [here](#), download the audio [here](#) or watch the video [here](#).

June 12, 2007: If you would like to donate to Daniel's education or legal defense

fund offline, you can send a check or money order made out to *Lisa McGowan* to:
McGowan
PO Box 106
New York, NY 10156

June 10, 2007: It has been a week since Daniel's sentencing and we wanted to give you some more information about what happened. We have uploaded Daniel and his wife Jenny's statements to the court at sentencing.

- Daniel's statement: www.supportdaniel.org/news/dm_sentencing.html
- Jenny's statement: www.supportdaniel.org/news/js_sentencing.html

Also, you can read extensive and detailed notes of Daniel's sentencing at www.supportdaniel.org/news/sentencing_report.html

Daniel is set to self report to prison in early July but we are not sure where. As soon as we find out this information, we will let you know. His sentence is currently 7 years with 3 years of supervised release and the terrorism enhancement for the Jefferson Poplar arson. How that affects Daniel's time in prison and afterwards is not known at this time.

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Please keep Daniel's codefendant Jonathan in your thoughts. His info is below. As always, thanks for your support at this very difficult time.

Jonathan Paul
Out on bail until August
Received a sentence of 51 months (sentence is not final)
friendsofjonathanpaul@yahoo.com
Friends of Jonathan Paul
PMB 267
2305 Ashland St., Ste. C
Ashland, OR 97520

June 6, 2007: Daniel was sentenced to a 7 year (84 month) sentence on Monday June 4th in Eugene Federal Court for his participation in arsons at Superior Lumber Company and Jefferson Poplar Farms. The government was asking for 7 years, 8 months.

Judge Aiken also gave Daniel the "terrorism enhancement" for the arson at Jefferson Poplar Farms because of particular language in the communique for that incident. We do not know what impact this will have on Daniel's classification in the Bureau of

Prisons.

As you can imagine, we are completely overwhelmed by the last two days in court and only want to extend our thanks to everyone for the constant emails, phone calls and check ins over the last couple of weeks.

Daniel will be reporting to prison on July 2nd and will be finishing his first quarter of his masters degree program and spending time with his friends and family until he goes in. We will be sending out updates shortly.

May 16, 2007: On May 15, Judge Aiken heard oral arguments on the terrorism enhancement from the government and the lawyers for all the defendants. The government is asking the court to impose the “terrorism enhancement,” which could affect the judge’s sentencing guideline calculation and have a huge impact on where, and under what conditions, Daniel McGowan is imprisoned. During the hearing, the government compared the defendants to the KKK and to other people who have been sentenced under the terrorism enhancement. What the government did not say is that in all of those other cases, the people who committed the crimes intended to injure and kill others.

Daniel’s lawyers argued that if the terrorism enhancement is applied, Daniel could be placed in a prison such as Terre Haute, Indiana, where inmates have very little contact with the outside world and are monitored constantly. They also pointed out that the government cannot seriously argue that the defendants are dangerous “terrorists,” considering that the government has agreed to allow Jacob Ferguson, who is responsible for over a dozen arsons, to remain free. The reality is that none of the defendants in the case are terrorists who pose a risk to the community.

The judge did not make a ruling at the hearing. She will rule on some legal issues by early next week. Daniel probably will not know if Judge Aiken will impose the terrorism enhancement until he is sentenced on June 4. Thank you to everyone who came out for the hearing.

You can read a court report from the hearing [here](#). More media coverage [here](#).

May 13, 2007: There have been a few articles on the Terrorism Enhancement in Daniel’s case this past week. Here are a few of them:

Terror Label: Feds seek to ‘enhance’ sentences for eco-saboteurs *Eugene Weekly*
Government Seeks “Terrorism Enhancement” for Environmental Activists by Will

Potter.

Terrorist label rests with judge *Register Guard*

'Family' of defendants conspired in crimes *Register Guard*

Destroying property is not terrorism By Jonathan Paul's mother, Sarah Paul published in the *Register Guard* for Mothers' Day.

May 7, 2007: Daniel's brief challenging the application to the "terrorism enhancement" is online here.

On May 15th, the Civil Liberties Defense Center will be holding a press conference and rally in support of the defendants opposing the application of the "terrorism enhancement". Please come out and support them.

Environmentalists are not Terrorists!

Rally and Press Conference

Eugene Federal Courthouse (405 East 8th Avenue)

12-1PM

May 15 at 9:30 am is the hearing to decide whether the people who have plead guilty to acts of environmentally motivated property damage and are awaiting their sentences, deserve the terrorist label.

Speakers include:

Alejandro Queral, Northwest Constitutional Rights Center

Lauren Regan, Civil Liberties Defense Center

May 6, 2007: The booksale was a huge success. Thank you to everyone who came out, donated and bought books. We made a substantial contribution to Daniel's tuition fund and sold hundreds of books.

April 22, 2007: The 2nd Annual Support Daniel McGowan booksale is set for May 5th, 12-7PM at the Book Thug Nation, Astor Place between 3rd & 4th Avenues in Manhattan. Read more about book donations here.

March 31, 2007: At a March 2nd court date, sentencing dates were set for all defendants. The sentencing dates for the non-cooperating defendants in the case are as follows:

June 4 - Daniel McGowan's sentencing. 9 AM

June 5 - Jonathan Paul's sentencing. 9 AM

We are encouraging people to attend these dates and support the defendants. Be

sure to arrive early (only 42 seats!), dress well for court and please behave during the proceedings. Oregon Federal Court is located at 405 East 8th Avenue. (Be careful crossing Franklin Boulevard). View map.

There is also a very important court date coming up in May. At a May 15th hearing, Judge Aiken will hear arguments on the "terrorism enhancement" the government wants to have applied on all defendants in the case. You can read an update on this aspect of the case in today's Eugene Weekly here. Letters to the Eugene Weekly regarding this important issue can be sent to editor@eugeneweekly.com (Letters to the Editor (to be published in the paper) should be clearly labeled as such, be no more than 250 words and must include your full name, address and phone number.

We are happy to announce that we are starting a matching grant campaign for Daniel's tuition. We have a donor that will match your donation dollar for dollar up to \$12,000. This means we will be able to double your donation i.e. Your \$25 donation means we get \$50. Thanks to this generosity we are in a position to cover Daniel's masters degree tuition in full. Please consider contributing and help Daniel earn his masters degree while he serves his sentence. You can donate online through the paypal button on this site or send a check/money order made out to "Lisa McGowan", POB 106, NY, NY 10156.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to write a letter to the Judge for Daniel.

March 1, 2007: Tonight's benefit show for Daniel featuring Leftover Crack has been canceled.

February 14, 2007: The deadline for letters to the Judge has been extended for the final time to March 2, 2007.

January 27, 2007: The Judge in Daniel's case has reduced Daniel's property bond to \$800,000 after one year of Daniel being out on bond.

Also, we now have two new flyers for letters to the Judge regarding Daniel's sentencing thanks to Eberhardt Press. You can download the full page and half page flyers.

January 14, 2007: The deadline for letters to the Judge for Daniel has been extended to February 15th.

We have set up an online book shop on Amazon.com. To browse and purchase any of

our books, [click here](#).

December 14, 2006: There is a court report from Daniel's court date posted [here](#). Daniel's sentencing date is set for April 26, 2007.

You can see photos from our December 7th rally for Daniel in NYC c/o of the following photographers: Fred Askew, Erin Siegal & Ida C. Benedetto. Also, you can see video of Daniel's post plea hearing press conference [here](#).

December 2, 2006: We just got shirts back from the printer. We now have all sizes in black, heather lake blue and olive green (and most sizes in pink). Check them out [here](#).

November 18, 2006: We have launched the December 7 NYC event info page [here](#). Also, be sure to pick up raffle tickets locally at Bluestockings Books and read more about the raffle and what you can win [here](#).

November 9, 2006: We would like to inform everyone about the events in court today. After months of negotiations and consideration, Daniel, along with Jonathan Paul, Joyanna Zacher and Nathan Block, pled guilty to some of the many charges. We cannot emphasize enough what an extremely difficult decision this was for Daniel and we will continue to give him our full support.

We do not want there to be any confusion about Daniel's plea agreement so we have posted it [here](#). Daniel agreed to plead guilty with the understanding that he would not implicate or identify anyone at all other than himself. The other three remaining co-defendants entered pleas with the same terms. Daniel has done everything possible to maintain his integrity, and he wants to be as open about his agreement as possible.

November 2, 2006: There will be a very important status hearing on November 9th before Judge Aiken at 9:30 AM. If you are able to come and show support for Daniel and the other remaining non-cooperating defendants, Jonathan, Nathan, and Joyanna, we really want to see you there. The McGowan family and Daniel's wife, Jenny, will be in attendance.

Daniel's lawyers, Amanda Lee and Jeffrey Robinson will be available for media interviews after the hearing. The hearing will be held in the new federal courthouse at 405 E. 8th Avenue, Eugene, Oregon.

October 17, 2006: We will be participating in the December 7th Day of Solidarity for Green Scare Indictees and Political Prisoners called by [GreenScare.org](#). There will be

two events in New York City - a daytime rally and film screenings and more at night. Details to be announced shortly. Be sure to bookmark our events page.

October 17, 2006: We just got shirts back from the printer. We now have all sizes in black, pink, heather lake blue and olive green. Check out the new color and order some here.

September 11, 2006: Great news! Daniel is no longer on house arrest!! Today Daniel's lawyers received word that Judge Aiken signed off on the motion which allowed Daniel's electronic monitoring device to be removed. Other restrictions still apply, but he is allowed to be out of the apartment and enjoy the crisp autumn weather coming our way.

August 26, 2006: We have uploaded photos from various benefits including the Art Auction for Daniel on our flickr page. Check them out here.

August 24, 2006: Read the court report from Daniel's court appearance here. Thank you to everyone who came out and supported the defendants! We really appreciate it.

August 15, 2006: Court Update - Daniel will be in court on Tuesday, August 22nd for a hearing on a motion filed by the defense related to government surveillance of the defendants. The defendants are asking the court to order the government to obtain and turn over any secret, warrantless surveillance, including any surveillance done by the NSA. There will also be arguments heard on whether or not the transcripts from the plea hearings last month and plea agreements of cooperating witnesses will be unsealed. There will be discussions on the pending trial date and whether it will be postponed. The hearing is set before Judge Aiken at 9:30AM at Eugene Federal Courthouse. **Please dress/act appropriately and be on time.**

August 2, 2006: Thanks to the wonderful designers and printers at Eberhardt Press, we now have a cool new flyer. You can download a PDF here.

August 1, 2006: Thank you to everyone who came out for the *If they come for you in the morning*: Art Auction for Daniel McGowan last week. It was an amazing event and very successful. Special thanks to Ryan, Jessie, Molly, Kevin, Katy, Kristine, Steve Englander and all the ABC No Rio volunteers, Jeffrey and Bluestockings Books, Aaron Thompson & art.les.nyc, Ian Kual'i'i, James and Evan of Graffiti Research Labs, Mark and Mattie from Fort Whitey, Jonathan Spies, Thadeaus D. Umpster, Angela Coppola, Mona Mady, Marianne-ski, Eliza Calhoun, Josh MacPhee, Chris Stain, Brandon Bauer, Eric Drooker, Aaron Resen, Callie, Sen, Eric Laursen, Andrew, Brendan Story, Cristina Chapman, Melissa Morrone, Meredith Sums, Benjamin, and

the McGowan family.

Anyone who has not yet picked up artwork from the show, please go to ABC No Rio on Wednesday, August 2nd and Thursday, August 3rd, from 5pm - 8pm. If you can't come by either of these days, please email us at visual.resistance@gmail.com.

July 24, 2006: In the interest of doing everything we can to secure Daniel's freedom, we are asking that you take an active role in writing to your Senators and Congressperson about the injustice of Daniel's situation. There are links, sample letters and more on the new Letter Writing Campaign page.

July 18, 2006: We have just put up a FAQ page to help people that are not familiar with the legal aspects of the case understand what exactly is going on. Check it out [here](#).

July 7, 2006: Thanks to everyone who came out to the booksale last weekend despite the threat of rain. It was a massive success. Thanks especially to Corey, W, Jessie, Angela, Sen, Brendan, Nancy, Jenny & everyone who donated and bought books. Thanks to the Book Thug Nation for hosting this sale.

June 24, 2006: You can now get a 15" x 20" poster of Kristine Virsis' *Solidarity* image as a fundraiser for Daniel's legal defense. Thanks to Kristine for her generosity! See how to get one [here](#). Also, Visual Resistance has a limited edition of 50 posters handmade silk-screened posters for the art auction available for purchase [here](#).

June 23, 2006: BOOK SALE POSTPONED - The book sale for Daniel's legal defense has been postponed due to rainy weather. It will be held on Sunday, July 2nd. More details [here](#).

June 12, 2006: The National Lawyers Guild has released a statement on the Green Scare and Operation Backfire. Read it [here](#).

June 2, 2006: CounterPunch listed us as 'Website of the Day'. Thanks!

May 30, 2006: New dates and deadline have been announced for the Visual Resistance Art Auction for Daniel. It is now two days - July 27th & 28th at ABC NO Rio. We've already got Armsrock, Arofish, Borf, GoreB, Peter Kuper, Josh MacPhee, RB827, Nicole Schulman, Chris Stain, Swoon, Seth Tobocman, and lots of other great artists involved, and we're still seeking donations for the show.

May 22, 2006: T-shirts and stickers are IN! Get them while you can!!! Go [here](#) to find

out more.

May 16, 2006: Daniel and Jenny were married this past weekend and celebrated with family and friends. Congrats to them!

April 29, 2006: Visual Resistance has put out a call for artwork to auction off at an art auction for Daniel's legal defense. If you have ideas of artists to approach for donations, please contact us at FriendsofDanielMcG@yahoo.com

April 29, 2006: A big thanks to everyone who came out for last night's successful benefit for Daniel in Brooklyn. Special thanks to Corey, Ish, Molly, Morgan, Tracey, Lauren, Josh, Your 33 Black Angels, David Rovics, Stockyard Stoics, Gloryhole, Oogle Orphanage, DJ Thadeaus, DJ Opus, Ryan, Spider, Leah, Bike Blog, Times Up! and the dedicated party volunteers, bakers and door people.

March 16, 2006: We just uploaded a revised $\frac{1}{4}$ sheet flyer with basic information and a new $\frac{1}{2}$ sheet flyer with info on how to help. For free printed flyers to distribute, please contact us (currently only in the NYC area).

March 13, 2006: We now have a PO Box that you can send legal defense fund donations to. In addition to our online donation button, you can now send a check or postal money order made out to "Lisa McGowan" to:

Lisa McGowan
PO Box 106
New York, NY 10156

Lisa is Daniel's sister and is coordinating the legal defense fund. Checks/money orders must be made out to "Lisa McGowan" or we will not be able to cash them. You can, of course, continue to use our Paypal online donation button which is additionally on every page this site.

Many people have asked for an address to send letters to Daniel. While Daniel appreciates letters, he would like to encourage people to support those still in prison by writing to them instead.

February 8, 2006: We are very happy to announce Daniel was granted release on bail on January 25th and has now arrived back in NYC.

Prison Life

CMU

On February 3, 2009, Daniel was moved back to his designated facility in Marion, Illinois. In 2011, he was moved to a CMU in Terre Haute, Indiana. He is in the **Communication Management Unit (CMU)**, a unit created to heavily monitor communications of its prisoners. We truly hope that his time passes as quickly as possible here. **Get ALL the info you need on the CMU here.**

Read Daniel's Blog Go here.

Sending letters

Daniel sincerely appreciates letters but cannot always respond to every single one. Please write him at:

DANIEL McGOWAN #63794-053
FCI TERRE HAUTE - CMU
P.O. BOX 33
TERRE HAUTE, IN 47808

Be mindful of what you write. **All mail is read, copied and scanned** by BoP staff and people who monitor all CMU prisoner communications. Please *do not* write to Daniel about anything that can be construed by prison staff as 'violent' or misinterpreted as code. **IMPORTANT: If you are on probation, parole, house arrest, subpoenaed to a grand jury, indicted yourself OR ARE CURRENTLY IN THE PRISON SYSTEM - please *do NOT* write to Daniel.**

Please send **no more than 20 pages** of printed materials per envelope.

Sending Pictures

Also, if you'd like to send pictures, he is allowed to receive up to 25 photos per envelope - no polaroids.

Sending Books

Daniel does not have any book wish lists. We tried that when he first went into prison but it became easier for him to just ask us for a few titles at a time. At the moment he has no specific requests. He is only allowed a handful of books in his possession at a time, so he asks us to discourage people to just send him books out of the blue. He has also read hundreds of books since he's been in prison, so there's a fairly good chance he has read a book you may have in mind.

Instead of trying to send a book, we suggest is donating to the paypal account and

including a note that you would like it to go towards books. When we order we'll let him know who it's from.

Donation link: <http://bit.ly/kbTKkm>

Thanks for your support.

As mentioned by a prison official, **any materials sent to Daniel, whether books, photos or letters, should not promote violence of any kind in any way.**

More info on CMU [here](#).

Communication Management Units (CMU)

On October 19, 2010, Daniel was moved out of the CMU and into general population at USP Marion. On February 24, 2011, Daniel was moved to the CMU in Terre Haute, Indiana. Close to a year prior, the Center for Constitutional Rights filed a lawsuit on behalf of multiple inmates, including Daniel and his wife. Legal documents and more can be found on CCR's site here: <http://ccrjustice.org/ourcases/current-cases/aref-et-al-v-holder-et-al>

In October 2011, Members of Congress wrote to the federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) with questions and concerns about the policies and practices at the Communications Management Units (CMUs), and the circumstances under which they were established. The Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) and the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) released the following statement in response:

“We are pleased that Representative Scott and Members of the House of Representatives have issued this Letter of Inquiry to the Bureau of Prisons outlining their concerns regarding the extraordinary communications restrictions, the lack of due process, and the disproportionate number of Muslims in the CMUs.

The Center for Constitutional Rights and CAIR met with members of Congress to brief them on the issue, and we commend them for standing up for justice.

We look forward to seeing the BOP's response to this inquiry, and we will continue to hold the BOP accountable as long as they isolate prisoners in experimental units.”

For a copy of the letter, go here. Then tell the Department of Justice to uphold due process and fair treatment at www.ccrjustice.org/cmuh-action.

Latest Media

March 17, 2011 - Backstory: Communications Management Units in Federal Prisons on **WNYC**, The Leonard Lopate Show.

March 10, 2011 - **The Nation** published Gitmo in the Heartland, an article discussing the CMUs and highlighting Daniel McGowan and his wife's experiences with the

CMUs.

March 3, 2011 - **NPR** is aired the first part of a two-part series on the Communications Management Units (CMU) on its *All Things Considered* program.

Part 1: 'Guantanamo North': Inside U.S. Secretive Prisons

Part 2: Leaving 'Guantanamo North'

DATA & GRAPHICS: Population Of The Communications Management Units

Learn more about the prisoners NPR identified, including their cases and release dates. (Daniel listed on page 11 of 15)

TIMELINE: The History Of 'Guantanamo North'

A chronology of the Communications Management Units in Terre Haute, Ind., and Marion, Ill.

In light of this coverage, we are calling on concerned individuals to take action by telling the Department of Justice to uphold due process and fair treatment at www.ccrjustice.org/cmucmu-action. Also, check our Events page for CMU info related events.

Quick summary from GreenIsTheNewRed.com: 5 Things You Should Know About CMUs, America's "Little Guatanamos"

Read Daniel's blog on *The Huffington Post*.

* Get the full article with clickable links and endnotes [here](#).

* Download the online version to view, email or post.

* Download the zine/booklet (US standard) and A4 format to print and distribute.

Download and view the official documents given to Daniel at the CMU.

Democracy Now! video from April 17, 2009: Segment on CMUs. **More Media below.**

Over the past two years, the United States Federal Bureau of Prisons has quietly opened at least two new prison units that severely restrict inmates' ability to communicate with the outside world. These units were opened either without the legally required public comment period or, there is good reason to believe, in spite of it. In April 2006, the Bureau proposed a strict new set of regulations for people involved with (not necessarily convicted in) investigations of "terrorism," and a public comment period followed. After a strong outcry from civil liberties advocates and other groups, the proposal appeared to be dropped. In December 2006, however, several men – almost all of whom were Muslims – were moved from the prisons in which they had

been residing to a new "Communication Management Unit " (CMU) housed at the U.S. Penitentiary in Terre Haute, which looked remarkably like the unit that the Bureau had proposed¹. There was no public comment period for the CMU.

In May of 2008, several men were moved without warning to what is believed to be the second CMU in the federal prison system – this one located at the US Penitentiary in Marion, IL. Again, none of these men were given any notice that they would be moved, and it was not until they arrived at the CMU there that there was any public acknowledgment that the CMU existed. The rules at the second CMU are the same as those at Terre Haute. One striking difference is that there is a small non-Muslim population – of which Daniel McGowan is one.

Once the news broke that the facilities had opened, CMU's came under immediate criticism for segregating inmates on the basis of religion and ethnicity and for punishing low-risk inmates by almost eliminating their ability to talk on the phone to loved ones, see them in person, or correspond to them through letters in a timely fashion. Inmates at the CMU's are allowed only one phone call per week, which is limited to 15 minutes, and which must be conducted in English. All mail that is sent or received is scrutinized and any mail written in languages other than English must be translated and transcribed before it is sent or received by an inmate. Visits take place behind glass and are limited to four hours each month. They must also be conducted in English. These restrictions are devastating to all of the inmates, who now have almost no contact with loved ones and very little ability to keep up with events in the outside world; the restrictions are particularly damaging to those whose first language is not English. The U.S. Bureau of Prisons continues to have very little to say publicly about the CMU's. The information we have is based on a few investigative articles about the CMU at Terre Haute^{1, 2} and on what we have learned from the inmates themselves. We need to know more. We need to know what is happening inside federal institutions that hold over 200,000 inmates and which may or may not be following the regulations that govern them. Please encourage local media in your area to investigate especially if you live near a federal correctional institution. Write letters to the editor and talk to your friends.

1. Van Bergen, Jennifer. "Documents show new secretive US prison program isolating Muslim, Middle Eastern prisoners." *The Raw Story*. 16 February, 2007. http://www.rawstory.com/news/2007/Documents_show_new_secretive_new_US_0216.html

2. Eggen , Dan. "Facility Holding Terrorism Inmates Limits Communication." *Washington Post*. 25 February, 20 07. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/>

article/2007/02/24/AR2007022401231.html

MEDIA

December 10, 2009: *Eugene Weekly*

Eco-Saboteur Stays in Terrorist Unit by Camilla Mortensen

July 28, 2009: *Khaleej Times Online*

Prisoners of a Special Kind by Karin Friedemann (Letter From America)

July 24, 2009: *New America Media*

Secret Bush-era Prisons Continue commentary by John C. Trang

June 25, 2009: *Democracy Now!*

EXCLUSIVE: Animal Rights Activist Jailed at Secretive Prison Gives First Account of Life Inside a "CMU"

June 22, 2009: *news-sentinel.com*

Striking a balance between security and civil liberty, Editorial

June 22, 2009: *Democracy Now!*, Headlines

ACLU Files Suit over Communication Management Units

June 19, 2009: *The National Law Journal*

ACLU Lawsuit Challenges Prison Units Designed to Keep Tabs on Suspected Terrorists by Tresa Baldas

June 18, 2009: *Los Angeles Times*

ACLU suit to challenge isolation prisons by Dean Kuipers

May 2009: *Earth First! Journal* (Beltane issue)

Silencing the Sentenced: Daniel McGowan and Little Guantanamo by Lauren Regan

May 10, 2009: *iReport.com*

Imprisoned in a secret federal prison unit

April 24, 2009: *Slingshot!*, Issue 100

Political prisoner Daniel McGowan's voice not buried in the hole by Daniel McGowan

May 1, 2009: *Nuclear Resister*, #153
CMU Prisoner Seeks Support, Jack & Felice Cohen-Joppa, editors

April 23, 2009: *The Global Research New Hour* with Stephen Lendman
GUEST: Jennifer Synan is the wife of Daniel McGowan, an "eco-terrorism" victim of injustice, now serving a seven year sentence in federal prison for his environmental activism in the Pacific Northwest. This program is a cutting-edge initiative of www.globalresearch.ca.
Listen to the mp3 [here](#).

April 17, 2009: *Democracy Now!*
"Little Guantanamo"—Secretive "CMU" Prisons Designed to Restrict Communication of Jailed Muslims and Activists with Outside World
Special thanks to Lauren Regan from CLDC and Will Potter from GreenIsTheNewRed.com for talking about Daniel's case.

April 14, 2009: *GreenIsTheNewRed.com*
Secretive U.S. Prison Units Used to House Muslim, Animal Rights and Environmental Activists

April 8, 2009: *SteveLendmanBlog*
Daniel McGowan - Another "War on Terrorism" Victim by Steve Lendman

April 2, 2009: *The Nation*
Guantánamo at Home by Jeanne Theoharis

March 15, 2009: *The Daily Gazette*, Schenectady
Re-examine prison unit for Muslims by Carl Strock

December 4, 2008: *Eugene Weekly*
<http://www.eugeneweekly.com/2008/12/04/news1.html>

May-June, 2007: *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*
Dr. Rafil A. Dhafir at Terre Haute Prison's New Communications Management Unit

by Katherine Hughes

SPREAD THE WORD

Download the online version to view, email or post!

Download the zine/booklet to print and distribute!

Download and distribute this flyer!

About Daniel

Daniel McGowan is an environmental and social justice activist from New York City, now a political prisoner held in the Marion Communication Management Unit (CMU). He is serving a seven-year sentence in federal prison for his role in two arsons claimed by the Earth Liberation Front in Oregon, 2001. The judge applied a terrorist enhancement to his sentence, because of the political nature of his case, despite the fact that nobody was harmed as a result of his actions. A proud New Yorker, Daniel was raised in Rockaway Beach, Queens, and has boasted of having lived in four out of the five boroughs of NYC. He has been active in everything from rainforest preservation to indigenous rights to political-prisoner support to military counter-recruitment. At the time of his arrest, December 7th 2005, Daniel was working at WomensLaw.org, an organization that assists survivors of domestic violence, and was also pursuing a degree in acupuncture. Daniel is due to be released from prison on June 5th, 2013.

Daniel's Blog

2015

December 7th: Ten years later

Source

by Daniel on December 7th, 2015

Ten years ago today, I was finishing up stuffing holiday cards for my employer when 2 beefy men asked me if i was indeed, Daniel McGowan. Once I was handcuffed and being frog-marched through the office, I knew what it was about.

At the same time, 6 of my codefendants were getting arrested at the same time. Others were receiving grand jury subpoenas as well. Sadly, all the people arrested that day became cooperating witnesses save for William Rodgers, who I knew as 'Avalon', who took his life in a county jail on the Winter Solstice, two weeks after we were arrested.

Of course, other arrests followed in the months after that, with a handful of codefendants refusing to play the game. We came together in solidarity to fight the charges and reduce the potential sentence as much as possible. For that, I will always have gratitude to Jonathan Paul, Nathan Block and Joyanna Zacher (though it would be disingenuous for me to not point out the latter two peoples' identification with esoteric fascist movements currently).

I was bonded out of jail, fought my case on house arrest for a year and months after that, worked out a plea that did not involve naming names or becoming a witness against anyone. It had repercussions for me including more time and no protection from grand juries (and surely, two years later, i was called before one as a witness and put on civil contempt of court). That said, I cannot have seen it going any other way. My regrets with the case is that more of my co-defendants did not stick with us and move forward together-something that had been the idea when worst case scenarios had been discussed years prior.

10 years later, its obvious to me every time i go to any activist event that many younger activists do not know this history. I suppose it is the struggle we all face-how to remember and memorialize, but not live in the past and nostalgia. I can tell people to watch *If a Tree Falls* or read *Green is the New Red* (thanks, Marshall Curry, Sam Cullman & Will Potter) but that is an incomplete picture. How then, do we, move forward in our fight for justice and pass on to others what we learned? Its a longer question.

I use the word “T” often in this post and perhaps others as I am talking about the past but at no point have I ever felt alone and not connected to others. Without these stalwart, loyal and amazing people in my life, I know with certainty that things would have gone a totally different way:

Jenny Malone- my former partner and best friend. The rock. The Wizard of Oz behind every aspect of the support campaign and the ‘trying to keep me sane’ campaign. G.O.A.T. EXES 4EVAH!

My family especially my sister Lisa who funded my legal defense, let me live with her while on house arrest and did not waver or flinch one time. These people taught me loyalty.

Family and Friends of Daniel McGowan better known as FAF.

This small group worked their asses off, put on so many shows, sold a zillion t-shirts, made my court dates, wrote articles, supported me mentally, emotionally and financially, put their lives on hold for some time to make sure I would have a life to come home too. So much gratitude to all of them. I am not even in touch with all of them, which to be honest, saddens me but I have nothing but lifelong gratitude for all of them. Shoutouts to Andrew, Ainsley, Eliza, Kitty, Corey, Sideshow, Cindy, Marianne and Ryan.

This article may be the best article I have seen on the topic though its quite dated. Check it out.

Write my codees:

Rebecca Rubin #98290-011

FCI Dublin

5701 8th Street – Camp Parks

Dublin, California 94568

Birthday: April 18

Rebecca Rubin is serving a 5 year sentence for her role in a series of Earth Liberation Front (ELF) actions including the arson of the Vail Ski Resort Expansion and US Forest Industries. She also participated in the liberation of horses and the arson of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Wild Horse Facilities in Litchfield, California and Burns, Oregon. Rebecca is expected to be released in September, 2017.

You can buy Rebecca a book (or 5!) at <http://www.amazon.com/gp/registry/wishlist/2EEY8SICPOC9D>

Justin Solondz #98291-011

FCI Oakdale I

Post Office Box 5000

Oakdale, Louisiana 71463

Birthday: October 3

Justin Solondz pleaded guilty to conspiracy and arson for his involvement in the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) arson of the University of Washington’s Center for Urban Horticulture in 2001 and the Romania Chevrolet dealership

in Eugene, Oregon. Justin was imprisoned in China for three years prior to extradition. His anticipated release date is 9/23/2017.

Filed under Uncategorized | No Comments »

2014

Daniel to speak at Left Forum June 1st

Source

by Jenny on May 30th, 2014

<https://www.facebook.com/events/651549734921703/?ref=22>

Daniel will be speaking publicly about the Communication Management Unit this Sunday, June 1 at 12pm at the Left Forum.

The panel will discuss the erosion of basic rights resulting from post-9/11 War On Terror (WOT) policies and practices – in our communities, courtrooms and prisons across the US. It will feature stories of impacted family members, former prisoners, and advocates, who have been resisting alarming trends in human rights violations since 9/11.

Panelists to include:

1. Daniel McGowan is an environmental and social justice activist from NYC, and a former political prisoner. As a former defendant and political prisoner, Daniel will reflect on how terrorism laws have been used to prosecute certain targeted groups and moreover how the WOT rationale is invoked again post-conviction to penalize protected activity and identity, e.g., through the use of Communication Management Units in federal prisons and other harsh conditions of confinement which further suppress political expression.

2. Ms. Shahina Parveen Siraj is a leader in DRUM – South Asian Organizing Center, and the mother of Shahawar Matin Siraj, who was entrapped by the NYPD;

3. Fahd Ahmed is the Legal and Policy Director at DRUM;

4. Chair: Abigail Downs is a Legal Worker at the Center for Constitutional Rights.

By exploring the linkages between repression of environmental activists, Muslims, and immigrants in the US under the WOT paradigm, the panel will encourage activists of the Left to think through how we can build bridges and mobilize together to achieve a more just society — by challenging both the rights violations that have increasingly become the norm in terrorism prosecutions post-9/11 and also broader injustices in the criminal justice system. In the spirit of the Forum's 2014 theme, the panel will explore strategies to effect change and debate the pitfalls of reform tactics that permit categories of people to remain vulnerable to grave abuses.

John Jay College of Criminal Justice

524 W. 59th St (Between 10th and 11th)

New York, New York

Room L2.81

Background reading material by Daniel and about the CMU:

Tales from Inside the U.S. Gitmo

Urgent Appeal from a Secret Prison

Live From Little Guantanamo

Court Documents Prove I was Sent to Communication Management Units (CMU) for my Political Speech

Daniel McGowan, Put in an Extreme Prison Isolation Unit for Writing Things, Loses Lawsuit Against Bureau of Prisons

Bureau of Prisons Backtracks, Again, On Daniel McGowan

Daniel McGowan Released After Lawyers Confirm He Was Jailed For HuffPost Blog

Daniel McGowan Jailed, Allegedly For Writing Huffington Post Blog (UPDATE)

UPDATE: BOP Invents Special Restriction for Environmental Activist Daniel McGowan: No Publishing Articles

Environmentalist Back in Jail Days After Writing About His Secretive Prison Unit for HuffPost- by Will Potter

Daniel McGowan Forbidden From Publishing Articles Without Permission

Filed under Uncategorized | No Comments »

Daniel is looking for work.

Source

by Jenny on May 11th, 2014

We are reaching out to you today because you have expressed interest and shown support to Daniel these past eight years. Daniel came out of prison December 2012, and thanks to an old friend, started work two days later at a progressive law firm in New York City. He is now at the point where he wants to move on and further his career goals. We are writing to see if you can assist us with leads or ideas. Like 2 years ago, Daniel's primary job goal is one in communications, one in which he can utilize his verbal and writing skills to communicate to a greater audience. Daniel is primarily interested in working for a non profit organization but is not opposed to working for a business that is not engaged in harmful behavior.

Daniel has been working as a receptionist for a law firm for the past few years. In addition to having a college degree, Daniel completed a paralegal course as well as many continuing education and vocational course available while in prison despite limited opportunities for education. He is driven and has a broad skill-set that he is looking to utilize. If you would like a copy of his resume, please email us.

Some of the areas Daniel is interested in are:

- Civil liberties/Free speech

- Prison reform
- Food justice/security
- Urban agriculture
- Recycling or Waste reduction
- Reproductive rights
- LGBT issues
- Climate change
- Harm reduction/Drug policy
- Prisoner re-entry
- “Green-collar”
- Alternative energy
- Sustainable transportation
- Environmental justice
- Domestic violence

If you work for a NYC-based non-profit, have a close friend, partner or contact at one, or have a specific organization or business in mind that might be open to hiring Daniel, we'd love to hear from you! Specific job ads or contacts are welcome. Thank you so much for your help.

All emails can be directed to friendsofdanielmcg@yahoo.com

Filed under Uncategorized | No Comments »

Two days left to write public comment on the CMUs

Source

by Jenny on March 22nd, 2014

Dear Friends of Daniel,

There are just two more days left to submit public comments on the Communication Management Units (CMU) that Daniel was held in for much of his prison sentence and which continue to operate illegally at both FCI Terre Haute and USP Marion. There are roughly 90 men still housed in these isolation units that are suffering from a lack of

contact with their families and extreme restrictions on their contact with society. As you know, the units have been a source of litigation practically since they have opened with the Center for the Constitutional Rights and prisoners from the CMU filing *Aref v Holder* in April of 2010. The case is ongoing and nearing its conclusion this year hopefully.

In order to help with your public comments, we recommend checking out CCR's letter writing ideas here.

Also, VICE magazine recently published an in-depth article on the CMUs by Annie P. Waldman that focuses on Daniel's former CMU neighbor, Yassin Aref who not only was a resident of both CMUs but was indicted in a fake terrorism scheme concocted by the FBI in Albany, NY. The article, 'Inside the Kafkaesque world of the US's Little Guantanimos' sheds lights on the struggles of CMU prisoners in maintaining family ties and their sanity as well as the lingering effects of isolation felt by released prisoners like Daniel.

Below is the original action alert for the CMU public comments.

The Bureau of Prisons (BOP) has reopened the public comment period for the Communication Management Units (CMU). You may remember that the original comment period of 2010 netted 700+ letters and emails against the restrictions outlined in the proposal. The Department of Justice ended the comment period and have sat on their hands since then in terms of getting actual legal approval to operate and maintain the CMUs. As a prisoner at Marion CMU during that time, our comrade Daniel McGowan tells us, "knowing that people outside of prison cared enough to put their concerns in writing on our behalf was heartening and re-energized my effort to close the CMUs."

The BOP has opened public comment for *just two weeks*. Please check out the links below and send a clear message to them about these units and how they should be immediately closed.

http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=BOP_FRDOC_0001-0037

<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2014/03/10/2014-05083/communication-management-units>

Filed under Human Rights, Prison | No Comments »

2.7.14 Punk Rock Karaoke benefiting NYC ABC!

Source

by Jenny on January 12th, 2014

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1440543476174839/>

<http://nycabc.wordpress.com>

What:Punk Rock Karaoke benefiting NYC ABC!

When: February 7, 2014, 8pm

Where: Pine Box Rock Shop 12 Grattan St, Brooklyn, New York 11206

Cost: \$8 donation at the door

Join us as we once again storm Brooklyn for a night of punk rock singalongs at the Pine Box. As with all our events, in addition to being a great time, this is also a benefit! This time all money raised at the event will benefit NYC Anarchist Black Cross and their ongoing efforts supporting political prisoners and opposing the prison industrial complex.

Tell your friends and come ready to have an awesome time. See you there.

Punk Rock Karaoke is a DIY, fund-raising event that benefits a different community group each time.

Featuring songs from:

Against Me!, Bikini Kill, Black Flag, Bratmobile, Buzzcocks, Choking Victim, The Clash, Circle Jerks, Crass, Dead Kennedys, Descendents, Devo, Flogging Molly, Fugazi, Gogol Bordello, Gorilla Biscuits, Jawbreaker, Joy Division, Minor Threat, The Misfits, NOFX, Operation Ivy, Pixies, The Pogues, Ramones, Rancid, Screeching Weasel, Sex Pistols, Sleater-Kinney, The Smiths, The Specials, Stiff Little Fingers, Wire, X, X-Ray Spex + More!!!

P.S. Like us on Facebook to stay up to date on future events:

www.facebook.com/PunkRockKaraokeNortheast

For more info on NYC ABC: <http://nycabc.wordpress.com>

NYC Anarchist Black Cross is a collective focused on supporting US-held political prisoners and prisoners of war and opposing state repression against revolutionary social justice movements. They are a support group of the continental Anarchist Black Cross Federation.

Filed under Uncategorized | No Comments »

New Campaign: Welcome Home John Tucker (Tinley Park Five)

Source

by Jenny on January 9th, 2014

Posted on behalf of NYC ABC

John Tucker of the Tinley Park 5 is due to be released from prison at the end of this month or by early February. So , Bloomington ABC , NYC ABC, and Sacramento Prisoner Support have launched a campaign to start a release fund for John.

From j.mp/JohnTucker:

“John Tucker, the second of the Tinley Park 5 to be released, will be free in JANUARY! The Tinley Park 5 are 5 men from Indiana charged with multiple felonies for an altercation with active white supremacists at a restaurant in Tinley Park, Illinois. (more info here)

John's health has been neglected while imprisoned, so he is facing medical expenses, including dentistry and dermatology, when he gets out. John will also be responsible for court costs and court-mandated "anger management" classes.

John has enjoyed many letters, book & commissary donations, and correspondences from his supporters during his time in captivity (y'all have helped to make his time much more tolerable!), but prisoner support doesn't end when they're released; transitioning out of prison can be a difficult time for former prisoners. Having felonies on their records creates barriers to housing and employment. Many things about their lives and communities may have changed during their time inside, so extra effort is required to provide support and build solidarity to avoid isolation and undue financial hardship. Please help us create a gracious homecoming and a smooth re-entry for John.

If you cannot provide financial support at this time, we recommend writing the 3 still inside and writing, visiting, and building relationships with other incarcerated folks to continue struggles like those for which the TP5 are imprisoned. Support your local prison rebels!"

Please remember that prisoner support doesn't end when a comrade is released. Through halfway houses, supervised release, parole, or probation, there is usually state supervision beyond the initial sentence. Also, prison is traumatic. And of course there is the stigma of being a former prisoner that effects nearly every aspect of one's life. All of this adds up to the less obvious, but equally necessary, support needed when our loved ones come home. Donate to your ability and show an anti-fascist comrade how we welcome folks home.

If for whatever reason you'd rather donate to John offline, please make the check payable to John Tucker and mail it to:

Sacramento Prisoner Support

Post Office Box 163126

Sacramento, California 95816

If you'd like to write to John to let him know you're thinking of him and that you're glad he's getting out soon, he'd love to hear from you. His current address is:

John Tucker M34024

Lincoln Correctional Center

Post Office Box 549

Lincoln, Illinois 62656

More information is available at tinleyparkfive.wordpress.com and j.mp/JohnTucker

Filed under Uncategorized | No Comments »

Illustrated Guide 9th Edition Now Uploaded

Source

by Jenny on January 9th, 2014

We've finished the latest version of the NYC ABC "Illustrated Guide to Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War" and it's available for viewing (and download) by clicking on the tab at the top of this page. This update includes address changes for a few prisoners as well as removing Guillaume Constantineau (TIME SERVED!), Youri Couture (TIME SERVED!), Chris French (TIME SERVED!), Steve Murphy (TIME SERVED!), Mark Neiweem (TIME SERVED!), and Lynne Stewart (COMPASSIONATE RELEASE!).

Filed under Prison, Repression, Social Justice | No Comments »

2013

Rest in Peace, Avalon

Source

by Jenny on December 21st, 2013

My friend, fellow activist and codefendant William C. Rodgers, known to those who loved him, as Avalon took his life on the Winter Solstice, December 21, 2005. Avalon was arrested and charged with one count of arson for his alleged role in an ELF arson at the National Wildlife Research Facility in Olympia, Washington. It is likely that those prosecuting our case would have attempted to portray Avalon as the mastermind of the conspiracy based on his age (5-7 years older than most of us) and his long term activism. Sadly, many of my codefendants who cooperated fully with the government were all too happy to indulge the feds with this fallacy, even submitting information only the Judge was able to view.

When I read the words used to describe Avalon, I am perplexed because the man I knew, though *far* from perfect was a kind, gentle soul who treated me and everyone he met with curiosity and generosity. I remember Avalon as a lover of nature; someone who dedicated much of his adult life to protecting and defending wild places. My memories of him are personal and I hesitate to share them but I just wanted to be clear that the ‘criminal mastermind’ & ‘leader of the ELF’ caricature suggested by cooperating codefendants and prosecution does not match who I knew. I am reminded of the fact that in all likelihood, Avalon would be either out of prison or leaving prison shortly had he not left us prematurely. I think it is pretty clear that part of the reason he chose to kill himself had to do with the betrayal he felt at the hands of many of my codefendants.

I for one, miss Avalon and i think the Earth and our communities are worse off without him.

Rest in peace, friend.

Daniel

There are many links about Avalon online. Here are a few:

Statement written by the Catalyst Infoshop, which Avalon founded

Wikipedia page

Memorial page on Earth First! Journal: *[TRIGGER ALERT: CONTAINS SUICIDE NOTE TEXT]*

PS-I have no doubt that Avalon would be disinterested in any focus on himself as a person and would want to focus on the issues and our fellow codefendants, who are still inside. Please check out <http://earthfirstjournal.org/eco-prisoner-list/> for information on them.

Filed under Uncategorized | No Comments »

Vegan Drinks on 12.19 benefiting NYC ABC

Source

by Jenny on December 10th, 2013

<http://web.archive.org/web/20170913022338/http://supportdaniel.org/blog/wp-content>

The next event will be **December 19, 2013** at **Fontana's Bar** at 105 Eldridge Street, Lower East Side, NYC.

We'll be in the back, in the two-story **Chandelier Room** (don't worry, despite the name it's not too fancy).

We'll have vegan Ethiopian food from **Bunna Café**, serving up their new Holiday Menu!

The December 19th Vegan Drinks benefits **NYC Anarchist Black Cross** and the tremendous work they do supporting all U.S.-held political prisoners. In particular, you'll have an opportunity to support Animal and Earth Liberation political prisoners by signing holiday greeting cards and writing letters to let our comrades know they are not forgotten, especially during the holiday season. NYC Anarchist Black Cross is a "collective focused on supporting U.S.-held political prisoners and prisoners of war and opposing state repression against revolutionary social justice movements."

RSVP on Facebook if you like.

The following Vegan Drinks NYC will be on January 30, 2014.

We have information about Vegan Drinks in other cities and some tips on how to organize your own Vegan Drinks. And for people who like such things, an FAQ.

Vegan Drinks is a monthly social networking* event for people interested in promoting veganism and advocating for animal rights. Vegan Drinks' mission is to bring together a diverse group of people—from cupcake aficionados to animal lawyers to veg*ns of all stripes in between—to build new coalitions and promote the sharing of resources. Vegan Drinks is for newbies and oldies. All we expect is an interest in animal rights, veganism and the pursuit of after-work fun. Show up and introduce yourself, pass around business cards (if you've got 'em) and embarrass yourself at least once an hour.

*Although we think love is grand, Vegan Drinks is *not* a singles' event. But, if you happen to meet the love of your life at Vegan Drinks, don't forget to invite us to the wedding!

Filed under Animal Rights, Environmental, Eco | No Comments »

Holiday Card-Writing Party for US-Held Political Prisoners & POWs

Source

by Jenny on November 15th, 2013

December 8, 2013

2-6 p.m.

263 Eastern Parkway, Apartment 5D

(between Franklin and Classon, #2,3,4,5 to Franklin Ave./Eastern Pkwy)

Every year, political prisoners and prisoners of war around the US look forward to receiving one of the handmade holiday cards coming from the heart of Brooklyn. This year will be no different. Join Resistance in Brooklyn, NYC Anarchist Black Cross, and Scientific Soul Sessions for an afternoon of crafts, camaraderie, and good food. We'll have updates and other ways to support the prisoners as well.

Contacts:nycabc@riseup.net

mmsrnb@igc.org

718-783-8141

Filed under Prison | No Comments »

NYC – Tuesday, October 29th – Come to a Green Scare(y) Halloween Card-Writing + Letter-Writing For Move Marie

Source

by Jenny on October 27th, 2013

WHAT: Political Prisoner Letter-Writing Dinner

WHEN: 7pm sharp, Tuesday, October 29th, 2013

WHERE: CAGE – 83A Hester Street (UPSTAIRS) New York, New York 10002
(directions below)

COST: Free

<http://web.archive.org/web/20171030133332/http://nycabc.files.wordpress.com/2011/0>
grand jury resistance here in NYC, Feds sneaking around in Southern California, and other campaigns & projects across the country, anarchists have their hands full. The work that's happening on these projects is, in many ways, inspiring. With that inspiration, there are plenty of reasons to become directly involved. It is in the spirit of direct involvement (and the magick of Halloween) that we host another Political Prisoner Letter-Writing Dinner. And what could be more ghoulish than the Green Scare?

Since the early 1980s, public relations hacks have been working to reify the term “eco-terrorism.” By 2004, they became successful and a phrase that a decade earlier

had no real meaning was now defined by the United States government and used to introduce legislation. Now we have comrades serving decades for economic sabotage and allegations of thought crime. With several recent animal liberation actions, and Rebecca Rubin facing 5 to seven and a half years, it is clear that Earth and animal liberationists are both still active and still in the cross-hairs of the feds. Join us in letting them know they are not forgotten.

We are also taking this letter-writing night to answer the call to organize an event to get letters on behalf of Marie Mason, in an effort to get her moved from the isolation unit in FMC Carswell, where she is currently imprisoned. For more information on the campaign, visit movemarie.com

The deal, as always, is that you come bringing only yourself (and your friends and comrades), and we provide you with a delicious vegan meal, information about the prisoners as well as all of the letter-writing materials and prisoner-letter-writing info you could ever want to use in one evening. In return, you write a thoughtful letter to a political prisoner or prisoner of war of your choosing or, better yet, keep up a long-term correspondence. We'll also provide some brief updates and pass around birthday cards for the PP/POWs whose birthdays fall in the next two weeks thanks to the PP/POW Birthday Calendar.

DIRECTIONS:

Getting to CAGE is simple:

From the J/M/Z:

Essex Street Stop: Walk west on Delancey Street (toward Essex Street, away from Norfolk Street) and make a left on Essex Street. Walk three blocks and turn right onto Hester Street. We're two and a half blocks down, on the right.

From the F:

East Broadway Stop: Walk north on Rutgers Street (toward East Broadway, away from Henry Street), that becomes Essex Street, and turn left on Hester Street. We're two and a half blocks down, on the right.

From the B/D:

Grand Street Stop: Walk east on Grand Street (Toward Forsyth Street, away from Chrystie Street) and turn right on Orchard Street. Walk one block and turn right onto Hester Street. We're a few storefronts down on the right.

If you have any questions, feel free to get in touch. Otherwise, we'll see you at supper.

This event is brought to you by your friendly neighborhood Anarchist Black Cross.
Filed under Uncategorized | No Comments »

Write BOP Director on behalf of Marie Mason

Source

by Jenny on October 25th, 2013

October 25: Write the BOP director and ask that Marie be moved

Source

Please help get Marie Mason moved out of FMC Carswell by writing a letter to the Bureau of Prisons Director. We are asking as many people as possible to write letters and organize letter writing events so that we can show the BOP just how many people recognize her position as unjust, and support the idea of her being moved into a general population unit closer to her family.

Below is the address to send all letters to, and a sample letter. Please remain firm but polite in your communications with the BOP.

Charles E. Samuels, Jr. , Director,
Federal Bureau of Prisons,
320 First St., NW,
Washington, DC 20534
USA

Dear Director Samuels:

I write on behalf of Marie Mason #04672-061, who is currently incarcerated in a special isolation unit at FMC Carswell in Fort Worth, Texas. Marie has been unjustly placed in this unit – without notice or cause- in a move that is strictly punitive on the part of the BOP. She has had no disciplinary incidents since her incarceration, poses no threat or danger to the prison or other inmates and has worked hard to make her life and the life of her fellow inmates better for the last 5 years. There is no reason for her to be in this unit – 1000 miles from friends and family.

In fact, you said in a memorandum written to all federal prisoners in June 2013 to reaffirm the importance of parenting that, “there is no substitute for seeing your children, looking them in the eye, and letting them know you care about them.” Marie would love the opportunity to do this.

I urge you to transfer Marie to a lower security facility – closer to her family and friends – so that she can serve the remainder of her sentence in a facility where she can be housed with the general population.

Her sentence would best be served in a facility consistent with her peaceful personality and constructive nature.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If a reply is possible, it would be appreciated.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Address Optional]

Move Marie from Carswell prison

<http://www.movemarie.com/>

October 21st—Call in day for Marie Mason

Source

by Jenny on October 19th, 2013

Please join in the campaign to move environmental activist and political prisoner Marie Mason out of the FMC Carswell isolation unit.

Environmental activist and community organizer Marie Mason is serving the longest sentence ever (22 years) for environmentally motivated property destruction. In 2010 she was transferred to the notorious high security prison FMC Carswell.

Now we're mobilizing to get her moved.

On Monday, October 21st, people across the country and world will keep the Bureau of Prisons office ringing off the hook demanding she be moved. We need your help to make the 21st the day we forced the BOP to take notice.

There are multiple ways to join in on the action:

Call In

See the call script and recommended call in time and make the call. It takes a minute, but your participation will make a huge impact on the campaign and the effort to move Marie.

Organize a Phone Tree

Get friends and family in on it by organizing a phone tree. Create a list of people who agree to join you in calling, then pass it out to everyone. The first person calls in, then calls to remind the next person in line. If you get a voicemail, leave a message go down the list until you reach someone. It's an easy way to help yourself and others follow through.

Join the Call In ThunderClap

A ThunderClap is a way to join hundreds of like minded people in sending out a common tweet on the same date. It helps grab people's attention and in this case it can help inspire even more folks to join in on the call.

Share Your Call In Story

After calling in, let people know how it went via Diaspora, Twitter, Facebook or other platforms you use. It can be as simple as “I called the BOP to Move Marie!” with a link to the call-in info or a quick rundown of what went down when you called. It will help inspire others to call and raise awareness about the campaign.

Call Script

Use the following script to help prepare what you will say. Practice a few times to yourself if you’d like. Speak politely and with confidence and urgency.

Call Bureau of Prisons Director Charles E. Samuels, Jr.

(202) 307-3250/3062

Hello, my name is _____ and I am calling about Marie Mason, ID #04672-061. I would like to speak with Charles E. Samuels Jr. about her unjust transfer to FMC Carswell.

Hello Mr. Samuels. My name is _____ I am calling on behalf of Marie Mason,

who has been unjustly placed in a special isolation unit at FMC Carswell – without notice or cause- in a move that is strictly punitive on the part of the BOP. Marie has had no disciplinary incidents since her incarceration, poses no threat or danger to the prison or other inmates and has worked hard to make her life and the life of her fellow inmates better for the last 5 years. There is no reason for her to be in this unit – 1000 miles from friends and family.

We demand that Marie be moved to a lower security facility – closer to her family and friends – so that she can serve the remainder of her sentence in a facility where she can be housed with the general population.

Thank you for your time. I will be following up in the coming months to check on this situation.

Suggested Call In Times

The BOP office is open 8am-5pm EST. We’re suggesting then that people call in at the following times according to their time zone. Of course, the most important thing is to call, so call when works best for you.

West Coast- Call between noon and 2pm your time

Mountain People- Call between 11am and one your time

Central Folks- Call between 10am and noon your time

East Coast- Call between 9am and 11am your time

Filed under Prison | No Comments »

Village Voice article on Daniel's life post-prison

Source

by Jenny on September 25th, 2013

Daniel McGowan: The FBI's Least Wanted

He did his time for burning down two Oregon lumber mills, but he's not exactly a free man

By Anna Merlan amerlan@villagevoice.com

Wednesday, Sep 25 2013

At six o'clock on a cool June morning, after five and a half years in federal prison and six months in a halfway house, Daniel McGowan went home. From the halfway house in Vinegar Hill, he took the F train to downtown Brooklyn, crawled into bed beside his wife, Jenny, and slept for a few hours. Then he headed out to meet his probation officer and a mountain of paperwork. It was his first day as a freed domestic terrorist.

"The definition of terrorism is exactly what they did."

"I was really horrified at the time of my sentencing at being called a terrorist," he says. "I'm still horrified."

At 39, McGowan is a little skinnier than before he went to prison, a little grayer. But he doesn't look too different from the guy who helped burn down two Oregon lumber mills on behalf of the Earth Liberation Front in 2001, or the guy a federal judge sentenced to seven years in prison for those crimes in 2007. On a recent evening, he's wearing a loose green T-shirt and several days' worth of stubble, a bike seat by his side and a smartphone in his hand. He glances at it every few minutes.

Courtesy Jenny Synan

McGowan can't associate with environmental or animal-rights groups.

"I used to make fun of people who texted all the time," he says. "And now I'm one of them."

With a summer of freedom behind him, McGowan is still figuring out the rules of his new reality. Besides being a convicted terrorist, he owes nearly \$2 million in restitution, which he's expected to pay in full. The peculiar terms of his probation forbid him joining "any groups or organizations whose primary purpose is environmental and animal rights activism"—a prohibition that includes nonprofits such as PETA and the Sierra Club. He can't associate with anyone with a felony on their record, or anyone convicted of illegal environmental or animal rights activity, even a misdemeanor—a tall order for a man who had spent much of his life in activist circles. And, as he learned in the halfway house, writing about his experiences in the prison system has the potential to land him back in jail.

McGowan says he left the ELF soon after the second Oregon arson. He was working at a nonprofit for victims of domestic abuse when he and 12 others were arrested during the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Operation Backfire, which ferreted out ELF members responsible for a series of arsons and other crimes between 1996 and 2001.

Vandals targeted lumberyards, slaughterhouses, and U.S. Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service offices, wreaking a record \$48 million worth of damage.

Several of those arrested agreed to cooperate with prosecutors. One ELF member secretly recorded conversations with McGowan, helping to convict him on several counts of arson and conspiracy—actions that, in the eyes of U.S. District Court Judge Ann L. Aiken, amounted to terrorism: attempts to create “fear and intimidation to achieve a goal and affect the conduct of government,” as the judge put it at McGowan’s sentencing.

Ten months into his prison term, McGowan was transferred from the general population at the Federal Correctional Institution in Sandstone, Minnesota, to a newer wing in Marion, Illinois, known as a Communication Management Unit. Much of the CMU population is Muslim, but politically affiliated prisoners such as McGowan also find themselves there. The main hallmark of a CMU is restricted contact with the outside world: McGowan was allowed two short, no-contact visits per month—he wasn’t permitted to have any physical contact whatsoever with his wife for the duration of his sentence—and his phone time was limited to a single 15-minute phone call per week. (The BOP has subsequently revised the CMU limits to two 15-minute calls and two four-hour visits.) His mail was delayed and often rejected by a censor as inappropriate. In 2009, while he was incarcerated at Marion, his mother died of cancer. (McGowan was later transferred to the nation’s only other CMU, in Terre Haute, Indiana, where he spent 22 months.)

Court documents would later show that the initial decision to move McGowan into the CMU was made by Leslie Smith, head of the counterterrorism unit of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Smith acknowledged that McGowan’s disciplinary slate was clean but argued that he posed a threat to public safety because his jailhouse letters and articles constituted “attempt[s] to unite the radical environmental and animal liberation movements.” Additionally, he had requested that his lawyers send him copies of leaked BOP documents—a blatant attempt, the BOP contended, to escape its monitoring of his communications.

After five and a half years in prison, McGowan was sent to a halfway house in Brooklyn to serve out the last six months of his sentence. While he was there, he wrote an article for the Huffington Post detailing his time at the CMU. On April 4, three days after the story was published, federal marshals arrested him, took him to the Metropolitan Detention Center, and issued him an orange jumpsuit. From there, he assumed, he’d be sent back to the CMU for the remainder of his sentence. But his lawyers quickly secured his return to the halfway house and quashed the BOP’s effort to impose a gag order.

“As far as we know, this is a made-up rule applied only to Daniel, in a further attempt to chill his freedom of speech,” wrote Rachel Meeropol, McGowan’s attorney at the New York-based nonprofit Center for Constitutional Rights.

The BOP quietly dropped the matter.

Will Potter is a journalist who has written extensively about environmental activism. He says restrictive parole conditions for activists are becoming more common.

“It reflects the political nature of these prosecutions,” Potter says. “And how this terrorism language can follow people long after they leave the courtroom and long after they leave prison. This is something that can follow these activists the rest of their lives.”

McGowan should not expect the surveillance to stop when his supervised release ends, Potter emphasizes. “At speaking events we’ve done with other former prisoners, law enforcement has been there. Sometimes they come in publicly, flashing badges. In FOIA [Freedom of Information Act] requests later on, I’ve also gotten information about [undercover] police officers at public events. I just can’t imagine what that would be like. It’s a constant cloud over you all the time.”

For Steve Swanson, McGowan’s terrorist designation and the terms of his release seem like justice. Swanson is president and CEO of the Swanson Group, which used to be called Superior Lumber, one of the two companies whose buildings McGowan helped to burn down.

“The definition of terrorism is exactly what they did,” Swanson says. “They were trying to change our behavior by inflicting terror on us. It’s not different than Islamic terrorists or what the IRA was doing back in the ’70s. To say they were nonviolent is just not accurate. We have a total volunteer fire department that responded. Any number of those people could’ve been killed.”

Adds Swanson, “Frankly, we used more wood products to rebuild all those things they burned down.”

At his sentencing, McGowan apologized for the fires, saying he felt “deep regret” for frightening the lumber workers. “Although I now know it’s hard for people to believe, my intention at the time was to be provocative and make a statement,” he told the court. “Not to put individual people in fear.”

Swanson says McGowan has never apologized to him directly.

In the meantime, both men have moved on. The Swanson Group tore down the remnants of its old factory and built a larger one. McGowan recently participated in Running Down the Walls, a fundraiser for political prisoner support groups. He figured it was permissible because it had nothing to do with environmental issues.

Still, he says, that April night in jail was jarring: “Sometimes things feel fragile.”

A federal judge recently ruled that because McGowan is no longer an inmate, he has no standing to participate in a lawsuit against the Bureau of Prisons that challenges the constitutionality of CMUs. Instead, on Tuesday, September 17, he filed a formal complaint against the Federal Bureau of Prisons, alleging that the re-arrest deprived him of his liberty and caused emotional harm.

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Filed under Environmental, Eco, Repression | No Comments »

Daniel McGowan, Jailed For HuffPost Blog, Takes First Step Toward Lawsuit

Source

by Jenny on September 20th, 2013

Matt Sledge

msledge@huffingtonpost.com

Posted: 09/17/2013 4:50 pm EDT | Updated: 09/17/2013 5:48 pm EDT

NEW YORK — Former Earth Liberation Front member Daniel McGowan took the first step toward a lawsuit against the Federal Bureau of Prisons on Tuesday, filing a \$200,000 claim over an April incident in which he was jailed for writing a Huffington Post column.

On April 4, 2013, McGowan was taken from a halfway house, where he was serving out the final months of a seven-year sentence, and sent to a Brooklyn jail for roughly a day and a half. Three days before, he had published a HuffPost blog post about the years he spent in two secretive federal prison units designed to severely restrict inmates' contact with the outside world.

McGowan, 39, alleges in his Federal Tort Claims Act submission with the Bureau of Prisons that the jailing caused him emotional harm and deprived him of his liberty. The bureau has acknowledged that the move was inappropriately made on the basis of a regulation against inmates publishing under their own name that had been ruled unconstitutional in 2007.

The Bureau of Prisons has six months to respond to McGowan's claim. If he is denied, he may then file a lawsuit against the agency.

Bureau spokesman Chris Burke said the agency does not comment on the cases of individual inmates.

McGowan's April jailing was the last in a series of what he alleges were retaliatory actions the Bureau of Prisons took against him during the seven years he served for conspiracy and arson committed as an Earth Liberation Front member. He was placed in the prison system's communication management units — which prisoners calls "Little Guantanamo" — at least in part on the bureau's determination that he had "attempted to unite the radical environmental and animal liberation movements" through articles and interviews from prison.

"The irony is just so thick," McGowan told HuffPost for a story last week. "You're writing an article about retaliation for freedom of speech and writing, and they retaliate by throwing you in prison."

Filed under Uncategorized | No Comments »

I ‘Got Snatched’: Daniel McGowan’s Bizarre Trip Through America’s Prison System

Source

by Jenny on September 12th, 2013

I ‘Got Snatched’: Daniel McGowan’s Bizarre Trip Through America’s Prison System
by Matt Sledge msledge@huffingtonpost.com

Daniel McGowan was in the yard of the Federal Correctional Institution in Sandstone, Minn., when his name rang out over the loudspeaker. It had been eight months since he first reported to the low-security prison to start a seven-year sentence for conspiracy and arson. To pass the time, he worked as an orderly in the prison psychology department, took correspondence classes and exercised.

Sandstone, located nearly smack-dab in the middle of the country, was about as far removed as McGowan could be from his wife, Jenny Synan, in New York and from his former compatriots in the Earth Liberation Front in Oregon, with whom he had been caught in a national law enforcement sweep. But he still kept in touch with the outside world, writing passionate articles about the environment and prisons for publications like the Earth First! Journal. He was allotted 300 minutes of phone time a month. And on the rare occasions when Synan could get away from work, she would come see him. In the prison’s visiting room, they would hug and kiss and play board games together.

He was looking forward to such a visit when the loudspeaker told him to report to the prison’s shipping and receiving department. It was the day before his second wedding anniversary in May 2008, and he assumed that he was being called in for some routine matter. Perhaps the package full of books he had recently mailed to his wife had been returned for insufficient postage, he thought.

Instead, a prison staffer handed McGowan two boxes and told him to fill them up with his possessions. He was the one being shipped. When he asked his case manager where he was being taken, he was thrown in a cell.

He headed south the next day, still unsure of his destination. “When I got on the bus, they told me ‘Marion,’” McGowan says.

* * * * *

The U.S. Penitentiary in Marion, Ill., is home to more than 1,100 prisoners. Originally built in 1963 to house inmates from Alcatraz, it operated on long-term lockdown as one of America’s most notorious prisons for decades. Inmates were held in their cells for 23 or 24 hours a day, in what was essentially the first federal “supermax.”

After the supermax in Florence, Colo., opened in 1994, Marion remained in use as a maximum-security prison. In 2006, it was renovated, expanded and downgraded to a medium-security facility. But in March 2008, it quietly regained some of its supermax identity — and its status as an experimental prototype for the prison system — when the Federal Bureau of Prisons established within its walls a secretive wing known as a

Communication Management Unit, where prisoners are held under tight restrictions. Inmates call it “Little Guantanamo.” This is where McGowan was headed.

Forty-two prisoners are currently in the CMU at Marion. Another 43 are in a similar facility in Terre Haute, Ind., that was built two years earlier. The special units were developed as part of the federal government’s crackdown on terrorism following 9/11. Particularly after Lynne Stewart, the former defense attorney for the Blind Sheik, Omar Abdel-Rahman, was convicted in 2005 of covertly sending messages to her client’s followers in Egypt, the Bureau of Prisons was determined to create a new form of incarceration to monitor inmates’ every contact with the outside world. When the CMUs were first opened, nearly all of their inmates were Muslim men.

Unlike at Guantanamo, the prisoners in these CMUs are not being held indefinitely. But they are subjected to unusual restrictions: only two 15-minute phone calls a week, heavily monitored mail and eight hours of visitation a month. Inmates are restricted in how many times a week they can hold group prayers. Their movements and conversations are recorded at all times. Critics have described the conditions as psychologically debilitating.

Some of the inmates currently being held in CMUs are people like John Walker Lindh, who fought with the Taliban against U.S. forces in Afghanistan. Many others have only tenuous connections to terrorism, however. Some of their crimes are merely hypothetical. Yassin Aref, an Albany, N.Y., imam, for example, was convicted of witnessing a fake loan for a Stinger missile to be used against the Pakistani ambassador in New York. According to Paul Wright, the ex-con founder of Prison Legal News, most of the prisoners being housed in CMUs “aren’t even the second- and third-tier prisoners in the war on terror. These are like the sixth and seventh tier.”

Others have no publicly known connection to terrorism at all, beyond sharing a religion with the perpetrators of the Sept. 11 attacks. Avon Twitty, for example, was serving a 27-year sentence for killing a man during an argument before being transferred to a CMU for the final years of his sentence, but he was also a convert to Islam.

According to a lawsuit filed by the Center for Constitutional Rights on behalf of a number of prisoners, the CMUs are analogous to solitary confinement — an “experiment in social isolation” that allows corrections officials to retaliate against what they view as bad behavior, even if it is protected by the First Amendment. By classifying the CMUs as simply a way to monitor inmates, rather than as a punishment, the Bureau of Prisons has sidestepped the knotty issue of due process rights.

In a bit of what McGowan’s lawyer at the Center for Constitutional Rights, Rachel Meeropol, calls “beautiful doublespeak,” the BOP refers to the CMUs as “self-contained general population units.” The inmates may be quarantined in the CMUs, the BOP asserts, but the units are still “general population” and thus don’t require additional administrative procedures to determine which prisoners will be placed there.

“My suspicion from the get-go was, I’m unrepentant in terms of my political identity,” McGowan says of his placement in the CMU. “I think what they’re trying to do is say,

‘OK, you want to be a little political prisoner type, you want to write and be all active and say stuff, and get a ton of mail and everyone thinks you’re peachy keen? You’re gonna get crushed.’”

The Bureau of Prisons has strenuously denied that it places inmates in CMUs because they are Muslim or because they have exercised other First Amendment rights. “Inmates are designated to the unit for management of their communications based on the potential security threat they present,” Chris Burke, a BOP spokesman, wrote in a statement to The Huffington Post. At least some inmates, he added, may be placed in the units for other communications threats, like trying to harass victims or witnesses of their crimes.

McGowan, at first blush, does not fit the image of a terrorist. Born the son of a police officer in New York’s working-class Rockaway neighborhood, he attended the State University of New York in Buffalo and then drifted into the world of environmental activism. In the hothouse atmosphere of Eugene, Ore., in the late 1990s, he became more and more radicalized — an evolution detailed in the Oscar-nominated documentary “If a Tree Falls” — and eventually joined a small cell of the Earth Liberation Front.

McGowan and his group conducted a campaign of vandalism and arson across the Pacific Northwest for several years. No one was killed or injured. Eventually, McGowan says, while his hands were still covered in gasoline during one of their actions, he decided to split from the group. In 2002, the year in which he turned 28, he moved back home to New York and took a job at a Brooklyn nonprofit for victims of domestic violence.

McGowan met Synan at his sister’s birthday party just before he moved back, and he was instantly taken with her. They began dating. She was sitting at work at an arts organization in December 2005 when she received a call from one of McGowan’s office mates that he had just been taken away by FBI agents. “And that was the first that I knew” that McGowan might have been under investigation, she says.

McGowan’s autonomous cell within the decentralized Earth Liberation Front was known as “The Family.” Its members had promised never to turn on each other if the feds came calling. But one of them did, leading to indictments for McGowan and six of his companions.

After bail, house arrest and legal proceedings — protracted because he refused to testify against his fellow defendants — McGowan eventually agreed to enter a non-cooperation plea. He would admit to taking part in arsons at a lumber company and a tree farm, but he would not be forced to testify against his fellow defendants.

“I hope that you will see that my actions were not those of [a] terrorist but of a concerned young person,” McGowan said in his plea statement in November 2006. “After taking part in these two actions, I realized that burning things down did not fit with my visions or belief about how to create a better world. So I stopped committing these crimes.”

McGowan did not see himself as a terrorist, but the federal government did. In the midst of a nationwide panic over environmentalist-linked crimes that critics call “the

green scare,” prosecutors obtained a terrorism enhancement for McGowan’s crimes. The designation did not result in a longer prison term, but McGowan’s supporters warned that it could lead to his placement in one of the CMUs, which were just being set up at the time.

Civil liberties groups like the National Lawyers Guild and criminal defense attorneys were infuriated by the “terrorist” label, which McGowan rejects to this day. Although they may not have approved of his criminal tactics, they argued that labeling him a terrorist was an absurd overreaction to crimes that resulted in nothing more than property damage.

“Is this what a terrorist is?” Heidi Boghosian, executive director of the National Lawyers Guild, asked at the time. “Americans know the difference between Daniel McGowan and Osama bin Laden, and this effort to subvert the fairness of the judicial system is an affront to the values they hold dear.”

Still, as McGowan was serving his sentence at Sandstone, Leslie Smith, the chief of the prison system’s Counter-Terrorism Unit, made the case to have him transferred to a more restrictive facility and to have his communications cut off. In a memo dated March 27, 2008, Smith argued that McGowan was an “organizer.”

“While incarcerated and through social correspondence and articles written for radical publications, inmate McGowan has attempted to unite the radical environmental and animal liberation movements,” Smith wrote. McGowan, according to Smith, had spoken bitterly of the government’s cooperating witnesses as “snitches” for their “betrayal.”

There were inconsistencies in Smith’s dark portrait. He singled out McGowan’s prison letters and interviews, but in them McGowan cautioned against the kinds of destructive actions for which he had been convicted, as he had in his plea statement.

“We need to have serious conversations about whether militancy is truly effective in all situations,” McGowan told the Earth First! Journal. “Certainly, direct action is a wonderful tool, but from my experience, it may not be the most effective one at all times or in all situations.”

“Direct action” is a deliberately vague term that covers a wide range of protest tactics, from non-violent sit-ins to sabotage and property destruction. But for those versed in the movement’s lingo, it was clear what McGowan was saying: Think twice before you try actions as aggressive as mine.

Nevertheless, to Smith, those articles and interviews about “direct action” were proof positive that McGowan was trying to act as a “spokesman” for the radical environmental movement.

According to Burke, the BOP spokesman, inmates can be placed in CMUs when they “have been convicted of, or associated with, international or domestic terrorism,” when they “attempt to coordinate illegal activities via approved communication methods while incarcerated,” or when they “have extensive disciplinary histories for the continued misuse/abuse of approved communication methods.”

In his memo, Smith noted McGowan's sterling disciplinary history but emphasized his speech since entering prison. Two months later, he was on the bus out of Sandstone. In McGowan's words, he "got snatched."

* * * * *

At Marion, McGowan says, he found a totally different world from the one he had known at Sandstone. With severely limited contact with the outside, and little access to the classes and activities available at regular prisons, inmates would stare at the TV all day or wander the halls aimlessly, like zombies.

When his wife visited him, they could no longer kiss and hug and play board games. Instead, they would walk down a hallway together, with two sets of bars between them, unable to touch. In a small room, they would sit across from each other, separated by glass, and speak through phones, so that agents in the BOP's Counter-Terrorism Unit could listen in.

"The worst part would be in the hallway together, and it'd be like two sets of bars, and she'd be coming in and I'd be going in the same room, and I'd see her in the flesh and I'd go I can't even believe how insane this is," McGowan remembers thinking. "Because then we go into our little box, and there's two cameras, and you're on a crappy little phone."

"And then you go there and you're behind glass," Synan says. "You can't touch the other person, feel their hands, touch their skin. But also you're sitting there in a very tiny booth, holding a phone, knowing that there's somebody recording the call."

Other families broke apart under the strain, McGowan says. His relationship with Synan, whom he married shortly before his prison term began, was tested.

At the time, only 15 minutes were allotted for phone time each week, making conversations frustrating. "Say you're just bickering about something, but after 15 minutes that phone hangs up, but you get nothing for the next week," Synan says. "You have to just sit there and, say somehow, we're in the middle of this argument, but you can't do anything about it."

Most difficult for McGowan, Synan says, was when his mother died in 2009. On their one phone call a week, she told him that his mother was in the hospital. "Your mom's very sick," she said. "It's just a matter of time."

But McGowan needed to have the hospital's phone number approved before he could call it — a process that couldn't be completed late on a Friday. All through the weekend, he lived in a suspended state, waiting for Monday to find out whether his mother was dead.

"It's horrible. This is life and death, and they had to approve a hospital room phone number, which is ridiculous," Synan says.

McGowan's mother made it through the weekend — a small solace. He called the hospital room, and with his sisters holding up the phone on the other end to his barely speaking mother, he talked to her. "He's got 15 minutes and that's it," Synan recalls.

“And so the phone hangs up and he’s talked to his mom, and he won’t know anything for a while.”

When McGowan’s mother died days later, Synan told him in a message sent through a special, heavily monitored prison email system.

“That was the only way to do it,” Synan says. McGowan had made her promise she would let him know as soon as possible.

With a few interruptions, McGowan was held in the CMU at Marion for two years. In October 2010, he was released into the prison’s general population.

But McGowan’s time in Little Guantanamo was far from over. After several months in general population, in February 2011 he was sent off to the other CMU, housed on the old death row at the Federal Correctional Complex in Terre Haute. McGowan says that move also smacked of retaliation and further highlighted the absurdity of treating prisoners like dangerous terrorists one day and common criminals the next.

The reason for his second transfer seems Kafkaesque. In January 2011, the leaks website Public Intelligence released two BOP Counter-Terrorism intelligence reports, which included details on letters to many of the inmates held at the CMUs. The documents provided a rare look into just what sort of communications monitoring the BOP was conducting on its “terrorist” inmates, including McGowan.

In one week, the report detailed, McGowan received two items of interest to the BOP: a series of postcards from a woman at a G-8 summit in Italy, describing the demonstrations there as “boring and depressing” because of their “total lack of antagonism,” and a letter from a lawyer describing an animal rights conference at which the “green scare” and McGowan’s incarceration were discussed.

Another report said that McGowan had been mailed a copy of a radical environmentalist magazine, which prison officials rejected, and an email from a member of a social justice public relations collective. “Much respect to you for hanging in there and staying strong,” Ryan Fletcher wrote to McGowan on Aug. 7, 2009. “One day all of this will come out and expose this thing for what it is.”

The BOP delivered some of these messages to McGowan and rejected others as too inflammatory for prison. But with the reports about his communications now live on the Internet for anyone to see, McGowan asked his wife to have his lawyer mail him copies.

To the BOP, that was “circumventing monitoring through the use of legal mail.” McGowan was sent to the Terre Haute CMU, where he spent the next 22 months.

* * * * *

In December 2012, in the final months of his seven-year sentence, McGowan was released to a halfway house in Brooklyn and obtained a job manning the front desk of a law firm.

But even then, he and his lawyers say, he was not free from the prison system’s efforts to retaliate against him.

On April 1, 2013, McGowan wrote a blog post for The Huffington Post about his incarceration in the CMUs. Three days later, U.S. marshals showed up at his halfway house. He was taken to the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn and placed in solitary confinement.

For McGowan, his wife and his lawyers, what followed were 20 hours of terror. They had no idea whether he was about to be shipped back to one of the CMUs. They had no idea, other than perhaps the blog post, why the BOP was so upset with him.

McGowan's jailing provoked protests from his lawyers and was reported across the Internet, including HuffPost and Politico. Three different BOP officials gave HuffPost three different explanations as to what was happening and why. Barely a day later, perhaps realizing the public relations mess it was causing, the Bureau of Prisons released McGowan back to his halfway house. Federal officials later admitted that McGowan's re-entry manager had jailed him on the basis of a regulation barring prisoners from speaking to the media — a regulation that had been ruled unconstitutional in 2007.

To McGowan, the episode was a reminder of just how arbitrary and over-the-top the BOP's reaction to political speech can be.

"The irony is just so thick," McGowan says. "You're writing an article about retaliation for freedom of speech and writing, and they retaliate by throwing you in prison."

BOP spokesman Burke would only say, "We don't comment on an inmate's disciplinary history."

If the prison system was hoping to break McGowan's will to express himself by sending him to the CMUs, or by jailing him for his blog posts, it failed. McGowan vows that his experience will only make him fight harder for the environment. It has also given him a new cause to fight for: prison reform.

In July, a federal judge ruled that McGowan could no longer participate in the Center for Constitutional Rights' lawsuit against the federal prison system, in large part because he is no longer a prisoner. But he is not the only one to have faced retaliation, the suit alleges.

Kifah Jayyousi is a Detroit native and Navy veteran who became a supporter of the Blind Sheik. Convicted in 2007 of conspiracy to murder, kidnap and maim in a foreign country and to provide material support to al-Qaeda, he was sentenced to 12 years in prison.

Jayyousi has never been accused of trying to communicate with al-Qaeda or any other terrorist group while in prison. But in June 2008, Smith had him transferred from a Florida prison to the Terre Haute CMU based on his conviction for a terrorism-related crime.

Inside the unit, Jayyousi became a leader among his fellow Muslims. Two months after his arrival, in the middle of the heated presidential election, Jayyousi delivered a sermon to the other prisoners.

"You were brought here because you are Muslim and ... our response to that has to be to stand firm, stand strong, to stand steadfast," Jayyousi said, according to the

BOP's transcript of his monitored speech. "John McCain is a presidential candidate, and in two months he could be our president. Where was he 20 years ago? He was being tortured in a Vietnamese prison for many years with no hope. ... He stood fast, he stayed firm, he came through."

"You are going to return to your Lord to meet him with your hard work and the hardships that you have faced and done in this life; this is why we martyr," Jayyousi said.

In October 2010, when one of his original co-defendants was sent to Terre Haute, Jayyousi was shipped off to Marion. The CMU unit manager there recommended him for release into the general population in February 2011, citing "clear conduct and a good rapport with staff and other inmates" and "no continuation of actions which precipitated his placement in the CMU." But Smith again interceded.

"Jayyousi made statements which were aimed at inciting and radicalizing the Muslim inmate population in [the] CMU," Smith wrote. In Smith's characterization, Jayyousi's long statement about prison conditions — which cited McCain; the late Vice Adm. James Stockdale, another Vietnam POW; and Nelson Mandela — was transformed into a call for inmates to "martyr themselves to serve Allah."

Jayyousi claims, according to the Center for Constitutional Rights lawsuit, that he was simply standing up for himself and other Muslim inmates who had been put in prison and the CMU because of "fabricated" terrorism convictions. But Smith said the speech was a "highly inflammatory" action from a "charismatic leader" that "encouraged activities which would lead to a group demonstration."

The debate is important, because courts have long held that prison officials may take actions limiting the free speech of inmates if those actions also advance "legitimate penological objectives," such as disrupting potential prison riots.

"The Constitution applies to prisoners too," says Meeropol of the Center for Constitutional Rights. "When you're put in prison, there are a lot of limits on your rights ... but there are limits on what can be done to them."

In July, a federal judge found that Jayyousi had a "plausible claim" that he had suffered retaliation because of his speech. "There is arguably a disparity between the actual content of the sermon and Smith's description of it," the judge wrote.

Jayyousi remained in the Marion CMU until May 2013, when he was released into the general population at Marion. He "was not provided with any explanation," Meeropol says.

Although Meeropol is glad that the BOP has instituted procedures for moving inmates out of the CMUs — in fact, the first time a prisoner was released from a CMU was when the BOP let one of her group's named plaintiffs out a week before the group launched its lawsuit — she still calls the situation of alleged hardened terrorists being moved in and out of the general population "ridiculous."

"There's no clear criteria for how a prisoner can earn their way out of the CMU," Meeropol says.

“When you don’t have procedural protections in place, it’s not surprising that abuse would result,” she adds. “The retaliation comes in with a case like Daniel.”

On June 6, McGowan was released from the halfway house after seven years in the Bureau of Prisons’ custody. At 6:01 a.m., he left the house. He got on the subway and finally headed home to crawl into bed with his wife. That weekend they stayed in at a fancy hotel. Since then, he says, he’s enjoyed simple pleasures like rock concerts — the Postal Service and Black Flag, two bands that have been re-formed since he was incarcerated — and his niece’s birthday party on Long Island.

Other than that, McGowan says, “it’s very early, and I’m trying to get my head straight about just being out and living my life. Trying to get through each day.”

Filed under Uncategorized | No Comments »

Running Down the Walls 2013 recap

Source

by Jenny on September 2nd, 2013

I just want to thank everyone who sponsored me for this year’s Running Down the Walls 5K run for Political Prisoners. Many people donated their time, energy and money to support me and the NYC Anarchist Black Cross. This year’s run was wildly successful and a really fun day.

Almost 30 people ran, walked and biked this year making it one of the bigger ones. The rain was threatening all week but held out and although it was muggy, there were copious amounts of beverages and food provided by ABC. The vegan deviled eggs, jackfruit/pulled pork sandwiches, cupcakes, cookies and such helped me finish the race, for sure!

I would thank you all by name if I knew it was ok, but over 50 people generously donated to sponsor me this year and I appreciate all your love and support, knowing full well this was the first big event I was involved in since I got out. I trained for a month and it was not easy—running at 39 is a totally different animal than at 22! The early morning time alone was remarkably helpful in helping me sort out the puzzling set of emotions and thoughts that come with re-entering society after 6 years inside.

Thanks to my non-corporate sponsor Bluestockings Bookstore, Café, & Activist Center who provided me with a shirt to run in, a generous donation and lots of moral support. Thanks also to my extraordinarily patient race-day supporter, Turtle, who helped make everything way easier than it would have been. I am sure NYC ABC will be coming out with a report-back and there are photos to be seen here thanks to Tom Martinez who donated his photography services.

Filed under Running Down the Walls 2013 | No Comments »

Letter Writing Night & Dinner for Lynne Stewart— Tuesday September 3rd

Source

by Jenny on August 29th, 2013

We fully encourage you to come out to this excellent letter writing event and dinner for Lynne Stewart, who is fighting cancer while imprisoned at a Texas federal prison.

For more information, check out <http://lynnestewart.org>

<http://nycabc.wordpress.com/2013/08/29/nyc-tuesday-september-3rd-letter-writing-for-lynne-stewart>

WHAT: Political Prisoner Letter-Writing Dinner

WHEN: 7pm sharp, Tuesday, September 3rd, 2013

WHERE: CAGE – 83A Hester Street (UPSTAIRS) New York, New York 10002
(directions below)

COST: Free

You know this country has made little progress when corny ass pop stars are still comfortable with racist cultural appropriation while at the same time being used by the corporate media to distract us from the impending war about to be waged on yet another Middle Eastern country. Where the largest prison hunger strike California has ever seen is being wholly ignored by the same media. And where our elders are allowed to age and die behind prison walls, suffering the same indignity of ignore-ance. Speaking to the latter is where we come in.

As a collective organized around supporting political prisoners, we refuse to fall prey to the media's inexcusable omission of our elders from their pages. To that end, we focus this week's political prisoner letter-writing dinner on a comrade suffering behind bars— Lynne Stewart.

Lynne Stewart received a 28-month sentence in October 2006. The government appealed the sentence, and in 2009 Lynne was sentenced to 10 years in federal prison. She is now in a federal medical facility for women in Texas, thousands of miles away from her home, family and community.

If for some insane reason you can't make it out, but still want to support Lynne, you can write to her at:

Lynne Stewart #53504-054

FMC Carswell

Post Office Box 27137

Fort Worth, Texas 76127

The deal, as always, is that you come bringing only yourself (and your friends and comrades), and we provide you with a delicious vegan meal, information about the prisoners as well as all of the letter-writing materials and prisoner-letter-writing info you could ever want to use in one evening. In return, you write a thoughtful letter to a political prisoner or prisoner of war of your choosing or, better yet, keep up a long-term

correspondence. We'll also provide some brief updates and pass around birthday cards for the PP/POWs whose birthdays fall in the next two weeks thanks to the PP/POW Birthday Calendar.

DIRECTIONS: Getting to CAGE is simple:

-From the J/M/Z: **Essex Street Stop:** Walk west on Delancey Street (toward Essex Street, away from Norfolk Street) and make a left on Essex Street. Walk three blocks and turn right onto Hester Street. We're two and a half blocks down, on the right.

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If you have any questions, feel free to get in touch. Otherwise, we'll see you at supper. This event is brought to you by your friendly neighborhood Anarchist Black Cross.

NYC ABC

nycabc[at]riseup[dot]net

<http://nycabc.wordpress.com>

<http://www.facebook.com/nycabc>

<http://twitter.com/nycabc>

<http://www.abcf.net/nyc>

Filed under Human Rights | No Comments »

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Wednesday

Source

by Jenny on August 28th, 2013

With just a few days left before the big run I ran 28 minutes long and slow. Nothing too exciting.

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WHAT: Running Down the Walls – 5k Run/Walk/Jog/Bike

WHEN: 2:00-7:00pm, Sunday, September 1st

WHERE: Prospect Park– Lincoln Road/East Lake Drive, east of the Terrace Bridge (see the below map for exact location)

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

Directions:

From the Q or S Shuttle train, get off at the Prospect Park stop. Walk to Lincoln Road and turn right into the park. We'll be about 700 feet away.

The event will be two laps around what is known as the Inner Loop, and will total five kilometers. For the curious, here's what it looks like:

Filed under Running Down the Walls 2013 | No Comments »

Weekend training update!

Source

by Jenny on August 24th, 2013

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NYC ABC

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Filed under Running Down the Walls 2013 | No Comments »

Menu for Running Down the Walls 2013 post-run picnic

Source

by Jenny on August 24th, 2013

Here's the latest confirmed menu for RDTW 2013 (all vegan):

******Smoked and slowly simmered jack fruit "pulled pork" sandwiches in a from-scratch Texas-style barbeque sauce***

******Kala Namak infused faux deviled eggs filled with whipped turmeric bean curd***

******Heirloom potato salad***

****Chocolate chunk cookies*

****A variety of homemade cupcakes*

Filed under Running Down the Walls 2013 | No Comments »

Running Down the Walls training update: Friday night

Source

by Jenny on August 23rd, 2013

Running down the Walls Training update: FRIDAY NIGHT RUNNING. I'm hoping rain doesn't come. Planning to do half-hour of intervals.

First day of doing something other than long runs. Wish me luck! Hope to be doing 1 minute of hard running followed by 2 minutes of slower. What the hell do I know about running? Not much!

See you on September 1st at Prospect Park for #RDTW

You can sponsor me on our online donation page.

Filed under Running Down the Walls 2013 | No Comments »

Running Down the Walls promo video

Source

by Jenny on August 21st, 2013

Thanks to Denver ABC, there is now a new promotional video for Running down the Walls 2013!

You can view the video here.

<http://web.archive.org/web/20130906013236/http://supportdaniel.org/blog/wp-content>

Filed under Running Down the Walls 2013 | No Comments »

Volunteers needed for Running Down the Walls

Source

by Jenny on August 21st, 2013

NYC ABC will need run-day volunteers for Running down the Walls. "We need folks who are willing to staff a registration/literature table, hand out water, bike the route as street medics, and help chalk the route beforehand" Contact nycabc@riseup.net to become a run day volunteer

Filed under Running Down the Walls 2013 | No Comments »

Training Update: Wednesday

Source

by Jenny on August 21st, 2013

Running Down the Walls training update: Wed. Ran 33 minutes with no rest. Hit two hills and finished strong. 11 days until run.

Filed under Running Down the Walls 2013 | No Comments »

RDTW Training update: Sunday night

Source

by Jenny on August 19th, 2013

Ran 23 minutes, took a 3 min rest and ran another 13 minutes. Stopped by Books Through Bars – New York City at Freebird Books for a breather. If you do not know about Books thru Bars and the excellent work they do, please check out their website at <http://booksthroughbarsnyc.org> I am running two days on and one day off at this point and ratcheting up the fundraising for the run. Please help me run this race and sponsor me here.

There are two main recipients of proceeds from Running Down the Walls this year: The ABCF warchest and the Brooklyn Base. Please check out their sites.

The route for this year's run at Prospect Park is below. Hope to see you there on September 1st. All the info you need about the run is here.

Filed under Running Down the Walls 2013 | No Comments »

Friday night Running Down the Walls training update

Source

Saturday, August 17th, 2013

Ran 30 minutes (around 3 miles) & did not stop once. Saturday is a day off!

Posted in Running Down the Walls 2013 | No Comments »

Village Voice article on Daniel's dismissal from CMU lawsuit

Source

Thursday, July 18th, 2013

Daniel McGowan, Put In an Extreme Prison Isolation Unit For Writing Things, Loses Lawsuit Against Bureau of Prisons

by Anna Merlan

A New York environmental activist stuck in an extreme isolation unit for writing letters and publishing articles — and then re-jailed for writing about being put in that isolation unit in the first place — has had his lawsuit against the Federal Bureau of Prisons dismissed, a development he calls “gross and unjust.”

We’ve written before about Daniel McGowan, a 39-year-old environmental activist from Rockaway Beach, Queens who was once affiliated with the Earth Liberation Front, a group he says he left in the summer of 2001. He spent five and a half years in a federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana, convicted of arson and conspiracy to commit arson, for trying to burn down two Oregon lumber yards in 2001, actions for which the ELF as a group claimed responsibility.

See also: Daniel McGowan Forbidden From Publishing Articles Without Permission

McGowan was released in December of 2012 and sent to a halfway house, where he was supposed to stay for six months before beginning three years of supervised release. But he was briefly re-imprisoned this April, three days after writing an article for the Huffington Post about his time in a Communications Management Unit, an experimental pod within the prison that drastically cut off his ties to the outside world.

McGowan explained in the Huffington Post piece that he landed in the CMU about a year into his prison bid, despite having a spotless disciplinary record. CMU rules drastically limited his access to phone calls and visits, as well as banning physical contact with his family and friends when they were allowed to see him. When his wife visited, they were separated by a thick pane of Plexiglass and a row of bars, communicating by phone.

In 2010, with help from the Center for Constitutional Rights, McGowan and several other CMU inmates filed suit against the Bureau of Prisons, challenging the constitutionality of CMUs and alleging that inmates were often assigned to them for their political beliefs, a practice which the CCR called “discriminatory and retaliatory.” In McGowan’s case, he and the CCR believed he’d been stuck in the CMU for writing letters and articles, which were still, when last we checked, constitutionally protected First Amendment activities.

As memos released during the suit revealed, he was right. They showed that McGowan was tossed in the CMU in large part for writing articles and letters about animal rights, as well as the need to unite the animal liberation and Earth liberation movements. Les Smith, a chief in the BOP’s Correctional Programs division, wrote that McGowan’s communications needed to be monitored constantly:

Inmate McGowan’s communications warrant heightened controls and review due to the fact that he was an organizer of [Earth Liberation Front]; wrote communiques for ALF/ELF actions; used coded communications during the commission of the offenses; participated in the recruitment of others into the group; espoused his anti-government beliefs verbally and in written communications; trained others to design and construct incendiary devices as well as how to conduct arson without being caught; and demon-

strated the ability to plan, organize and carry out his plans without detection. While incarcerated and through social correspondence and articles written for radical publications, Inmate McGowan has attempted to unite the radical environmental and animal liberation movements.

Three days after the HuffPo piece went live, on April 4, McGowan was picked up from his Brooklyn halfway house and locked up at the Metropolitan Detention Center. After one night, he was re-released to the halfway house, but with a new condition: no publishing articles.

“As far as we know, this is a made-up rule applied only to Daniel,” the CCR wrote in a press release, “in a further attempt to chill his freedom of speech.”

On June 5, McGowan was released from the halfway house, to go home to his wife and begin his supervised release. “I am out of the reach of the Bureau of Prisons,” he says. He’s now working as a receptionist in a law firm. On Tuesday, as Courthouse News first reported, Senior U.S. District Judge Barbara Rothstein dismissed McGowan from the BOP lawsuit, under the logic that his release from prison has made his standing to bring the case moot. Only one CMU inmate remains in the lawsuit, Kifah Jayyousi, who was convicted of aiding Al-Qaeda.

The Center for Constitutional Rights said it was “deeply disappointed” by the dismissal of McGowan’s suit. It added that a portion of the suit was dismissed under the Prison Litigation Reform Act, a 1996 federal law that makes it very difficult to prisoners to sue the government for damages unless they’ve been physically injured. The CCR refers to this as a “second-class system of justice.”

“I have to say, I find the dismissal severely disappointing,” McGowan told us via email yesterday. “That my claims can be dismissed on what amounts to a technicality is just a sad example of how badly our system of justice works. The PLRA essentially states

that prisoners cannot seek relief from the courts for emotional or mental injuries, only physical injuries. There is something very gross and unjust about that. After spending 48 months in the CMU, I’m appalled that I will not get my day in court and be able to testify about what it is like to live in those conditions and the severe impact CMU designation has on one’s family and community ties.”

Send story tips to the author, Anna Merlan.

Posted in Uncategorized | No Comments »

Daniel McGowan, Jailed For HuffPost Blog, Loses Lawsuit Against Bureau Of Prisons

Source

Monday, July 15th, 2013

By Matt Sledge, msledge@huffingtonpost.com

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/07/15/daniel-mcgowan-huffpost-lawsuit_n_3600724.html

A federal court has dismissed an environmental activist's claims against the U.S. Bureau of Prisons over a restrictive prison wing he was housed in, but a lawsuit filed by other prisoners against the government over its restrictive communication management units continues.

Daniel McGowan, 38, served seven years in federal prison for arson connected with the Earth Liberation Front, four of them in the secretive communication management units, or CMUs, dubbed "Little Guantanamo" by critics.

Along with dozens of other mostly Muslim inmates, McGowan's phone calls with the outside world and physical contact with his family were severely limited. Even after he was released to a halfway house, McGowan was briefly tossed back into prison this year for writing a Huffington Post blog entry detailing his case.

McGowan's lawyers at the Center for Constitutional Rights had argued that his re-jailing proved he was still at risk for re-incarceration in the CMUs. But the judge overseeing the lawsuit disagreed, citing a 1990s-era law that severely restricts the rights of federal prisoners to challenge cruel and unusual punishment.

McGowan's lawyers at the Center for Constitutional Rights said in a statement that they were "deeply disappointed" by Senior Judge Barbara J. Rothstein's decision, but that they would push on with the larger lawsuit.

Posted in Uncategorized | No Comments »

CCR Press Release about Daniel's claims being dismissed on Aref v. Holder

Source

Monday, July 15th, 2013

Former Prisoner's First Amendment Claims Dismissed Under "Second Class System of Justice"

BOP Not Liable for Retaliation Against Activist Daniel McGowan

press@ccrjustice.org

July 15, 2013, New York – Today, the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) released the following statement in response to the dismissal of the claims in a federal lawsuit that plaintiff Daniel McGowan was placed in highly-restrictive Communications Management Units while in federal prison in retaliation for protected First Amendment activity. The other claims in the case, *Aref v. Holder*, continue.

We are deeply disappointed by the court's dismissal of Daniel McGowan's claims against the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP). Mr. McGowan was designated, and then re-designated, to the Communications Management Units (CMU) in blatant retaliation for his political speech and activities. At the CMUs, he had severely restricted access to telephone calls and social visits – including a total ban on contact visits with

his loved ones. Once he had been released to a halfway house, the BOP once again retaliated against Mr. McGowan, unconstitutionally placing him in federal custody days after he published blog piece about the CMUs on the Huffington Post. While our claims challenging broad due process violations at the CMUs will proceed, *Aref v. Holder* also sought accountability for these acts of retaliation against protected First Amendment activity. Now, the court has held that, while non-prisoners may sue under these circumstances, the Prison Litigation Reform Act (PLRA) bars Mr. McGowan's damages claims because he was not subjected to physical harm. CCR condemns the second class system of justice created by the PLRA, which places unjust hurdles between prisoners and redress for constitutional violations. We will continue to vigorously pursue our case against the BOP.

The Center for Constitutional Rights is dedicated to advancing and protecting the rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Founded in 1966 by attorneys who represented civil rights movements in the South, CCR is a non-profit legal and educational organization committed to the creative use of law as a positive force for social change.

Posted in Uncategorized | No Comments »

New motion filed in *Aref v. Holder*—Regarding Daniel's April 2013 “trip” to MDC

Source

by Jenny on May 22nd, 2013

The defendants in *Aref v Holder* have filed what is called a “*Defendants’ Objections and Responses to Plaintiff’s Fourth Set of Interrogatories*” and we have posted it

here. This is in response to Daniel's lawyers investigating why Daniel was taken back into custody in April 2013 after writing a short article on his civil lawsuit. The response are telling but one thing is certain-it sure appears that the Bureau of Prisons is not aware of its own policies and has disrespect for the First Amendment rights of prisoners.

Read for yourself. More updates to be posted soon. Thanks for your support of Daniel!

Filed under Uncategorized | No Comments »

New motions filed in *Aref v. Holder* (Daniel's civil lawsuit against the Bureau of Prisons)

Source

by Jenny on April 13th, 2013

Daniel's lawsuit against the Bureau of Prisons (*Aref v. Holder*) has been progressing rapidly these past months. Our lawyers have filed a 'surreply' to the defendants' (BOP) motion to dismiss. The motion deals with some issues that have popped up in the wake of Daniel's unconstitutional jailing last week. You can read the surreply written by our lawyers at CCR here. (This 'surreply' is also in response to the defendants' 'reply brief' on their motion to dismiss, which is available here. Older legal documents in this case can be viewed here. Thanks to our excellent lawyers at CCR for putting together these well-crafted motions.

Filed under Uncategorized | No Comments »

Rosenburg Fund for Children founder Robert Meeropol's article on Daniel

Source

by Jenny on April 12th, 2013

Imprisoned for Blogging

Submitted by Robert Meeropol on Thu, 04/11/2013

For the second week in a row I am compelled to write about someone represented by the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), and more particularly by my daughter, Rachel Meeropol, who is a senior staff attorney there.

Daniel McGowan pleaded guilty to an environmentally motivated arson in 2006 and is now serving the last six months of his seven-year sentence at a halfway house in Brooklyn. My daughter got involved in his case when the CCR filed a suit attacking the constitutionality of his transfer to a "Communication Management Unit" (CMU) during his imprisonment. In these units, inmates' communication with the outside world is limited to one 15-minute phone call a week and two two-hour visits a month. Rachel described the CMUs "[as] political prisons. These people are being targeted to limit their ability to communicate with the outside world, and to limit their ability to be political people."

Daniel McGowan was swept up in a wave of "Green Scare" cases that generated a number of RFC beneficiary families. In 2010, Daniel believed he was transferred to the CMU because he remained politically active in prison and published a blog. Lauren Regan, his criminal defense attorney, with whom I toured the Pacific Northwest in the fall of 2007, noted that the only difference between Daniel and other Green Scare defendants who were not transferred was "the outreach that he was doing and the voice that he had behind bars."

The CCR's legal action recently forced the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) to provide McGowan with documents outlining the reasons for his transfer. On Monday, April 1st, 2013, Daniel published an article in the Huffington Post entitled: "*Court Documents Prove I Was Sent to the Communications Management Unit (CMU) for My*

Political Speech.” On Thursday he was seized at the halfway house and confined in the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn because he’d published the blog. The BOP cited its regulation prohibiting prisoners from “publishing under a byline” to justify this action. They neglected to mention that the regulation in question was dropped in 2010, three years after a federal court had declared it unconstitutional.

This is a “let me get this straight” moment...The BOP retaliated against McGowan for writing constitutionally protected political blogs by placing him in a Communication Management Unit and then after he was released, re-imprisoned him when he exercised his free speech rights by writing an article complaining about it. Kafka is twirling in his grave.

The CCR’s lawyers scrambled, the BOP acknowledged its “mistake” and McGowan was back in the halfway house the next day.

But was this really a mistake? It could be a case of bureaucratic incompetence, but there is another more ominous possibility. Perhaps the BOP knew that the regulation was no longer in force, and that his attorneys would move quickly to obtain his release, but they decided to cite it as an excuse to put Daniel through 24 hours of hell to punish him and deter others. He won a victory, but he paid a price. Perhaps one day his attorneys will through further discovery get to the bottom of this, but who knows when, if ever, that will happen.

I suspect we’ll never know, but given the BOP’s history and its actions last Friday, I remain suspicious. The CCR’s press release states that when he was returned to the halfway house, “Daniel was provided with a list of prohibited activities by halfway house staff, which he was required to sign. The list forbids him any media contact without BOP approval, though BOP regulations only require preapproval of in-facility interviews. It also prohibits him from publishing any writing of his own without prior BOP permission. As far as we know, this is a made-up rule applied only to Daniel, in a further attempt to chill his freedom of speech.”

I can’t help but think, as we approach the 60th anniversary of my parents’ execution, how important the publication of my parents’ prison correspondence was in galvanizing the movement that fought to save them. What if the federal government had muzzled them in a Communication Management Unit? Even in the depths of the McCarthy period the government didn’t consider such an action. But today, after 60 years of “progress” thousands of federal prisoners are gagged in this manner.

Filed under Uncategorized | No Comments »

Bureau of Prisons Backtracks, Again, On Daniel McGowan (HuffPo)

Source

by Jenny on April 10th, 2013

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/10/bureau-of-prisons-daniel-mcgowan_n_3054153.htm

NEW YORK — The latest twist in the saga of Daniel McGowan, an environmental activist who was convicted of arson linked to the Earth Liberation Front, has his lawyer exasperated with the Bureau of Prisons, which is now conceding it cannot stop him from blogging for The Huffington Post.

McGowan was taken from his Brooklyn halfway house by marshals and put in jail last week in response to a blog post he wrote that was critical of the Bureau of Prisons. After his lawyers complained that his rights were being infringed upon, he was re-released to the halfway house where he had been serving out the final months of his term.

But there was a twist: Upon being released, McGowan was forced to sign a document stating that “writing articles, appearing in any type of television or media outlets, news reports and/or documentaries without prior BOP approval is strictly prohibited.” Violating that agreement, which he signed under duress, might mean going back to jail.

It was, said Rachel Meeropol, his lawyer at the Center for Constitutional Rights, a form of “fast and loose retaliation.”

When HuffPost contacted the Bureau of Prisons’ regional office in Philadelphia, however, they quickly backtracked on the agreement.

“He’s not prohibited from doing that, and we’re going to address it with the (halfway house) contractor,” said Lamine N’Diaye, a BOP public information officer. If McGowan wrote another HuffPost blog today, said N’Diaye, “he’s not going to be punished.”

The BOP’s new position may be on firmer legal ground than the contract McGowan was forced to sign: as the CCR pointed out when they fought for his rerelease, a federal judge ruled in 2007 that attempts to prohibit inmates from writing articles under their own byline are unconstitutional.

“This chain of events is so ridiculous, it is almost laughable,” said Meeropol. “What is sobering, however, is the impact of these repeated ‘mistakes’ — a dedicated activist is being chilled from sharing important information with the public in violation of the First Amendment and the Bureau of Prison’s own regulations.”

Filed under Uncategorized | No Comments »

Daniel McGowan Forbidden From Publishing Articles Without Permission (Village Voice)

Source

by Jenny on April 9th, 2013

http://blogs.villagevoice.com/runninscared/2013/04/daniel_mcgowan.php

By Nick Pinto Tue., Apr. 9 2013 at 5:12 PM

Support Daniel McGowan Facebook Group

Daniel McGowan has been forbidden from publishing anything without the permission of the Bureau of Prisons.

After more than seven years, the stack of dehumanizing and seemingly unconstitutional interactions between Daniel McGowan and the American prison system is now piled so high it is teetering over into a recursive mess of bleak and Kafkaesque absurdity.

Last Monday, McGowan published a piece on the *Huffington Post* that laid out much of his situation to date. After years in prison for his role in environmentally motivated property destruction that was prosecuted as acts of terrorism, he wrote, he was finishing up the remaining months of his sentence in a halfway house in Brooklyn.

The various perversions of the case that sent McGowan away are well documented in the documentary (streaming on Netflix!) *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front*. But, as McGowan wrote, less publicized is what happened to him a year into his prison term: Despite a flawless disciplinary record, McGowan was transferred to an experimental new Communications Management Unit, a supermax-like extreme-isolation facility some have dubbed a “Little Guantanamo.”

Why was McGowan transferred to a CMU? He never got a good answer to that question, even after a Freedom of Information Act request, so, along with other CMU inmates, he filed a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the CMUs and alleging that they are effectively political prisons designed to silence the voices of people whose message the government doesn't like. As it turned out, McGowan was right: Bureau of Prisons memos discovered through the lawsuit appear to link his transfer to the CMU to the fact that he continued to write things the government found politically objectionable.

“While incarcerated and through social correspondence and articles written for radical publications, inmate McGowan has attempted to unite the radical environmental and animal liberation movements,” one memo states, before dilating on other political statements McGowan made in interviews and his own writing.

McGowan wrote about all of this in his *Huffington Post* piece last Monday. Two days later, the staff at the halfway house to which he had been assigned told him that his work permit had been revoked on order of the Bureau of Prisons. The next morning, federal marshals arrived and brought him to the Metropolitan Detention Center. Once there, he was presented with a document explaining that he had violated the terms of his release to the halfway house. Specifically, the incident report stated that McGowan had violated a prison regulation that stated “an inmate currently confined in an institution may not ... act as a reporter or publish under a byline.”

That's right: McGowan was sent back to jail for writing about how he'd been imprisoned in a CMU for writing things.

There's more: The regulation that the Bureau of Prisons cited to justify returning him to jail had actually been declared unconstitutional by a federal court in 2007, and the Bureau of Prisons had finally taken it off the books in 2010. McGowan's lawyers

mentioned this to the bureau and to the lawyers representing the government in his lawsuit, and he was re-released to the halfway house on Friday.

But that's not the end of it. Back at the halfway house, staff presented McGowan with a document and directed him to sign it. The document stated that "he is not permitted to have any contact with the media without approval from the BOP's Residential Reentry Manager. Accordingly, Resident McGowan was advised that writing articles, appearing in any type of television or media outlets, news reports and or documentaries without prior BOP approval is strictly prohibited."

It's worth noting that McGowan hadn't been asked to sign this document when he first arrived at the halfway house, nor, as far as his lawyers can tell, has anyone there been asked to sign it. In fact, there's nothing in the Bureau of Prison's published media policy that requires pre-approval before publishing anything.

"There is no national prohibition on publishing," Chris Burke, a spokesman for the Bureau of Prisons, confirmed this afternoon.

"I thought I had lost my ability to be surprised by what the Bureau of Prisons does years ago," said Rachel Meeropol, a lawyer with the Center for Constitutional Rights who's representing McGowan. "But restricting an individual's freedom of speech in this manner is truly surprising. It's beyond ironic that Daniel was retaliated against and returned to prison for publishing a blog about being retaliated against for speaking out in prison."

Here's the incident report explaining McGowan's return to prison:

Daniel McGowan Incident Report

And here's the statement McGowan was required to sign upon his return to the halfway house:

Daniel McGowan Halfway House statement

Filed under Uncategorized | No Comments »

Copy of Incident Report Daniel received last week

Source

by Jenny on April 9th, 2013

McGowan 4.3.13 Incident Report

Go ahead and try to count how many things are wrong with this picture! Note to BOP: The policy in question (whether prisoners are allowed to write under a byline) has not been in place since 2007! Way to be updated about your own policy, BOP!

Filed under Uncategorized | No Comments »

Press release from CCR on Special Restrictions for Daniel

Source

by Jenny on April 8th, 2013

BOP Invents Special Restriction for Environmental Activist Daniel McGowan: No Publishing Articles

McGowan Released from MDC Prison Friday, Returned to Halfway House

press@ccrjustice.org

April 8, 2013, New York – Today, attorneys for activist Daniel McGowan at the Center for Constitutional Rights released the following update on his situation:

Daniel McGowan is back at the halfway house where he has been residing after a week that was by turns difficult, disturbing and ridiculous. To recap: on Monday, April 1, Daniel published an opinion piece on the Huffington Post titled “Court Documents Prove I Was Sent to Communication Management Units (CMU) for My Political Speech.” On Thursday, April 4, Daniel was picked up by U.S. Marshals from the halfway house and taken into custody at Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn. He was issued an “incident report” indicating that his Huffington Post blog post violated a BOP regulation prohibiting inmates from “publishing under a byline.” The BOP regulation in question was declared unconstitutional by a federal court in 2007, and eliminated by the BOP in 2010. On Friday, April 5, after we brought Daniel’s unjust detention to the BOP’s attention, he was released from MDC, and the incident report was expunged.

That same day, Daniel was provided with a list of prohibited activities by halfway house staff, which he was required to sign. The list forbids him any media contact without BOP approval, though BOP regulations only require preapproval of in-facility interviews. It also prohibits him from publishing any writing of his own without prior BOP permission. As far as we know, this is a made-up rule applied only to Daniel, in a further attempt to chill his freedom of speech.

McGowan, who was released from prison in December and is serving out the last six months of his sentence at a halfway house, is a plaintiff in a Center for Constitutional Rights lawsuit, *Aref v. Holder*, challenging the constitutionality of the federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) experimental Communications Management Units (CMUs) where he was kept for four years. New documents uncovered in the case indicate he was placed in these highly restrictive experimental units as retaliation for his political writings on current events and issues while he was in prison.

Aref v. Holder challenges the violation of prisoners’ fundamental constitutional rights, including the right to due process. Attorneys say that because transfer to CMUs are not based on facts or discipline for infractions, a pattern of religious and political discrimination and retaliation for prisoners’ lawful advocacy has emerged. Daniel

McGowan recently amended the complaint to include claims of retaliation for First Amendment protected speech.

For information about CCR's federal lawsuit challenging CMUs, visit the *Aref, et al. v. Holder, et al* case page or www.ccrjustice.org/cmu.

The law firm

Weil Gotshal & Manges LLP and attorney

Kenneth A. Kreuzscher are co-counsel in the case.

The Center for Constitutional Rights is dedicated to advancing and protecting the rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Founded in 1966 by attorneys who represented civil rights movements in the South, CCR is a non-profit legal and educational organization committed to the creative use of law as a positive force for social change.

Filed under Uncategorized | No Comments »

Well said!

Source

by Jenny on April 6th, 2013

Filed under Uncategorized | No Comments »

Daniel McGowan Released After Lawyers Confirm He Was Jailed For HuffPost Blog

Source

by Jenny on April 5th, 2013

From the Huffington Post

UPDATE: 5:25 p.m. — Lawyers for environmental activist Daniel McGowan said in a statement Friday afternoon that he had been returned to his halfway house in Brooklyn. They added that they had confirmed McGowan was jailed by federal marshals on Thursday for his Huffington Post blog post — on the basis of a prison regulation that was declared unconstitutional by a judge in 2007.

Their statement read:

Daniel McGowan has been released from the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn where he was taken into custody yesterday and is back at the halfway house where he has been residing since his release from prison in December. Yesterday, Daniel was given an “incident report” indicating that his Huffington Post blog post, “Court Documents Prove I Was Sent to Communication Management Units (CMU) for My Political Speech,” violated a BOP regulation prohibiting inmates from “publishing under a byline.” The BOP regulation in question was declared unconstitutional by a federal

court in 2007, and eliminated by the BOP in 2010. After we brought this to the BOP's attention, the incident report was expunged.

The Bureau of Prisons did not immediately return a request for comment.

The earlier story ...

NEW YORK — The jailing of environmental activist Daniel McGowan is under review, a Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) official said Friday morning.

McGowan, who pleaded guilty to arson linked to the Earth Liberation Front in 2006, was serving out the final months of his seven-year sentence in a Brooklyn halfway house when he was jailed by federal marshals Thursday morning, allegedly for writing a commentary on The Huffington Post critical of a harshly restricted federal prison unit in which he had spent time.

Tracy Rivers, a residential reentry manager for the BOP in New York, told HuffPost Friday morning, "We are reviewing this case to determine if the actions that were taken were appropriate."

Rivers declined to say more about why McGowan was moved to the Metropolitan Detention Center, citing privacy issues. But she noted that a determination would be made in McGowan's case by the end of Friday.

In general, Rivers said, prisoners can be punished for violating a BOP rule that prohibits giving interviews to the news media without official approval. But that rule says nothing about prisoners writing blog posts.

McGowan's wife, Jenny Synan, told HuffPost that neither he, his lawyers nor a BOP official she talked to about the case had heard of a regulation prohibiting prisoners from writing blog posts.

In a statement Thursday, McGowan's lawyers at the Center for Constitutional Rights said, "If this is indeed a case of retaliation for writing an article about the BOP retaliating against his free speech while he was in prison, it is more than ironic, it is an outrage."

UPDATE: 1:25 p.m. — Daniel McGowan may soon leave jail. His attorney with the Center for Constitutional Rights, Rachel Meeropol, told HuffPost Friday afternoon, "We have been told by the BOP that he will be sent back to the halfway house today."

Filed under Uncategorized | No Comments »

Daniel McGowan Jailed, Allegedly For Writing Huffington Post Blog

Source

by Jenny on April 5th, 2013

Posted: 04/04/2013 5:50 pm EDT | Updated: 04/05/2013 5:54 pm EDT

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/04/daniel-mcgowan-arrested_n_3016885.html?view=p

NEW YORK — The federal government on Thursday jailed Earth Liberation Front activist Daniel McGowan in response to an article he wrote for The Huffington Post, his wife Jenny Synan said. The HuffPost story, which was published April 1, charged the Federal Bureau of Prisons, citing documents McGowan had obtained, with transferring him to a high security prison unit in order to restrict his political speech during his incarceration.

Synan told HuffPost that she asked a BOP official why her husband had been re-imprisoned after his release to a halfway house in December. She said the official told her that the HuffPost article violated a term of his release that restricted him from interacting with the media.

Synan expects the BOP to keep her husband locked up until the official end of his seven-year sentence in June. His 38th birthday, she said, is next month. “We were thinking, ‘Oh my God, first birthday home!’”

McGowan’s attorney, Rachel Meeropol of the Center for Constitutional Rights, confirmed that McGowan was taken from a Brooklyn halfway house Thursday morning and brought to the Metropolitan Detention Center. She said she believed but had not yet confirmed that McGowan’s jailing was connected to his recent blog post.

“Needless to say, this is outrageous,” she said. “I’ve never heard of a regulation limiting an individual from blogging or contacting the news media.”

The Center for Constitutional Rights released a statement Thursday afternoon about McGowan being re-incarcerated:

We have received information that this was triggered by an opinion piece he published on the Huffington Post Monday, and we are currently trying to confirm this and learn more about the situation. We were unable to meet with him today because, we were informed, he was being processed. We will seek to meet with him tomorrow and follow all avenues to secure his release. The name of the piece is “Court Documents Prove I Was Sent to Communication Management Units (CMU) for My Political Speech.” If this is indeed a case of retaliation for writing an article about the BOP retaliating against his free speech while he was in prison, it is more than ironic, it is an outrage.

McGowan pleaded guilty in 2006 to federal charges of arson and conspiracy to commit arson, for fires linked to the animal rights group Earth Liberation Front. Between 2008 and 2010, he served time in the Communication Management Unit (CMU) at the U.S. Penitentiary in Marion, Ill. Prisoners in the unit, which has been dubbed “Little Guantanamo” by critics, are isolated from other prisoners and severely restricted in their contact with their families.

The Center for Constitutional Rights is challenging the Bureau of Prisons’ use of CMUs as part of a federal lawsuit. A recently released court document revealed that McGowan was apparently transferred to the CMU at least in part because of his communications with the outside world.

“While incarcerated and through social correspondence and articles written for radical publications, inmate McGowan has attempted to unite the radical environmental and animal liberation movements,” the internal memo states.

“In short, based on its disagreement with my political views, the government sent me to a prison unit from which it would be harder for me to be heard, serving as a punishment for my beliefs,” McGowan wrote in his blog post.

Synan noted the irony that the BOP, by jailing him for speaking out, had proven her husband’s point. “They already have a lawsuit against them for things like this,” she said. “He just posted his thing a few days ago about all this stuff — about his political beliefs and speech — and they do something to him because of his post about this. It’s crazy.”

The Bureau of Prisons did not immediately respond to a request for comment on McGowan, but national spokesman Chris Burke said that under a general media policy, “inmates cannot do interviews without permission. So if there’s some sort of a phone interview or a sit-in interview, those have to be pre-approved.”

But Stuart Whatley, executive blog editor at The Huffington Post, said blog posts cannot be compared to interviews.

“The HuffPost blog is a platform for contributors to share opinion, commentary and their thoughts on any topic of their choosing,” Whatley said. “As our guidelines explicitly state, ‘you can write about anything you want. Huffington Post does not select or approve your topics.’”

McGowan previously wrote for HuffPost in 2009 while imprisoned in the “U.S. Gitmo” unit.

UPDATE: Friday, April 5 — Daniel McGowan has been returned to his halfway house after his lawyers confirmed that he had been jailed for his HuffPost blog. More details [here](#).

Filed under [Uncategorized](#) | [No Comments](#) »

2012

Free Screening of IF A TREE FALLS in MD

Source

by Jenny on May 10th, 2012

Radicalizing the Green Man!

Please join us for a free screening of the award-winning documentary, *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front*, Saturday, May 12th, 11:00 am, at the Old Greenbelt P&G Theater, 129 Centerway, Greenbelt, MD 20770 - in conjunction with the 8th Annual Greenbelt Green Man Festival.

If A Tree Falls examines environmentalism, activism, and the way we define terrorism.

For an in-depth interview with the filmmaker & others, visit WPFW's Democracy Now - http://www.democracynow.org/2011/6/21/if_a_tree_falls_new_documentary.

For a shorter clip, go to:

<http://oscar.go.com/nominees/documentary-feature/if-a-tree-falls-a-story-of-the-earth-liberation-front>

The screening is sponsored by:

Capital Regime

Reel and Meal at the New Deal Cafe'

Sweet & Natural Bakery Cafe'

GATE (Greenbelt Access Television)

Beaverdam Creek Watershed Watch Group

Chears (Chesapeake Education, Arts and Research Society), and

Green Vegan Networking

P.S. **Sweet & Natural Bakery Cafe'** will be selling their delicious, scratch-made vegan muffins and other goodies before the show!!

P.P.S. Great live/outdoor Green Man Fest music just outside the theater following the screening!!

Filed under Uncategorized | No Comments »

Help Daniel find a job

Source

by Daniel on April 4th, 2012

Dear Friends and Supporters,

In a nice change of pace from the usual tenor of our communications, we are happy to report some really good news: Daniel McGowan's stay in the CMU is coming to an end! Despite many punitive measures over the course of the years, Daniel has maintained a sterling record in prison and has accrued enough "good time" to take 1 year off his 7-year sentence. What is even more exciting is that he has qualified to serve the last 6-months of this time in a halfway house in Brooklyn, beginning in December 2012! After so many years, and so much antagonism from Federal authorities, we are overjoyed to welcome Daniel back home, where he belongs.

The support you all have shown over these past 5 years has helped Daniel get through what are undoubtedly the hardest years of his life. Now that he is on the verge of rejoining us, and never looking back upon these dark times, the focus of support for the Family and Friends of Daniel McGowan is in assisting him in his re-entry and securing him meaningful employment. Not only is finding a job an important condition of Daniel's being in the half-way house — in addition to his supervised release once he is done with his sentence — but it is also extremely important to Daniel himself, who joins thousands of other ex-prisoners who struggle to find employment because of their prior records.

Lots of people are looking for work these days, and it's a daunting task for anyone. However, while Daniel is as highly-motivated and hard-working as many others seeking employment, it is obvious that he faces serious hurdles in getting a job because of his conviction. Daniel is a warm, intelligent, passionate, and dedicated person and he would love to find employment at a place that is doing work he cares about and finds meaningful. Over the years many of you have asked how you can help — helping Daniel find such a job would be the most important thing you could ever do for him.

HELP DANIEL FIND A JOB:

In addition to having a Bachelor's degree, Daniel completed a paralegal course as well as every continuing education and vocational course available (over 25!) while in prison despite limited opportunities for education, as well as frequent moves. He is extremely driven and has a broad skill-set that he is looking to utilize at a NYC-based, non-profit organization. Much of Daniel's career experience from 1997 onward is within the non-profit world he has ample experience in development/fundraising, communication and IT positions. Daniel has a particular interest in working as a paralegal for civil liberties organizations but would welcome and appreciate work in any of these fields/areas:

- Civil liberties/Free speech
- Prison reform
- Food justice/security

- Urban agriculture
- Recycling or Waste reduction
- Reproductive rights
- LGBT issues
- Climate change
- Harm reduction/Drug policy
- Prisoner re-entry
- “Green-collar”
- Alternative energy
- Sustainable transportation
- Environmental justice
- Domestic violence

If you work for a NYC-based non-profit, have a close friend, partner or contact at one, or have a specific organization in mind that might be open to hiring Daniel, we'd love to hear from you!

All emails can be directed to friendsofdanielmcg@yahoo.com

Please put “jobs” in the subject line.

His resume will be made available upon request.

Daniel is still in prison, in the CMU, and will be until the end of 2012.

Filed under Animal Rights, Counter-recruitment, Environmental, Eco, Friends, Human Rights, Immigration, Prison, Repression, Social Justice, Uncategorized, War | No Comments »

2011

Raffle Prize winners announced!

Source

by Jenny on December 15th, 2011

Hi all,

Here are the winners of the December 7th raffle. We've already been in touch with the winners but if you see your name and haven't heard anything, let us know.

Congrats and thanks!!

Will P Pie Any Means Necessary

Carey S BORF Print

Kathleen M The Will of the Many

Ryan O Winds From Below

Joe S Certain Days Calendar

Ryan K If A Tree Falls DVD; Combustion Books Pack

Beve C Pie Any Means Necessary; If A Tree Falls DVD

Evan W Compassion Buttons

Michael V Compassion Buttons

Compasson Co. Daniel Shirt - Purple L

Dylan P Bluestockings T-Shirt; Elektra KB Art

Ethan W Bluestockings membership; Book Thug Nation Gift Certificate

Yuri C Live Scribe; Recipes for Disaster

Nikki C Work; Signal: 1

John O IFC Membership; Firebrands

Josue M If A Tree Falls DVD; Celebrate People's History

Anastasia C Dr. Bronners Gift Basket; Boom! DVD

John Eberhardt Notes; Let Freedom Ring

Nikki K Eco-Warriors

Karen O Agriculture and Food in Crisis

Michelle D Fifth Estate Subscription; If A Tree Falls DVD

Cindy Toward Climate Justice

Olga N Eberhardt Zine Pack; JustSeeds Organizer

Jay Spectacle Theater Tickets

Deborah D Green is the New Red

Eliza C Book Thug Nation Gift Certificate

Meil E Quagmire; Acupuncture by Famous
Lana P Wilder Brook Farm Maple Syrup
Smokey We Interrupt This Empire
Benjamin P Eberhardt Notes; Daniel T-Shirt
Sangamithra I Support Daniel Water Bottle
J G Certain Days Calendar; Eberhardt Book Pack
Willie L If A Tree Falls DVD; 4Struggle Mag Subscription
Tom G Oppose and Propose
Dave R Paper Politics
Ainsley B Eberhardt Notes
Janine Suffled How It Gush
Spencer S Combustion Books Pack
Molly G Burning Books Gift Certificate
Melissa M Pie Any Means Necessary
Dayna Mittens; Boom!
Karen F We Interrupt This Empire
Sideshow Sparrow Shirt
Leah T Compassion T-Shirt
Julie R Daniel Water Bottle
Vera B Daniel Water Bottle
Stavros C Eberhardt Book Pack
Mirza Fifth Estate Subscription
Catherine F Sparrow Media T-Shirt
Harry N Pie Any Means Necessary
Nicolas U Uses of a Whirlwind
Filed under Animal Rights, Environmental, Eco, Friends, Prison, Repression, Social
Justice, Uncategorized | No Comments »

NYC – December 7th – Raffle and CCR + RFC + Family and Friends of Daniel McGowan Panel Discussion

Source

by Jenny on November 14th, 2011

WHAT: Panel discussion with Robert Meeropol, Will Potter and Jenny Synan
with an introduction by Rachel Meeropol plus an **AMAZING** raffle

WHEN: 6:30-8:00, Wednesday, December 7th

WHERE: Community Church of New York (40 East 35th Street, between Park
and Madison Avenues)

COST: Free entry; raffle tickets are \$2 each or three for \$5.

Every year we commemorate Daniel's arrest with an event on or around December 7th. This year's event will link advocates, activists and concerned individuals to think critically around the Red and Green scare, and ongoing repression of political dissidents in the United States. On the sixth anniversary, **Family & Friends of Daniel McGowan**, The Rosenberg Fund for Children, Will Potter of GreenIsTheNewRed and the Center for Constitutional Rights are hosting this panel discussion. In addition to the panel, we're planning on doing a raffle to raise money which goes to Daniel's commissary account in prison and any future legal expenses.

Raffle now over (12/08/11)

RAFFLE PRIZES are being added daily, but currently include:

- IFC Membership (The Cineaste Plus One) (\$120 value)
- BORF signed limited-edition Support Daniel print (\$100 value)
- Bluestockings membership & t-shirt
- Dr. Bronner's Holiday Gift Basket (\$50 value)
- If A Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front DVDs
- Livescribe Echo 4GB smartpen + 4-pack of Livescribe Dot Paper (\$150+ value)
- 1/2 Gallon Wilder Brook Farm Maple Syrup
- Art by Elektra KB (\$250 value)
- Sparrow Media Shirts: One, Two, and Three
- Fingerless mitts hand-knitted by Sarah Paul (mother of Jonathan Paul, Daniel's co-defendant!)
- Support Daniel McGowan T-shirt
- Support Daniel McGowan Water Bottle
- Green is the New Red book donation and signed posters
- A pair of tickets to the Spectacle Theater
- Two gift certificates to Book Thug Nation
- 1 acupuncture session with Famous
- Pie Any Means Necessary: The Biotic Baking Brigade Cookbook
- \$75 worth of Books from Justseeds
- Let Freedom Ring, edited by Matt Meyer
- Eco-Warriors by Rik Scarce
- Subscriptions to Fifth Estate
- The Will of the Many by Marrienne Maeckelbergh
- Books by Brian Tokar ("Toward Climate Justice" and "Agriculture & Food in Crisis")
- 2012 Justseeds/Eberhardt Press Organizers
- Books from Crimethinc. (Recipes for Disaster and Work), Eberhardt Press, Combustion Books, Burning Books (Buffalo, New York)
- Wind(s) from below: Radical Community Organizing to Make a Revolution Possible
- Team Colors Posters
- DVDs from Whispered Media (Boom and We Interrupt This Empire)

- Certain Days: Freedom For Political Prisoners 2012 Wall Calendar
- One year subscription to 4StruggleMag

Tags: center for constitutional rights, cmu, december 7, green scare, greenisthenewred, if a tree falls, red scare, Repression, rosenbergs, terrorism, will potter

Filed under Animal Rights, Environmental, Eco, Human Rights, Prison, Repression, Social Justice | No Comments »

Live from Little Guantanamo: A Conversation with Daniel McGowan Inspired by the Film IF A TREE FALLS

Source

by Daniel on October 25th, 2011

Live from Little Guantanamo

A Conversation with Daniel McGowan Inspired by the Film If a Tree Falls

The award-winning documentary, *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front*, premiered at Sundance last spring and continues to screen in theaters across the globe. The film, which aired on PBS earlier this fall and is now available on DVD, details the events that led to the imprisonment of environmental activist Daniel McGowan and raises critical questions about ecological crisis, terrorism, and government repression of political activists.

Those who see *If a Tree Falls* are likely to be left with a number of lingering questions. *How is Daniel doing now? When will he be released from prison? What does he think of the movie?* Daniel, who is currently serving a seven-year sentence in the Communications Management Unit at FCI Terre Haute in Indiana, answered some of these questions and others in the following interview about the film, prison life, and his thoughts about the future.

Question: *What was it like being interviewed and filmed while you were on house arrest awaiting trial during such an obviously difficult time in your life? How present and intrusive were the filmmakers? Did it add stress to your situation?*

 Daniel McGowan: It was at times frustrating and other times, comforting. What I mean is that throughout the period of house arrest, I felt stifled and unable to be productive. Having the filmmakers over for half of the day helped me motivate, get out of bed and organize my day. In that way, it countered the severe monotony of being stuck in an apartment and helped jolt me out of periods of depression. The whole experience was surreal - wearing a microphone for part of the day after being recorded on a wiretap by an informant was one of these bizarre instances.

There were times that I said something and realized that it may end up in the film! That was disconcerting, as was the negative impact a camera had on social situations.

Was it a hard decision to agree to be the subject of this film during that time? What did you hope would be the result?

 DM: The decision to allow myself to be filmed would never have been made if I had not previously known Marshall Curry. I worked for his wife [Elizabeth Martin, founder and former Executive Director of WomensLaw.org] and knew him somewhat and was familiar with his previous film, *Street Fight*. Originally, my sister raised the issue as I was flying back from Oregon after getting bonded out of jail in 2006. The thought was basically that Marshall was considering my situation as a topic for a film and whether or not that eventually happened, footage of me coming home would be essential.

Once I got my ankle bracelet, so probation could monitor me, and got settled in, we spoke at length about his ideas and we took it from there, setting up some longer background interviews. After a few months, despite frequent grumblings on my part, I was fully committed to it.

Having seen my indictment announced on cable TV and seeing how we were all being portrayed as crazy, dangerous terrorists, I felt strongly that it needed to be countered.

The film to me was a way to challenge the narrative the prosecution and media put out about us, knowing it was a long-term thing. My hope was that people would be able to hear my own thoughts and version of events instead of accepting the mainstream media version, which was exceedingly shallow and accepting of the law enforcement view.

Were you able to watch the film from prison when it aired on PBS? Do you even want to watch it?

DM: When I found out PBS was going to air *If a Tree Falls*, I was excited that huge amounts of people nationwide were going to view it. However, I have no intention of viewing it while in prison. There are deeply personal scenes, especially interviews with my wife and the day I turned myself in that I want to view by myself, at home. I want to have the chance to emotionally deal with that in a safe environment.

As the film's primary subject, what is the number one effect that you would like the film to have on viewers? In general, what do you hope the film achieves?

DM: It is difficult to dive into some of these areas because I haven't yet seen the film. While I have spoken to many people who have seen the film, and read many reviews, there really is no substitute for seeing it myself. That said, I hope people see it and feel a form of discomfort - not in a bad way, but one that has them thinking about what they saw for a few days or weeks after. That discomfort would be because the film challenged previously held ideas, like what a terrorist is, who the kind of people

are that commit property destruction, and whether the U.S. government really is on the right path environmentally, with prisons and the isolation of political prisoners in special units.

What would you like for viewers to know or understand about you, Daniel McGowan, on a personal level?

DM: From what I have heard, the film does a pretty good job of showing who I am. Friends and family have all commented that my personality shines through and I credit the filmmakers for editing all their footage so well! The letters I have received from people who have seen the film have been sympathetic but I fear people may worry too much. The film is a snapshot of my life at a time where I mentally and physically was not doing well at all. That time has passed, though, and I am in the homestretch now. There's a huge difference between facing 30 years and having almost completed your sentence. All things considered, I am doing okay.

The other thing I want people to know about me is that there really is no major difference between myself and most viewers of the film. Like them, my circle of compassion is wider than myself and my family. Similarly, I seek to live my life as close as possible to my ideals, though like everyone, I fail at that sometimes. On a less serious level, I love fantasy fiction, singing in the shower, and I am a sucker for children and animals - I'm pretty sure some of those details never made the film!

The film ends with your family and friends walking with you to report to the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn to begin your sentence, which began in 2007. If you could add 30 minutes to the film to bring it up to present day, what would you add to the story? What are the most important things that have happened since you started your sentence that the public should know about?

DM: If I could add 30 more minutes to the film, I would discuss how unusual my stay in prison has been since July 2007. My friends and I have joked that we should print one of those concert tour t-shirts but instead of listing the cities that shows were played in, it would list the prisons I have been at! Let's just say I have seen more of the Midwest than I ever wanted to.

After an uneventful 8 months at a low-security prison in Minnesota, I was held in contempt of court in Wisconsin during a grand jury I was called to against my will. Once that ended, I was shipped to the Communications Management Unit (CMU) in Marion, Illinois, where I spent 26 months. While there, I persistently sought a transfer hearing to dispute the rationale for my placement there, and I also finished a paralegal certificate. One day I was told to pack up and was released to Marion's general population, where I spent 4 months and then was sent to the hole (secure housing unit). Two days later, I was driven to the original CMU - FCI Terre Haute in Indiana. I've been here since February 2011.

I am not sure to what extent the filmmakers addressed the CMU issue, whether in the film or 'extras' on the DVD version.

Two years ago, you wrote an insider's account of life in the Communication Management Unit facilities that you have been housed in for most of the past 3 years. What is life like in these units? How does being housed in the CMU compare to life in general population?

DM: The CMU is extremely different than general population, from my limited personal experience. For starters, the Bureau of Prisons has moved people to these units since 2006 without any form of due process. There have not been any hearings, evidence presented, or any real methods of issuing a grievance about the issue (other than asking for reconsideration from the very same people who have moved me here). This is one of the main issues we sued about in our civil lawsuit, *Aref v. Holder*.

There is extensive monitoring of all contact between CMU prisoners and the community, whether it's phone, visits, mail, or email. A separate part of the BOP exists in Washington, D.C. that monitors all our communications. In addition to monitoring, there is a drastic reduction in our communications that has resulted in widespread anxiety and disruption to familial relations.

Prisoners in the CMU are given two 15-minute phone calls a week that must be scheduled a week in advance and take place within a specified time slot. Comparatively, most prisoners in the prison system can use 300 minutes a month. In the CMU, we have two 4-hour non-contact visits a month. There is a no physical contact allowed and the call takes place over a phone so that it can be monitored and recorded. Our visit room has a small glass window with bars in addition, which seems excessive. This is clearly one of the crueler aspects of our placement here. Many of my neighbors have chosen not to have their families visit. Their children do not understand why they cannot hug their father when some had contact visits at previous prisons. Most prisoners in general population receive up to 8 visits a month, up to 8 hours a day, where they can sit with their loved ones, hug and kiss their children, share food and play games.

If there is a good aspect to the CMU, it's the people. Many of the men here are highly educated, considerate and generous. We share our magazine subscriptions, watch BBC news and football, and lend a helping hand to those in need. The unit is highly diverse, multilingual and there are quite a few men who got raw deals from overzealous prosecutions. At the end of the day, it's prison and living so close to others creates annoyances. Ultimately though, things here are resolved through dialogue.

In the movie, when describing your political awakening, you say: "I had never seen with my own eyes what kind of world we lived in. I feel like I'm in perpetual mourning and I have been from the moment that... I kind of took the blinders off and was like, 'Holy crap what the hell are we doing?'" Do you still feel this? And how do you deal with this deep sense that something is wrong in the world, now that you are in prison?

DM: Yes, I would say I still feel this way, though ten years later, I am better able to deal with the frustration that comes with seeing the world like that. When I first got involved in activism, around 1997, I felt like I was exposed to so much, so fast. Part

of this was due to where I got involved - at the (now closed) Wetlands Preserve bar, which had an extremely active environmental activism center. Each week, I learned about new injustices and due to my pragmatic nature, felt a desire to put my energy into combatting them. I still very much feel we are on a very ill conceived path but I tend to be calmer about what I see and realize that one person, by himself, cannot do everything.

Prison, and I would say finding yourself in a legal case, has the effect of narrowing one's focus. This is a dynamic that occurs due to the need to focus on your day-to-day survival and well-being. In this environment, no matter the cordial relations you may have, you are truly on your own. Your emotional, physical, and mental well-being is your responsibility. This focus on the self inevitably changes how you deal with events occurring outside the walls. It used to frustrate me to no end that I stuck in here while my friends were out there, able to work on issues we both care deeply about. Ultimately, what I learned (and I'm not suggesting this concept works for everyone) is that you fight injustice where you are. Can I, as a prisoner of the United States, really be an active participant in outside campaigns? No, of course not - though I am more than happy to share my opinions. I have done what I can, while in prison, to counter the injustice I see. Sometimes, this means refusing to believe what I have read about a prisoner and judging him on his actions and from what I see. Other times, it's more concrete, such as soliciting the aid of various legal organizations to address the CMUs. I share what information and resources I can so people can effectively and legally fight their cases.

Do you think it's a better or worse climate for environmental activism now in 2011 vs. 2001 when the actions you are in prison for occurred?

DM: Since I have been in prison for four years now, it is truly difficult for me to judge the state of environmental activism in 2011. When you are free, you learn about and absorb information in a totally different manner than when you are imprisoned. In here, I rely on what I read and the viewpoints expressed in letters by friends and family. This leads to very spotty analysis, since the information I do receive is so subjective. Unfortunately, many publications have ceased publication or gone all-digital since 2007 and there is a dearth of high-quality environmental publications. Also, the majority of people I correspond with are not heavily involved with environmental campaigns.

That said, I cannot say environmental activism is in a better position now, in 2011. So much has happened since 2001 that bodes poorly for progress in environmental activism. I was amazed at how the BP oil well disaster played out, how in the aftermath, there were calls for accountability on the part of BP but as time went on, it petered out. BP set up a reimbursement fund and a bureaucratic and lengthy process by which people could be compensated. No talk was made of restoration to the Gulf or reparations for the environment or non-humans that that rely on a healthy ecology. In fact, within months, BP handled the PR struggle well and blunted public anger.

The environmental movement was unable to change the long-term dynamics of deep oil drilling, and business has gone on as usual already.

Another example where I feel the environmental movement is worse off in 2011 is in countering well-funded and articulate public relations campaigns for the coal, tar sands oil, and hydro-fracking industries. As scrutiny increases on one form of polluting and carbon-producing source, for example coal, the response is to highlight another source of energy, which is usually no better than the first. Coal dust spills lead to people saving on coal, which leads to nuclear being portrayed as carbon-neutral. The Fukushima disaster occurs, leading people to get fuel from tar sands oil from Canada. The process continues, yet we never move toward healthier and sane sources of energy, or more importantly, any fundamental questioning of the consumer driven culture that requires such insane amounts of energy.

Do you think at all about what your life will be like when you are released?

DM: Being relatively close to release, I often find myself thinking about life on the outside. A lot of my thoughts focus on employment, halfway house, probation and serious things like that. Also, I find myself daydreaming about spending time with my wife, playing with my nieces, traveling, eating good food and being able to play music - loud and whenever I want! I try not to romanticize these things and fall into thinking life will be problem-free on the outside. It's hard because prison is just so bland, negative and soul killing that life outside feels heavenly.

When do you expect to be released from prison? What are your hopes and ambitions for life after prison? What challenges do you think you will face? What do you fear?

DM: As things stand now, I should be released to a halfway house in New York at the end of 2012. Then, after a few months of adjustment (which entails a job and getting passes home), I'll go home and begin 3 years of "supervised release". After four years in prison and many hours spent in reflection, I have loads of ideas on what I'd like to do. Primarily, I want to get on my feet, spend quality time with my wife, family, and friends, and seek out meaningful employment. My hope is to work as a paralegal or communications director for a non-profit engaged in issues I care about. Prison reform is one of these issues as is urban agriculture, the struggles against homophobia and the marginalization of activists in the U.S. I have ideas for different projects and campaigns, most of which are long-term and involve books, dumpster-diving and "free-cycling." How's that for vague?

The challenges most on my mind are the preconceived notions and biases of potential employees as well as people I meet - who do not know my past. I have no interest in hiding my history, if that were even possible. Realizing that people may judge me based on being a 'felon' or having been convicted of arson and erroneously being labeled a terrorist is a tough pill to swallow. I don't want to be mired in this though and instead, I plan on devoting time and energy to campaigns that seek to de-stigmatize felons and

remove the barriers that deny us full personhood in this country. Remarkably, in 2011, there are many states you cannot vote in once convicted of a felony and thus, there are more than 5 million such disenfranchised people in the U.S. today.

*If you could ask everyone who sees *If a Tree Falls* to do one thing, what would it be?*

DM: This is a tough question because I loathe the idea that somehow, my suggestion would be relevant or suitable for people reading this interview. In the context of this film, I would ask everyone to be skeptical in how they perceive the words and message of the U.S. government and mainstream media. You can see by watching the film that the issues presented - about terrorism, tactics, environmental politics, incarceration - are more complex than how you will find them portrayed in governmental press releases or the newspaper. When I see the way that I have been presented in the [mainstream] media, even I don't like myself! It's truly important for all of us to consider the intent and political goals behind those crafting the messages we are exposed to daily. I am really appreciative of anyone who took the time to see the documentary and question the hype around cases like mine. You can learn more on my website and on Facebook.

This interview was conducted by friends of Daniel McGowan in the fall of 2011. An abbreviated version of this interview also appears on Huffington Post [www.huffingtonpost.com/daniel-mcgowan].

Tags: activism, cmu, communications management unit, earth liberation front, elf, if a tree falls, Prison, sundance, terre haute, terrorism

Filed under Environmental, Eco, Prison, Repression, Social Justice | No Comments

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IF A TREE FALLS opens next week in NYC and Eugene, Oregon!

Source

by Jenny on June 17th, 2011

IF A TREE FALLS opens Wednesday, June 22 at the IFC Center in NYC, where the filmmakers will be doing Q&As at primetime shows from the 22nd to the 25th.

The film is also playing at 2 festivals in NYC beginning this weekend — June 18 at BAMcinemaFest, and June 19th and 20th at the Human Rights Watch Film Festival.

And in Eugene, Oregon, it premieres Thursday, June 23rd at the Bijou Cinemas, where the Thursday screenings at 6:15pm & 8:45pm will be followed by a moderated Skype chat with the filmmakers.

Ticket sales at the IFC theater and Eugene will be monitored by other theaters around the country to determine whether they want to pick up the film. Please consider

attending the IFC and Eugene screenings during the opening week as ticket sales there will assure the film's widest possible release!

MORE ABOUT THE FILM:

Winner of the U.S. Documentary Editing Award at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival, *IF A TREE FALLS* is a feature-length documentary that offers a behind-the-curtain look at the Earth Liberation Front (ELF), the radical environmental group that the FBI calls America's "number one domestic terrorist threat." Centering on the story of Daniel McGowan, an ELF member who participated in two multi-million-dollar arsons against Oregon timber companies, the film investigates the origins of the ELF in America and explores how a working class kid from Queens found himself facing life in prison for "eco-terrorism." Using never-before-seen archival footage and intimate interviews from all the players — including ELF cell members and the prosecutor and detective who were chasing them — *IF A TREE FALLS* weaves an intriguing and suspenseful story that asks hard questions about environmentalism, activism, and the way we define terrorism in America today.

If a Tree Falls is distributed by Oscilloscope Laboratories and will screen nationwide this summer. Click here for more information and screening times.

Please follow us on facebook and twitter.

And check out the trailer online here and here!

See you at the movies!

**Note from Family and Friends of Daniel:

We feel that both Daniel's story and the message of the film are important to share, and we hope that as many people as possible are able to see it. We also want to highlight an issue we feel the film did not go far enough to illustrate—that Daniel and other non-cooperating defendants have been put behind bars in large part due to the betrayal of former friends who turned government informants. Some of these informants, like Suzanne Savoie, who is interviewed in the film, received sentences that were only slightly less than those who did not cooperate and many of them are currently out of prison because of this betrayal. It is paramount that we as a community do not forget the damage they have done, or allow them opportunities to try to reintegrate into our circles. For this reason, we are at odds with the filmmakers' decision to invite informants like Savoie to film screenings and we encourage the audience to question and object to any government informant's participation in the release of this film.

Filed under Animal Rights, Environmental, Eco, Human Rights, Prison, Repression, Social Justice | No Comments »

2010

Spring Update: RAISE YOUR VOICE AGAINST THE CMU

Source

by Daniel on April 24th, 2010

Daniel McGowan

April 24, 2010

Spring Update

After three years in prison and hundreds (thousands, even) of letters mailed out, I have gotten to the point where there is little to write about. Prison life is remarkably static—so unchanging in its daily routine—that news resonates here in a pronounced way. The early part of April brought some major announcements that will profoundly affect my life here in the Bureau of Prison’s Communication Management Unit (CMU). Finally, my friends will be saved from the endless litany of letters about what TV shows I watch, Prison drama, my workouts and books I have read that week!

In February, after completing 18 months of “clear conduct” here, I requested a transfer to a “normal” prison (that is, one without punitive restrictions on my contact with the outside world). My request was denied on April 5th and did not come as a major shock. The written rejection notice did not offer a reason for my denial; instead just informing me that I can apply again at my next “program review.” I am not the only one who has had my transfer request denied and who faces the paradox of being held here without any explanation why. Despite twenty months of “clear conduct” (the BoP term for no disciplinary sanctions) and participation in classes, I am still being held here at the government’s discretion.

On March 30th, the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) filed suit on my behalf against the BoP regarding this unit (*Aref v. Holder*, D.C. Circuit). The suit raises a number of substantial constitutional claims and violations of federal law. Also included in the suit are fellow prisoners at this CMU, the other CMU at Terre Haute, my wife Jenny and another prisoner’s wife. The suit is asking for injunctive relief—that the court intervene and fix these constitutional violations. While this is a positive step in addressing the massive problems with the concept of the Communication Management Unit, the journey through the courts is a slow and somewhat tedious affair.

Just one week after the lawsuit was filed, the Bureau of Prisons released proposed rules for the CMU, opening a 60-day comment period for the public (BoP Docket #

1148-P, Communication Management Units). The unfortunate part of this proposal is that they represent a huge reduction in communication for prisoners. The new rules would set the following standards:

- 1) Only one phone call per month (to immediate family).
- 2) Only one hour, non-contact, visit per month (with immediate family).
- 3) Only one, 3 page letter, to and from a single recipient per week.

These rules are remarkable and fly in the face of the BoP's supposed ideas on the positive aspects of communication between prisoners and their community, family members and friends. The proposed rules are far worse than the current conditions, and current conditions are bad enough. I can assure you that attempting to maintain healthy, close relationships on 2 phone calls a week and 8 hours of non-contact visits a month is exceedingly difficult and expensive. (My family lives 1,100 miles from this prison creating bills of \$600+ for a two day trip). The irony is that most of the men in this unit do not even have communication violations so why the reason for the new rules? Normally, a government agency (such as the BoP) proposes rules *before* implementing a policy. In this case, the CMU has been in operations for nearly three years. Not only is that an obvious violation of federal law but the proposed rules have an air of mean-spiritedness and retribution.

You can submit public comment on these proposed rules easily online at www.regulations.gov or by reading the rules online and sending your comments to:

Rules Unit, Office of General Counsel
Bureau of Prisons
320 First Street, NW.
Washington, DC 20534

Please be cordial and to the point with your comments. If you need help or talking points for your comments, do not hesitate to contact the organizations below.

Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) www.ccrjustice.org, 212-614-6480.
Family & Friends of Daniel McGowan www.supportdaniel.org
Daniel McGowan
63794-053

USP Marion CMU
PO Box 1000
Marion, IL 62959

Filed under Human Rights, Prison, Repression, Social Justice | No Comments »

2009

Running Down the Walls

Source

by Daniel on September 14th, 2009

Today, on a muggy day at USP Marion, I ran 5K to coincide with the Anarchist Black Cross Federation's annual "Running down the Walls" benefit run in Los Angeles (with other runs & bike rides around the continent). Because of this year's timing, I did it solo (more than 2/3 of the men here fast during the Muslim month of Ramadan). Despite an allergy flare up and an absurd amount of smoke from a nearby wood burning stove, I finished the 5K in 33:04. I have to disclaim that time though! You should know that our yard's path is only 1/18th of a mile requiring me to run 55 laps and make a fairly hard turn 220 times! It was a great day to run and I started my run at 12PM so that I would be running at the same time as the folks in LA. I thought a lot today about all the others participating in the run and how this isolation I feel is really an illusion—that there are many others out there that struggle against this cruel and unjust system. My thoughts are with all of you out there struggling for a better world and my fellow political prisoners (and all prisoners for that matter). I hope all of the runs were successful today and that a lot of funds were raised to booster the important work the ABCF does.

Please check out <http://www.abcf.net> for more information.

Thanks for all your support,

Daniel

Filed under Prison, Repression | No Comments »

Exposing "Little Guantanamo": Inside the CMU by Daniel McGowan, Spring 2009

Source

by Daniel on June 8th, 2009

As of May 2009, I have been at USP Marion's "Communication Management Unit" or CMU, for roughly nine months and now is a good time to address the misconceptions (and the silence) regarding this unit. I want to offer a snapshot of my day-to-day life here as well as some analysis of what the existence of CMUs in the federal prison system

implies.¹ It is my hope that this article will partially fill the void of information that exists concerning the CMU, will help dispel rumors, and will inspire you to support those of us on the inside fighting the existence of these isolation units— in the courts and in the realm of public opinion.

It is best to start from the beginning— or at least where my story and the CMU meet. My transfer here is no different from that of many of the men here who were living at Federal Correctional Institutions (normal prisons) prior to the genesis of the CMUs. On May 12, 2008, on my way back from a decent lunch, I was told to report to “R&D” (receiving and discharge). I was given two boxes and half an hour to pack up my meager possessions. After complying I was placed in the SHU (secure housing unit or “hole”) and put on a bus the next day. There was no hearing and no information given to me or my attorneys— only after a day was I told I was on my way to Marion, Illinois’ CMU.²

Hearing the term “CMU” made my knees buckle as it drummed up some memory I had of the infamous ‘control units’ at Marion (closed in 1995 and replaced by Florence ADX: the lone Federal “Supermax” prison. Then it hit me. The lawyers, in challenging the application of the terrorist enhancement in my case made the prescient argument that if I receive the enhancement, the Bureau of Prisons (BoP) would use that to place me in the CMU at FCI Terre Haute, Indiana (at the time just 5 months old).³ In fact, on the way to FCI Sandstone in August 2007, I not only saw the CMU but met one of its residents while in transit. Let me back up and offer a brief history of the Communication Management Units.

The CMU I reside in, at USP Marion, received its first prisoner in May 2008 and when I arrived, held about 17 men, the majority of whom were Muslim. Currently, the unit has 25, with a capacity of 52 cells. In April 2009, we received seven new people, all of whom were from the CMU at FCI Terre Haute. The unit is overwhelmingly Muslim with 18 men identifying as such. Most, but not all of the prison,⁴ have so-called terrorism cases. According to a BoP spokesperson, the unit “will not be limited to inmates convicted of terrorism-related cases through all of the prisoners fit that description.”⁵ Others have prison disciplinary violation or allegations related to communication and the misuse of telephones etc. Here, almost everyone has a terrorism related case— whether it is like my case (destruction of property characterized as ‘domestic terrorism’) or conspiracy and ‘providing material aid’ cases.

Before the Marion CMU opened, there was the original CMU, opened in December 2006 at the former death row at FCI Terre Haute.⁶ According to early articles, the unit was intended for “second tier terrorism inmates, most of them Arab Muslims and a less restrictive version of the Supermax in Florence, Colorado.”⁷

Additionally, BoP Director Harley Lappin, in a July 2008 hearing on the 2009 BoP budget request, said this about the CMUs:

A lot of the more serious offenders, terrorists, were housed at ADX Florence. So, we are ramping up two communications management units that are less restrictive

but will ensure that all mail and phone calls of the offenders are monitored on a daily basis.⁸

Terre Haute's CMU has 36 men (27 of whom are Muslim) and is roughly comparable to Marion's CMU.⁹ The rest of this place focuses on the latter, in which I have resided and of which I have seen firsthand.

You may be curious about just what a CMU actually is. From my correspondence, I can tell that many correspondents do not know much about what goes on here. I hope this can clear up any misperceptions. According to the BoP,

The CMU is [sic] established to house inmates who, due to their current offense of conviction, offense conduct or other verified information, require increased monitoring of communication between inmates and persons in the community in order to protect the safety, security, and orderly operations of Bureau facilities and protect the public...The CMU is a self-contained general population housing unit.¹⁰

There are, of course, alternate views to the above definition including the belief that the CMUs are Muslim units, a political prisoner unit (similar to the HSU operated by the BoP in the 80's,¹¹ and a punishment unit.

The CMUs have an extremely high Muslim population; here at Marion, it is 65-75%. An overrepresentation of *any* one demographic in a prison raises constitutional issues of equal protection as well as safety issues. Nowhere in the BoP will you find any group represented in such extreme disproportion. To counter these claims, the BoP brought in a small number of non-Muslims to be used as proof that the units are not strictly Muslim (an interesting note is that some of the Muslim men here have cases unrelated to terrorism). Does the inclusion of six people that are non-Muslim really negate the claim of segregation though? What are the criteria for determining who comes to the CMU? The BoP claims there are 211 international terrorists (and 1000 domestic terrorists) in their system.¹² Yet, the CMUs have no more than 60 men at the present time. Where are the rest of these people? How does the BOP determine who of those 1200 are sent to a CMU and who to normal prisons? These are questions that need to be asked— in court and in the media.

Many of the men here (both Muslim and non) are considered political prisoners in their respective movements and have been engaged in social justice, religious organizations, charities and humanitarian efforts.¹³ Another conception of the CMU is that it is a location designed to isolate us from our movements and to act as a deterrent for others from those movements (as in 'step outside the line and you too will end up there').¹⁴ The intended effect of long-term housing of this kind is a profound sense of dislocation and alienation. With your mail, email, phones, and visits monitored and no human touch allowed at the visits, it is difficult to feel a connection to "the streets." There is historical evidence of the BoP utilizing political prisons— despite the fact that the Department of Justice refuses to acknowledge the concept of political prisoners in US prisons, choosing to call us "criminal" instead.

The Lexington High Security Unit (HSU) was one such example. Having opened its 16-bed facilities in 1988 and housing a number of female political prisoners,¹⁵ the HSU

functioned as an isolation unit— underground, bathed in fluorescence, and limited interaction with staff. In the opinion of Dr. Richard Korn, speaking on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union, the unit’s goal was:

...to reduce prisoners to a state of submission essential for their ideological conversion. That failing, the next objective is to reduce them as efficient, self-directing antagonists. That failing, the only alternative is to destroy them by making them destroy themselves.¹⁶

After an arduous campaign by human rights advocates and supporters, the BoP capitulated, stating it would close its facility (when it did not, it was sued).¹⁷ The judge ruled that the plaintiffs were illegally designated based on their past political affiliations, statements and political beliefs.¹⁸ The unit was closed and the women were transferred to other prisons.

The correlations between the HSU and CMU are many and seem to have some of the same goals as well as methods used to designate us here. Knowing they are dealing with people committed to ideals and the movements they are a part of, we were placed here in order to weaken those connections and harm our relationships. An example is the horrendous strain that the CMU puts on our familial relations— especially our marriages. It was certainly considered by the architects of the CMU that preventing visits that allow human touch for long-term prisoners would have a disastrous impact on our relationships and would lead to weaker inmates.

Finally, the CMU can be viewed as “the stick”— a punitive unit for those who don’t play ball or who continue to express political beliefs anathema to the BoP or the US government. Although I am not aware of the BoP’s criteria for sending people here (due to their refusal to release *specific* CMU information), it is curious who is and who is not here. Out of roughly 18 codefendants in my criminal case, I am the *only* one at a CMU (the remainder of them are at low and medium security prisons). The same goes for a member of the SHAC7 campaign, Andrew Stepanian, one of 6 defendants in his case who was sent here for the last 6 months of his sentence.¹⁹ Other men here have codefendants at the Terre Haute CMU while others have codefendants at normal federal prisons. Despite numerous Freedom of Information Requests,²⁰ the BoP refuses to grant the documents that specify the rules governing transfer to the CMU. Remember, hardly any of the men here have received any disciplinary violations and some have been in general population over 15 years! How can someone be OK in general population for that long and then one day be seen as a communication threat?

So, I have hypothesized about the goals of the CMU. Let me discuss the *many* problems and injustices associated with the existence of the CMUs.

Due process

More appropriately, a lack thereof. A term I never thought much about before my imprisonment, due process is:

...the conduct of legal proceedings according to established rules and principles for the protection and enforcement of private rights, including notice and *the right to hearing before a tribunal* [my emphasis] with the power to decide the case.²¹

I was moved from FCI Sandstone, against my will and at a moment's notice, with no hearing and thus no chance to contest the reason for my transfer. A FOIA request recently received states I was redesignated May 6th, my transfer was signed the next day and I was moved on May 13th with the reason given as "program participation".²² Since I got here, I have not had a hearing to contest the claims made in the "Notice to Inmate of Transfer to CMU, " ²³ some of which were woefully inaccurate. Instead, I was told I can utilize the administrative remedy process (which I have done to no avail) and request a transfer after 18 months of "clean conduct".²⁴

The irony is that all prisoners who violate prison rules are subject to a series of disciplinary hearings in which they could offer their defense. For legal units such as Florence ADX (Supermax) or the control unit program, there exists a codified set of rules and hearings for transfer to these locations .²⁵ The BoP has deliberately ignored this process and has instead transferred us to this special, brand-new CMU without due process. My notice of transfer was given to me 12 days after I arrived!

Similar to the callous disregard for due process (and the US Constitution), there is no "step down" process for the CMU. Unlike the ones that exist at Florence ADX, control units or even the gang units, the CMU has no stages, no requisite amount of time we are to spend here before being sent back to a normal prison.²⁶

Because these preceding programs are specifically for prison misbehavior, there is a logical and orderly way to finish the program and eventually transfer. For us, the BoP has set up a paradox— if we are here for our offense conduct, which we cannot ever change, how can we reasonably leave the unit? In its "Admissions and Orientation" guide for Marion's CMU, here is what they say:

Every new commitment to the CMU will be evaluated by his unit team regarding his suitability for incarceration in this institution. If, for some reason, the inmate is deemed not acceptable for confinement in this unit, he will be processed as expeditiously as possible...²⁷

[I am still roughly 10 months from my 18-month period in which I must wait before requesting a transfer. Considering the fact that all my remedies have been denied, I am not hopeful about this.]

CMU as Secret

In addition to the due process and transfer issues, there is the secretive and illegal manner that the CMU was created (Note: for historical perspectives, it needs to be stated that the CMU was established roughly halfway through the second term of George W. Bush and his Attorney General Alberto Gonzales).

In April 2006, the BoP proposed a "Limited Communication for Terrorist Inmates" policy,²⁸ which suggested new restrictions for "terrorists" and "terrorism related inmates" such as:

- 1) One 6-page letter per week.
- 2) One 15-minute phone call a month.
- 3) One 1-hour visit a month.²⁹

A coalition of civil rights organizations signed a letter of protest criticizing the proposed rules and raising numerous constitutional, practical and ethical objectives.³⁰ The outcry appears to have caused the BoP to reconsider it and just 6 months later, open the CMU at FCI Terre Haute quietly.³¹ Since the BoP never sought public comment on the new CMU, it certainly appears to be a violation of the Administrative Procedural Act (APA),³² an argument a federal judge in Miami raised in response to a prisoner's legal challenge to transfer to the CMU.³³

The unit is functionally an open secret. While the BoP circumvented the standard public comment (and feedback process), it has sought to get around this by describing the CMU as a "self-contained general population unit,"³⁴ implying that the unit is legally and penally no different than a normal unit at an FCI. There is no mention of the CMU on the BoP's website (ww.bop.gov) or USP Marion's subpage on the same site.³⁵ You will not find extensive Congressional hearings on the subject— other than a July 2008 subcommittee hearing in which it appears that the BoP director was not fully forthcoming on the CMU³⁶. Letters here are stamped "USP Marion," not CMU, and the unit is called "I Unit" by staff. (An interesting anecdote: while on transit in Winter 2009, I met men from the FCI here and asked them what they knew about I Unit. Without hesitation, they said, "That's where the terrorists are." They informed me this is what BoP Staff routinely told them).

Media queries are met with silence or vague information. Requests by the media to interview me by coming to Marion have been denied— due to it "being detrimental to the safety, security and good order of the institution."³⁷ There still is no Program Statement on the CMU— a legal requirement, outlining the specific rules of the CMU and its designation criteria.

Because of this, and the general refusal of the BoP to hand over relevant documents through FOIA, it is impossible to determine the *specific* reasons why one is sent here— and thus, how to contest this process.³⁸ In effect, the CMU was created on the fly, with no eye toward legality; they are free to operate it in whatever manner they choose.

Communication Management (The promotion of isolation and alienation)

The most painful aspect of this unit, to me, is how the CMU restricts my contact with the world beyond these walls. It is difficult for those who have not known prison to understand what a lifeline contact with our family and friends is to us. It is our link to the world— and our future (for those of us who are fortunate enough to have release dates). Prison authorities and architects are well aware that those with strong family ties and in good communication with their loved ones are well behaved and have significantly lower rates of recidivism. The BoP, in theory, recognizes this by claiming they try to situate us within 500 miles of our homes. Mostly, this is a cruel farce for many prisoners— I have not been within 1000 miles of my family in 2 years.

The most Orwellian aspects of the CMU are in how they manage our communications:

A) *Telephones*- at my previous prison, I was able to use the phones for 300 minutes a month— days, nights, weekends and holidays— basically at any point I was not in my

housing unit (6am-10pm). Here, we receive *one 15-minute phone call a week*. The call can only take place between 8am and 2:30pm, never on weekends or holidays and must be scheduled one and a half weeks in advance (we can choose a back-up number to call but if neither picks up, we don't get a call).³⁹ The call is live-monitored and recorded. Not only do we receive one fifth of the minutes granted to other federal prisoners but the call is also very trying for our families— all of whom have day jobs and many of whom have children in school. The CMU requires calls be made in English only— a difficult demand considering over half of the men here speak English as a second language (this restriction is not present at other federal prisons).

B) *Visits*- At FCI Sandstone, I received up to eight visiting days a month (56 hours)— contact visits in which I could embrace my wife, play cards with my nieces and share vending machine food with my visitors. These visits were my lifeline. I got about twelve of them in eight months and it aided in my adjustment to prison.

The CMU restricts our visits to *one four-hour non-contract visit* a month. One short visit through two inches of plate glass with cameras hanging overhead and my visitors stuffed in a four-and-a-half by three-and-a-half-foot stuffy booth— a tight squeeze for two.⁴⁰ The visits can only take place on weekdays from 8am-2pm— no more Christmas or thanksgiving visits— and worse, no physical contact (Consider what it would be like to have no contact with your loved ones. What if you couldn't hug or kiss your lover, partner, wife, husband? What would that do to you?) I find myself riddled with guilt when I ask friends to spend \$500 to fly across the country, drive three hours (and repeat) for a four-hour non-contact visit. I'm lucky though, having people who will do this. Many of the men here can't afford it or don't want to subject their children to this reality.

C) *Mail*- We can only send out mail once a day and we cannot visit the mail room to send out packages. We are one-hundred-percent reliant on the one staff person who deals with our mail to do so and sending a box home is a laborious procedure. We must leave our envelopes unsealed so that staff can read, copy, scan and send to whatever other agency studies our correspondence. A letter to NYC takes roughly seven to nine days (which should take five). Letters sent abroad, especially those not written in English, could take a month or more— a common complaint of some of my fellow prisoners.

Staff here has an interesting reading of the rules governing legal mail leading to the charge that they open our legal mail (this is the subject of an administrative remedy I filed with the BoP Central Office in Washington DC). The rule states that the lawyer's name must be clearly identified and that the envelope must say "Special Mail- Open only in the presence of inmates"⁴¹ and yet staff has opened my legal mail that said "Law Offices of Jane Doe" stating that it should have said, "Jane Doe, Attorney at Law"! The staff looks for any reason to disqualify our legal mail as protected and gather intelligence this way. In doing so, they violate the sanctity of the attorney-client confidentiality principle.

Most of my violations have been petty— a package has more than twenty pieces of paper or a friend kindly enclosed stamps. A few instances though amount to censorship and a limiting of political expression and dialogue. See Appendix B for a detailed discussion of these instances.

D) *Media Contact*- Although requests have been made to interview people in the CMU, none have been granted to date. This is a violation of the spirit of the BoP's own media policy.⁴² There is an imperative on the Bureau's part to control and ultimately suppress information on the CMU from making it to a mass audience.

Daily life at the CMU

Neither one of the two CMUs were built for long-term habitation. The Marion CMU was the site of the Secure Housing Unit (SHU), the USP that closed here in 2005. Terre Haute's CMU is in "D-wing"— the site of the former federal death row.

The CMU was seemingly converted to its current use with the addition of televisions, steel tables, and new wiring and yet it is not suitable for long-term use due to its "open cell" design (i.e. with bars). With twenty-five prisoners, our movements are restricted to two housing ranges (hallways about one hundred by twelve feet); a recreation range where we also eat (consisting of seven cells with a computer, typewriter, barber shop, religious library, social library, art room and recreational equipment); and a small rec yard (all concrete, a lap equals one-eighteenth of a mile, four cages with two basketball hoops, one handball court, a weather awning with tables and some sit-up benches). We are lucky to be visited daily by a resident bird population of doves and blackbirds, and overhead, the occasional hawk or falcon (Ironically, as I write this, I overhear warnings from staff that if we continue to feed the birds, we will receive violations). The appearance of the yard with its cages, concrete, and excessive barbed wire has earned it nickname "Little Guantanamo" (of course a punitive unit with seventy-five percent Muslims also contributes to the name as well).

The conditions here are not dire— in fact, the horror stories I have heard over the last two years have convinced me it is far worse at many prisons and yet, I believe it is important to be descriptive and accurate— to dispel fears (about violence, for instance) but also to demonstrate just how different life is for us at the CMU.

There are many things we lack here that other prisons in the federal system have to offer:

1- *A residential drug/alcohol program*— despite at least one person here having completion of it ordered by the court.

2- *Enough jobs for the prisoners here*- There is not nearly enough jobs for all the men here and most are extremely low paying.

3- *UNICOR*- This is Federal Prison Industries which has shops at many federal prisons (including this one outside the CMU). These jobs pay much more, allow men to pay their court fees, restitution and child support and, as the BoP brags, teaches people job skills.

4- *Adequate educational opportunities*- Until recently, we did not have GED or vocational programs. Due to inmate pressure and persistence, we now have both of those as well as a few prisoner-taught classes but no college courses at all.

5- *Access to staff on a daily basis*— At other federal prisons, you are able to approach staff members at lunch every day, including the Warden. Here, we get (at most) two quick walk-throughs a week, usually taking place early in the morning. You are often left waiting days to resolve a simple question.

6- *Law library access*- We have a very small law library here with only twenty-five percent of the books required *by law*. We can only request books twice weekly and those are only delivered if the other nine hundred prisoners at the adjacent Medium are not using them. We lack Federal Court and Supreme Court reports as well as books on Immigration Law (fifty percent or more of the men here face deportation). This lack of access makes for an arduous and ineffective research path.

7- *Computers*- We have four computers for our email system (two for reading, one for printing and one that we were told would be for legal but it still isn't working. Unlike my previous prison, where we had forty computers with a robust computer-class program, or like other prisons that teach a vocational computer course, we have no such thing.

8- *Access to general population*- Being in an isolation unit makes for a situation in which we cannot have organized sports leagues and tournaments due to not having enough people at all. This may not seem crucial but sports are a very useful diversion from the stress of prison life and separation.

After reading the preceding sections, perhaps like me you are wondering what really is the purpose of the CMU. In short, the CMU is Florence ADX-LITE for those men whose security points are low and present no real problems to staff. From my interactions with the men here, I can say with certainty, that people here are remarkably well-behaved and calm— many without any disciplinary violations. If these men, like myself, don't get in trouble, and have been in the system for some time, why are we here? Consider my case.

My short time in prison prior to coming to the CMU consisted of two months at MDC Brooklyn and eight months at FCI Sandstone. I had never gotten in trouble and spent my days as a clerk in psychology, working toward a Master's degree, reading, writing and exercising. My goal was to get closer to home and my loved ones. In April 2008, I filed a "hardship transfer" request due to my mother's illness and her inability to travel to Minnesota to visit me. I had my team meeting, and my security points were lowered. Weeks later, I was moved to the CMU.

The irony is that I was moved to the CMU to have my communication managed, but what changed in that one year to justify this move? If I was a danger, then why did the BoP house me in a low-security prison? The same applies to many of the men here— some have been in general population for twenty years and then suddenly a need to manage their communication is conjured up. During my pre-CMU time, I had used 3500 phone minutes and sent hundreds of letters. If there was a problem with my

communication, shouldn't the BoP have raised this with me? My notice stating their rationale for placing me here attributed it to me "being a member and leader in the ELF and ALF" and "communicating in code."⁴³ But if this is true, then shouldn't I have been sent to the CMU as soon as I self-reported to prison in July 2007?

The CMUs were crafted and opened under the Bush administration as some misguided attempt to be tough on the "war on terror". This unit contains many prisoners from cases prosecuted during the hyper-paranoid and over-the-top period after 9/11 and the passage of the USA Patriot Act.⁴⁴ The number of prosecutions categorized as terrorism-related more than doubled to reach 1,200 in 2002.⁴⁵ It seemed that every other week, there was some plot uncovered by overzealous FBI agents— in Lackawanna, NY, Miami, FL, Portland, OR, and Virginia and elsewhere (never mind the illegal wire-taps and unscrupulous people used in these cases). These cases may not be headlines anymore but these men did not go away— they were sent to prison and, when it was politically advantageous for Bush, transferred to the CMUs. The non-Muslim populations of these units (although definitely picked judiciously) were sent there to dispel charges that the CMUs were *exclusively* Muslim units.

The codified rationale for all prisoners being transferred here are "contact with persons in community require heightened control and reviews"⁴⁶ and "your transfer to this facility for greater communication management is necessary to the safe, secure, and orderly function of Bureau institutions...". Should an increase in monitoring of communication mean a decrease in privileges? If the goal is to manage our contact with the outside world, shouldn't the BoP hire enough staff so that we can maintain the same rights and privileges as other prisoners (since the party line is that we are *not* here for punishment)? The reality is the conditions, segregation, lack of due process and such are punishment regardless of whether the BoP admits it or not.

Forward!

Where to from here, then? Does the new President and his Attorney General take issue with segregation? Will Obama view the CMU, as he did with Guantanamo Bay, as a horrible legacy of his predecessor and close it? Many people are hopeful for an outcome like that. On April 7th, 2009, Mr. Obama, while in Turkey, said, "The United States will not make war on Islam," and that he wanted to "extend the hand of friendship to the Muslim world."⁴⁷ While that sounds wonderful, what does that look like in concrete terms? Will he actualize that opinion by closing the CMU? Or will he marry the policy of Bush and condone a secret illegal set of political units for Muslims and activists? What of the men here? Will he transfer us back to normal prisons and review the outrageous prosecutions of many of the CMU detainees? If it can be done with (former) Senator Ted Steven's case, it can be done here.

While lawsuits have been filed in both Illinois and Indiana federal courts, what is needed urgently is for these units to be dragged out into the open. I am asking for your help and advocacy in dealing with this injustice and the mindset that allows a CMU to exist. Please pursue the resource section at the end of this article and consider doing something. I apologize for the length of this piece— it was suggested to me (by people

way smarter than myself) that it would be best to start from the beginning and offer as many details as possible. I hope I gave you a clearer idea of what's going on here. Thank you for all your support and love— your letters are a bright candle in a sea of darkness.

In struggle, with love, Daniel McGowan

#63794-053

USP Marion-CMU

PO Box 1000

Marion, IL 62959I read two passages below while writing this article. They fit well here:

“After climbing a great hill, one only finds more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest...But I can rest only for a moment, for with freedom comes responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not yet ended.” — Nelson Mandela

Acknowledgements

*I read once, perhaps in 9th grade English, that “no man [sic] is an island”. If anything I have learned *that* over the last four years! Eternal gratitude and love to my wife, partner and best friend Jenny, for everything. My family, friends and community have been there for me unfailingly— especially the NYC crew. Special thanks to Josh Raisler Cohn, Matt Strugar, Lauren Reagan and Rachel Meeropol for their endless legal advocacy, analysis of the CMU and friendship. Of course, thank you to all the CMU prisoners for feedback and the laughs.

Appendix A: Marion CMU Demographic

Number of prisoners = 26

Organized by race/national origin

Middle Eastern-10

African-American-8

White-5

Latino-2

Native American-1

Asian American-0

Appendix B: Mail Violation Examples

In October 2008, I received a mail violation for the Jericho Movement's *Freedom Times* – a newspaper by and about the political prisoner support organization. At various levels, I was informed it was rejected either due to its ‘divisive’ nature or because it contained articles about other inmates. The BoP's faulty logic was that reading these articles would contribute to the “detriment of security, safety & good order of the institution.” (original mail violation, October 2008.)

The divisiveness argument is an interesting one given that I receive (and the unit receives) what may easily be defined as ‘divisive’ articles in the op-ed/editorial pages of the *NY Times*, *USA Today* and *Chicago Tribune*. There are point-counter-point lambasting of Congress and the President and extreme conservative/religious perspectives represented in these screeds.(e.g. against abortion, casting queer people as sinners etc).

But for some reason, the BoP allows these publications in and deems them relevant to a safe and acceptable dialogue.

My assumption about the articles in the *Freedom Times* (I still haven't yet seen it) is that Jericho is critical of the BoP and the prison industrial complex that exists in this country (Currently housing 2.3 million people in prisons/jails and 5 million on probation/parole, leading to the sick statistic that *1 in 31* US adults are under criminal supervision. See the Pew Center's website & reports for more info. Also, the Jericho Movement argues forcefully yet legally that there are political prisoners in US prisons and demands their amnesty (I was granted PP status by Jericho in 2007). In denying me this newspaper, they are actually cutting me off from a base of support. In the past 8 months, I have received other articles and newspapers that contain articles by/about other prisoners but they take place in the context of safe/acceptable mainstream publications, not newspapers that criticize the BoP, prisons and that argue for the release of political prisoners.

Another example. On 4/15/09, I received a mail violation for the publication *Rolling Thunder* by the Crimethinc Ex-Worker's Collective. It was denied based on "violence" depicted on roughly 11 pages. It's ironic that I can receive any number of corporate newspapers detailing the riots at the April 2009 NATO protests in Strasborg, France, the G20 protest in London and police overreactions and violence at last summer's DNC and RNC mobilizations. The reason is the mainstream publications are "objective," while Crimethinc's publication "encourages or promotes violence". Crimethinc is being held to an extreme level of scrutiny based on their obvious radical beliefs and unflinching support of myself and other ecological and animal rights prisoners.

The overall effect of these mail violations is a furthering of the alienation processes that the CMU engenders. On some level, I am quite clueless about what is happening in our movement(s) and on the streets, and have to rely way too much on mainstream and shallow sources of news (a point made by Rob Thaxton, ironically, in a past copy of *Rolling Thunder*).

Resources YOU can educate yourself on the CMU!

Articles / Media1. "Little Guantanamo – Secret 'CMU' prisons designed to restrict communication of jailed Muslims and activists with outside world." *Democracy Now*, 4/17/09.

2. "Secretive US Prison Units to house Muslim, Animal Rights & Environmental Activists" by Will Potter. greenisthenewred.com, 4/14/09.

3. "Daniel McGowan – Another victim in 'War on Terror'" by Stephen Lendman. sjlendman.blogspot.com, April 2009.

4. "Guantanamo at Home – terrorist suspects are held in US prisons on dubious evidence under inhumane conditions" by Jeanne Theoharis. *The Nation*, 4/20/09.

5. "The View from Here" column by Carl Strock. *Schenectady Daily Gazette*. www.dailygazette.com

6. "Terrorist Prison – Eco-activist sent to secretive new prison" by Camilla Mortenson, *Eugene Weekly*, 12/04/08.

7. “Dr. Rafil A Dhafir at Terre Haute prison’s new communication management unit” by Katherine Hughes. *Washington Report on Middle Eastern Affairs*, 6/18/07.

8. “Facility holding terrorism inmates limits communication” by Dan Eggen, *Washington Post*, 2/25/07.

9. “Documents show secretive US prison program isolating Muslim, Middle Eastern prisoners” by Jennifer Van Bergen. *the raw story* (online blog), 2/16/07.

Weblinks - Prisoners at the CMU

www.supportdaniel.org, www.supportdaniel.org/cmu (specific CMU info)

www.yassinaref.com

www.aliasad.org

www.freekhalidawan.com

hamidhayat.blogspot.com

www.dhafirtrial.net (has CMU info)

Supportive Organizations

Civil Liberties Defense Center – www.cldc.org

Center for Constitutional Rights – www.ccrjustice.org

National Lawyers Guild – www.nlg.org

Nuclear Resister – www.nuclearresister.org

ACLU National Prisoner Project – www.aclu.org/prisons

Demand Change!

You can contact your elected officials and demand they shut the CMU down

President Barack Obama

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue

Washington, DC 20500

Attorney General Eric Holder

US Department of Justice

950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW

Washington, DC 20530

Also, www.senate.gov and www.house.gov (type in your address to get your rep’s contact}

Ask other Organizations for their support!

You can contact human rights groups and urge hem to address the CMU and join legal efforts to close it. Please be polite.

1. Human Rights Watch - www.hrw.org

2. Amnesty International - www.amnestyusa.org

3. Stop MAX coalition - www.afsc.org/stopmax

*The following organizations signed a letter opposing the “limited communication for terrorist inmates’ policy the BoP tried to pass a few years back. **Contact them** and let them know that plan was indeed put forth in the form of the CMU and *urge them* to address it.

1. Center for National Security Studies - www.cnss.org

2. Comité Pro Derechos Humanos de Puerto Rico - presopoliticospuertorriquenos.org
3. DC Prisoners' Legal Services Project - www.washlaw.org/projects/dcprisoners_rights/default.htm
4. FLA Institutional Legal Services - (352) 375-2494
5. Interfaith Prisoners of Conscience Project - (847) 328 1543
6. Legal Aid Society - www.legal-aid.org
7. Office of Public Defender-Maryland - www.opd.state.md.us
8. The Multiracial Activist - www.multiracial.com
9. National Boricua HR Network - boricuahumanrights.org
10. NW Constitutional Rights - (503) 295-6400
11. Penal Reform International - www.penalreform.org
12. People's Law Office - www.peopleslawoffice.com
13. *Prison Legal News* - www.prisonlegalnews.org
14. Sylvia Rivera Law Project - www.srlp.org
15. Prisoners' Legal Services of New York - www.plsny.org
16. Uptown People's Law Center - (773) 769-1411

Mainstream Media

You can contact the media and request they investigate and expose the CMUs. Letters to the Editors and op-eds are good ways of doing this. Some outlets:

- The New York Times – www.nytimes.com
- LA Times - www.latimes.com
- The Washington Post - www.washingtonpost.com
- Seattle Times - seattletimes.nwsourc.com
- San Francisco Chronicle - www.sfgate.com
- The Oregonian - www.oregonlive.com/oregonian
- Indianapolis Star - www.indystar.com
- The New Yorker - www.newyorker.com
- Newsweek - www.newsweek.com
- CNN – www.cnn.com
- BBC - www.bbc.co.uk
- MSNBC - www.msnbc.msn.com
- Chicago Tribune - www.chicagotribune.com
- USA Today - www.usatoday.com
- Houston Chronicle – www.chron.com
- Boston Globe - www.boston.com/bostonglobe/
- Village Voice - www.villagevoice.com
- Hartford Courant - www.courant.com

Independent/Alternative Media

- Pacifica Radio - www.pacifica.org
- National Public Radio – www.npr.org
- Counterpunch - www.counterpunch.org

Prison Legal News - www.prisonlegalnews.org

Mother Jones - www.motherjones.com

Utne Reader - www.utne.com

Z Magazine - www.zmag.org/zmag

Upping the Anti - uppingtheanti.org

The Independent - www.independent.org

Your local pirate radio station - (US list)

Endnotes¹ As an introduction, for those unfamiliar with my case. I am serving an 84-month sentence in federal prison for arson & conspiracy for my role in 2 arsons claimed by the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) in 2001. I left the group in 2001, was indicted 12/7/05, pleaded to a non-cooperative plea agreement in 2006 & reported to prison in 7/07. I received a 'federal crime of terrorism' enhancement, 3 years of probation and 1.9 million USD in restitution. I am set for release on 6/2013.

² On the way to the CMU, I received a grand jury subpoena from Wisconsin. I refused to answer questions at the grand jury, was held in civil contempt for 8 days and, before my appeal made it to court, was released due to an indictment having been issued. That case has since been resolved with 3 plea agreements. More info can be found at <http://www.cldc.org>

³ Memorandum in Opposition to the Application of Terrorism Enhancement. US vs. McGowan, CR 06-60124-AA. Filed May 4, 2007.

⁴ "Facility holding terrorism inmates limits communication" Dan Eggen, *Washington Post*, 2/25/07.

⁵ We are 'prisoners.' 'Inmate' is the authorities' word for us.

⁶ Eggen article.

⁷ Much of the early information on the CMUs was due to the writings of Dr. Rafil Dhafir and the two articles cited in the 'Resources' section by Eggen/Van Bergen.

⁸ Testimony of Harley G. Lappin before House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce Justice, Science and Related Agencies. 110th Congress. July 2008.

⁹ Based on observations of men who were at FCI Terre Haute.

¹⁰ Institutional Supplement # MAR-5321.07A, November 13, 2008. CMU.

¹¹ Unpublished paper written by Josh Raisler Cohn. 2008.

¹² Lappin testimony before Congressional Subcommittee.

¹³ These movements include environmental, animal rights, tax resisters, white separatists, Muslim charities etc.

¹⁴ In my case, I ask 'deter from what'? At the time of my arrest, I was in acupuncture school, long divorced from ELF and focused on prisoner support, environmental justice and combating domestic violence.

¹⁵ Unpublished paper by Josh Raisler Cohn, pp8.

¹⁶ Dr. Richard Korn, 'Report on the Effects of Confinement in the Lexington High Security Unit.' August 25, 1987, pp19-20.

¹⁷ Unpublished paper by Josh Raisler Cohn.

¹⁸ *ibid*.

19 See <http://www.shac7.com> for background on that case

20 December 18, 2008 & March 10, 2009 letters from attorneys Matthew Strugar and Lauren Regan to FOIA/Privacy Act Section of BoP Office of General Counsel.

21 Blacks' Law Dictionary, Third pocket edition. Bryan A. Garner (ed).2006. p228.

22 BoP Transfer Order for D McGowan, April 2008.

23 'Notice to Inmate of Transfer to Communication Management Unit' dated 9/3/08 signed by Lisa J. W. Hollingsworth and J.S. Wilson.

24 The '18 months of clear conduct' is standard at all federal prisons yet no one here expects to receive a transfer on that date for reasons I will explore.

25 Code of Federal Regulation, 2 CFR 541 and Subpart D-Control Units

26 *ibid.*

27 Admissions & Orientation Handbook, USP Marion CMU, Revised June 2008.

28 BoP Docket No. 1135-P RIN 1120-AB35, 71 Fed. Reg. 16520-16525 (April 3, 2006).

29 *ibid.*

30 Coalition Letter to Bureau of Prisons re: Suppression of Prisoner Contacts, June 2006.

31 Van Bergen article.

32 -Title 5 USCC 551.

33 Jayyousi v. Mukasey, Lappin. Case 08-21310-civ-Cooke. Southern District of Florida-Miami.

34 Institutional Supplement USP Marion CMU.

35 Although it is called 'USP Marion', the USP closed in 2005 and the prison consists of a camp and a medium (the CMU being inside the medium).

36 Lappin testimony to Congressional Subcommittee.

37 Letter to Dean Kuipers, October 2008. Signed by Warden Hollingsworth.

38 This occurred despite President Obama's decision to release documents through FOIA at a higher pace than his predecessor.

39 'Reexamine Prison Unit for Muslims' by Carl Strock, Daily Gazette. 3/15/09.

40 The two I refer to are not out of the 'average' in size either-one 5 ft 11, the other 5 ft 6 and both slim.

41 28 CFR 540.18 Special Mail

42 Program Statement #1480.05,9/21,2000, News Media Contacts.

43 from 'Notice to Inmate of Transfer to CMU'

44 personal observation

45 Josh Raisler Cohn unpublished article. Cited from "How many Terrorists are There. The Escalation in So-Called Terrorism Prosecution." 16 Fed.Sent.R.38., pp.7 WL23269270 October 1, 2003.

46 from 'Notice to Inmate of Transfer to CMU'

47 "US 'is not and will never be at war with Islam,' Obama says" by Richard Wolf, USA Today, 4/7/09.

Filed under Human Rights, Prison, Repression, Social Justice | No Comments »

Support the Good Time Bill

Source

by Daniel on March 24th, 2009

Dear family and friends,

Greetings from the "Communication Management Unit" (CMU) at USP Marion. I hope this letter finds you well and enjoying the springtime weather.

I am writing you today to let you know about a piece of federal legislation introduced in Congress recently that has the potential to reduce my sentence-and many federal prisoners' sentences-by increasing the level of 'good time' credit we receive. **This bill, H.R. #1475**, also known as the Federal Work Incentive Act of 2009, introduced by Representative Danny Davis (IL) has the potential to pass, given the dire economic situation and the Democrat-majority Congress. Nonetheless, *this bill needs your support*.

I am requesting that you write a letter to your House Representative urging them to co-sponsor the bill and vote for it when the time comes. (You can find out who your rep. is by typing your address into the tool at www.house.gov or www.goodtimebill.info/takeaction.html).

You can read the text of the bill, background information on the situation with federal prisons today, talking points and sample letters on the new website, www.goodtimebill.info This will be the only site you need to check for updates - feel free to contact them to get more involved at support@goodtimebill.info

When writing your Representative on this issue, it's OK to mention you know someone in federal prison but also, raise issues of cost and overcrowding as well [e.g. federal prisons are 40% overcrowded, costs U.S. taxpayers 7.6 billion annually and over 3/4 of the prisoners are serving time for non-violent offenses]. Currently, the population in federal prisons is 203,000 (and growing), parole was abolished 20 years ago and we serve about 85% of our sentence. This bill can begin to remedy these issues and give prisoners incentives for early release and good behavior.

You can sign up to receive more information or join the 'Good Time Bill' Facebook group by visiting the above website. In the next couple of months, we will be asking for you to follow your letter up with an email and before a vote, a simple two minute phone call to your Rep's office urging a 'yes' vote. *Please do your part in addressing a very relevant problem in our society by working to pass this bill* - it has the potential to reduce the sentence of the majority of the 203,000 peoples' sentences and return us to society to live productive lives.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for all the support. Be sure to check the www.goodtimebill.info website for more information, updates and more detailed information about the Good Time Bill.

With love from Little Guantanamo,

Daniel McGowan

#63794-053

USP Marion-CMU
PO Box 1000
Marion, IL 62959
Filed under Prison, Social Justice | No Comments »

Blog back up

Source

by Jenny on March 2nd, 2009

I've decided to post the blog entries on the site again. There's nothing new up but at least you can read the older entries.

Thanks for the support,

Jenny

Filed under Environmental, Eco, Friends, Prison, Repression, Social Justice, Uncategorized | No Comments »

2008

Focus on: Civil Liberties Defense Center (CLDC)

Source

by Daniel on April 15th, 2008

It is an unfortunate fact but during the course of my legal case, my codefendants and I received very little organizational support from the environmental and social justice movements. While prisoner support groups like ELPSN (UK) and ABCF and legal organizations like the National Lawyers Guild and Center for Constitutional Rights were quick to extend their solidarity, the environmental movements' silence was palpable. Other than Forest Ethics and some Earth First! groups, there was nothing but private support offered; an inability to organize a response to the terrorist enhancement and at worst, condemnation offered from NGO heavyweights, Rainforest Action Network, Ruckus Society and Greenpeace[1]. While this speaks volumes about our movement's conception of solidarity and the discomfort expressed by non-profit organizations in dealing with cases of property destruction, this is beyond the scope of this blog entry[2]. One group that did not act like the previously named groups and went well beyond the call of duty is the Civil Liberties Defense Center based out of Eugene, Oregon.

A tiny, young organization funded by environmental lawyer and activist (and I'm proud to say, a good friend of mine) Lauren Regan, the CLDC had the Operation Backfire defendants' backs from day one[3]. During the chaotic weeks following the first wave of arrests in December 2005, the CLDC made valiant attempts to find lawyers for all the defendants and quickly became a hub for families of defendants, lawyers and media contacts. Sitting in Lane County Jail, just 3 blocks from their office, I took solace knowing there were local lawyers advocating for us, keeping everyone well informed through conference calls and providing a local and long-term perspective (being that they lived in Eugene during the time of the conspiracy 1996-2001).

As the case progressed, I was freed on bail, returned to New York and relied on the CLDC's extensive court reports and posting of legal documents. I devoured the court reports and was able to determine which codefendant started to cooperate at which time and better determine my chances of success at trial. When people ask me what it is that defendants in those cases need, I reply that it's the unglamorous and tedious work that the CLDC does, sitting in court for hours concentrating hard and taking copious notes, getting those court reports and analysis posted on sites like Portland Indymedia, monitoring databases for relevant court documents, legal research, setting

up a local media collective and press strategy and visiting people regularly at the jail. The support was invaluable with the preparation of my defense and helped my wife, family and NYC support group make sense of the case and develop solid and powerful defense strategies.

Now, don't mistake the CLDC for some large, well-funded outfit based on their impressive resume. They are a few lawyers, an office and a dedicated crew of volunteers operating on a shoe-string budget. Since I have been imprisoned, I have relied on their work to keep up on Green Scare cases like Briana Waters and the campaign to repeal the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act. The CLDC is one model of how an organization can provide support for complex legal cases and free the defendants and their families to deal with the pressure of the case itself.

Please support the CLDC with their ongoing work if you are able. On their site, cldc.org, you can make a donation or send a check to them at Civil Liberties Defense Center/ 259 East 5th Avenue, Suite 300 A/ Eugene, Oregon 97401. Don't forget— if you are arrested for an offense like mine or face a grand jury subpoena, do not hesitate to call the CLDC at 541.687.9180 or the NLG's hotline at 888-NLG-ECOLAW.

[1]Many contacts were made by my support group to RAN and Ruckus Society directly through email, to people on RAN's board of directors and informally to staff of both organizations. RAN, at least, expressed support privately. Board member Jodie Evans, in particular, expressed support and committed to raising this issue with her executive director. A staff member of RAN committed to writing a letter from RAN regarding the terrorist enhancement issue and never did. Ruckus Society members/staff never once responded to emails, informal contacts, or info packets sent to them. Greenpeace's director, John Pascantando, took it further condemning us publically—you can read a criticism of that statement in an article by Michael Donnelly on Counterpunch.org from 2006.

[2]What is sad is that defendants in this case had professional relationships with RAN and Ruckus. I had worked on the Mitsubishi, Home Depot and U'wa campaigns RAN organized, getting arrested while committing civil disobedience and dedicating countless hours to these campaigns. I attended two of Ruckus Society's action camps including the 'Globalize This' pre-Seattle/WTO camp with many of my codefendants. We also worked with the Direct Action Network to some extent in the months leading up to the WTO protests in 1999 (DAN was partially a creation of RAN, Ruckus Society, and other groups). Additionally, a fugitive in my case was a former trainer for Ruckus and local organizers in Seattle, employed by RAN, and dealt with harrassment and search of their former residence by the FBI related to this case. The links were many but the support from these groups was sorely lacking.

[3]The CLDC's involvement begins well before December 7, 2005— the day of the first arrest in Operation Backfire. Lauren Regan represented an early target of the investigation in 2000/01 and participated in community efforts to protect the individuals who had received grand jury subpoenas.

Green Scare spring update

Source

by Daniel on April 14th, 2008

There have been many updates since my last dispatch regarding the various legal cases that comprise the Green Scare against environmental and animal rights activists in the U.S. Please show support for these people as they are all in a tough situation—either recently indicted and fighting their charges, convicted by a jury (which gives the illusion of fairness) or facing sentencing and on the way to prison. The support I received (and continue to receive) made all the difference in my outlook and helped me face the case with eyes open and head held high. My apologies for the length of this update but I think it's important to look beyond the urgent e-mails and remember, we're talking about people here— not just names and potential sentences.

*In February 2008, Earth First! activist Marie Mason found a GPS tracking device on her car and when she removed it, plain clothes police sprang out with guns drawn. They called her 16 year old daughter by name even questioning why her routine changed (indicating some level of surveillance). Weeks after this incident, Marie was arrested and indicted on charges related to two acts of property destruction (arson) claimed by the Earth Liberation Front in 1999. While I have not read anything about 2 of the other defendants (or a fifth person “known to the grand jury”), it appears that Marie's ex, Frank Ambrose, has pleaded guilty and is cooperating with the investigation. I remember Frank's name from years ago when he was charged with spiking trees (an action meant to deter trees from being cut, not to harm loggers) in Indiana. I have no clue whether the indictment is true or not but I feel strongly that we support Marie as she is from our movement and has worked on environmental campaigns for years (most recently, on the campaign to stop the I-69 NAFTA superhighway). Also, like my case in Oregon, prosecutors in Michigan have trotted out the “terrorism” word to scare people and inflame public opinion against Marie. Although the fires in question were intended to destroy property and not harm people (based on a reading of the communiqué and a solid analysis of the arrest at greenisthenewred.com), the government is using the ‘T-word’ to tie the case to the nationwide anti-terrorism hoopla. Marie is currently out on bail and on house arrest and can surely use your support. To get involved contact Friends of Marie Mason, Post Office Box 19065, Cincinnati, Ohio 45219, freemarie@riseup.net, or midwestgreenscare.org.

* Filmmaker, violin instructor and mother (of a three year old girl) Briana Waters was convicted by a jury of two counts of arson related to the May 2001 ELF arson of a genetic researcher's office at the University of Washington Center for Urban Horticulture. The trial saw two cooperating witnesses testify against Briana and many

names were dropped by both witnesses. Despite the fact that both witnesses' potential sentence was based on the quality of their testimony against Briana, the jury believed them and found her guilty of two counts of arson (but not the destructive device count which carried a 30 year mandatory minimum). She faces 5-10 years for each count of arson and is awaiting her May 28th sentencing at FDC-Sea-Tac (having lost her detention hearing due to unsubstantiated allegations made by another informant). Being separated from family is the worst part of prison and I'm sure she can use the support. You can find her address and ways to donate at supportbriana.org, PDX IMC, or through the CLDC.

* Environmentalist Tre Arrow was recently extradited from Canada to the U.S. following a years long battle for refugee status. Tre has vigorously maintained his innocence despite three cooperating witnesses' claims that he was involved in two arsons in 2001 (it should be noted that all three of these people did not name Tre until being questioned for hours and they all received 41 month sentences for 2 arsons— quite a low sentence). He has a large and lively support group and I expect the trial will be interesting and revealing of the U.S. government's myopia with these prosecutions. His website has a list of needs and his current prison address at trearrow.org.

* Long time activist Rod Coronado recently pleaded to charges in San Diego, California regarding a speech he gave in which he answered questions about his past actions. Although the jury hung in his trial, the prosecution, vindictively, threatened to re-file charges or indict him on new, similar charges related to another speech he made in Washington D.C. Rod received a sentence of 1 year, 1 day and with good time should be out in ten months. This is third trip to federal prison and from his statements, it is clear he wants to put this behind him. I first got involved in prisoner support in 1997 writing and fundraising for a legal fund Rod set up and have nothing but respect for him and his contributions to the movement. If you can get your hands on his old prison zines (Strong Hearts 1-4 available from inourhearts@gmail.com) do so, or better yet, get his prison fundraiser Flaming Arrows for \$10 from IEF Press Post Office Box 0372, Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514 or AK Press. supportrod.org

* Eric McDavid's sentencing has been postponed over five times— the latest is now set for May 8th. Eric faces up to 20 years on one count of conspiracy related to an incident that never happened (but was pushed and promoted by a 19 year old hired by the FBI to monitor anarchists). Eric's case is a perfect example of the U.S. government's obsession with the anarchist movement and their concoction of a conspiracy that did not exist prior to their employee's involvement. Without a doubt, Eric will need help funding his appeal. See supporteric.org to help out.

* Finally, my codefendant and friend, Jonathan Paul, not only has a new website but is writing monthly dispatches. I'm sure he'd love to hear from people and appreciate news from the movement. You can also email his support crew at friendsofjonathanpaul@yahoo.com to see if he needs any books or magazines. Because he is housed in Phoenix, Arizona— far from his home in Oregon, donations for his wife to visit him are appreciated.

Free to be freed (sooner than later)

Source

by Daniel on March 19th, 2008

(picture of Jeff and Daniel from 2005 in OSP)

On February 28th, 2008, my friend and political prisoner Jeff ‘Free’ Luers received his long-awaited sentence of 10 years by Judge Billings in Eugene, Oregon. This outcome was a long time coming— Jeff was arrested in June 2000, sentenced June 2001 and his appeal was filed January 2002. February 14, 2007 saw his sentence of 22 years and 8 months, imposed by Judge Lyle Velure, thrown out. After waiting so long and feeling no faith in the so-called criminal justice system in terms of fairness, I doubted I would ever see any victory with Jeff’s case.

Jeff received an absurd sentence of nearly 23 years back in 2001 which many saw as a clear message to the movement: use property destruction as a tactic and you will be crushed. It was a message heard loud and clear just a few years later when my co-defendants were indicted in the Operation Backfire/ELF case initially charged us with crimes that could have put us behind bars for life.

I knew Free from the Eugene anarchist scene— at the time a thriving and active smattering of collectives, groups and spaces. Free did Food Not Bombs and taught self defense. We were both involved in an 8-week activist gathering called Eugene Active Existence and had mutual friends. My interactions with him were always positive and I respected his participation in the Fall Creek tree village— a tactic/style of campaigning I had become disenchanted with. When Jeff was arrested, like many of the local anarchists, I joined efforts to support him and fundraise for his legal defense. Ironically, at the same time, I was involved with the Earth Liberation Front and was participating in actions similar to what Jeff was arrested for.

Hindsight is 20/20, of course, so perhaps it’s easy to say this now. Either way, events outside of Jeff’s (or my) control heavily impacted his life and legal case. Some of my co-defendants went back to Romania Chevrolet’s, in an apparent gesture of solidarity, and burned 36 SUVs in an immense and spectacular action. The second Romania arson (“Romania II”) was polarizing to say the least. Some in the activist community freaked out thinking it was a COINTELPRO-inspired set-up specifically designed to ruin Jeff’s trial. The corporate media in Eugene (specifically the Register Guard and Oregonian) offered sensational coverage implying links between Jeff and the incident.

In this climate, Jeff made the decision to have a bench trial— without a jury. The Judge would not only give the sentence (per usual) but would decide guilt or innocence. Despite major holes in the government’s arguments, the Judge (Lyle Velure) found Jeff guilty on 11 of 13 charges— including counts related to an attempted arson at Tyree

Oil (an action Jeff has stated he was not involved in). Jeff was found guilty of 3 1st-degree counts of arson— one for each vehicle— which carried 7-year mandatory minimum sentences. When all was said and done, Velure handed Jeff a 22-year, 8-month sentence and Jeff was sent to a maximum security prison. It's where he has done much of his time since that day.

There has been a lot of speculation on the impact of Romania II on Jeff's sentence. Suffice to say, I think the action had a clearly negative impact on Jeff's state of mind regarding his ability to win at trial, inflamed the Judge and the Romania family and polluted the potential jury pool. Everyone knew about this action in the small city of 150,000. Of course the media's role in this is obvious but they are just doing what they do and it's silly to assume they would do anything else [case in point, the smoke hasn't cleared at the Woodinville, WA fires that took place at a rural development before the media and law enforcement proclaimed it an ELF action. The impact on the Briana Waters' trial is widely assumed to have been negative.]

It is my belief that our movement(s) need to not shy away from discussions of these situations. Criticism, when done in the context of support and respect, is appropriate. It can help us move forward and give us a decent perspective on our own actions. As evidenced by the Woodinville fires (assuming it is ELF), it is apparent that we haven't learned our lesson. Suspending any sort of discussion on whether the radical environmental movements should use arson, the question of timing and impact on others is still there. It was foreseeable, in my opinion that the second Romania arson was going to inflame and polarize Jeff's legal situation. To see this situation (potentially) play out years later is just sad. While I know the intentions of those who did Romania II were good, we still need to face up to the impact of these actions.

Although my participation with the Romania II arson was limited to being shown the communique (and failing to have Jeff's name removed), I felt partially responsibility. The repercussions of that action hit home for me and I decided I needed to be responsible for Jeff's sentence. I committed to being there for him in the long haul, through every appeal and ordeal until he was released. From 2001- my arrest in December 2005, I was lucky enough to work with a variety of activists all over the world in fighting for Jeff's freedom. Specifically, the Luers family, Break the Chain and the Friends of Jeff Luers crew were the stand-outs of that effort.

Almost 8 years later after many legal briefs, multiple prisons, a few trips to the hole, 3 international days of action/weekends of resistance and countless interviews, dispatches, articles and videos, we won. Jeff is coming home in December 2009 provided he participates in a boot camp program. While I am pissed off that Jeff wasn't released immediately, as he should have been, I am happy he will be getting out at age 30, not 43!

Our prisoners have not always done so well upon release and have had a hard time adjusting to outside life again. It is imperative that we resolve to support people not just while they are imprisoned but in the period of adjustment when they re-enter society.

The Irish republican movement has a group called ‘Welcome Home’ (translated from Irish) that exists to provide support released political prisoners beyond the initial rush and euphoria from release. This work isn’t glamorous but it’s necessary. Finding decent housing and jobs, helping people comply with parole and probation, setting them up with clothes and some money when they get out— these are all things our communities can and should do. Jeff luckily has options in all these areas due to the hard work of activists in Eugene. He plans to go to school for green building or ecological sciences. He also plans to spend a lot of time with family and friends. His future indeed does look bright.

For me, I’m just excited my friend is coming home. While I will not be able to see him until 2015, due to my probation, its a day I look forward to. Free’s coming home— damn, that feels good to say.

I want to personally thank a few people who I have worked with over the years on Jeff’s campaign: Jenny, Leanne, Brenton, Nadia, Priya, Chris, Lauren and John and Judy Luers.

To contribute to Jeff’s legal or release fund, go to his website at www.freefreenow.org. There’s a paypal button there or you can send a check/money order.

Filed under Environmental, Eco, Friends, Prison, Repression | No Comments »

Winter in Sandstone

Source

by Daniel on January 23rd, 2008

It has been a while since I have sent out an update on life here at FCI Sandstone. Part of the reason for that is my life is pretty boring and I’d hate to bore you with the details - invariably, anything on the outside sounds great compared to the mundane days here! I did want to thank everyone who has written me these past couple of months and assure you that even if you don’t get a response, I *do* read each and every letter or postcard (more than once). The amount of letters and my other responsibilities (as well as my sore thumb from writing too much!) prevents me from responding to everyone. It is a great feeling to stand there at mail call every day and receive all these letters - with tales from the outside and news, both good and bad. I’d like to especially thank everyone who sent me cards around the holidays - which, as you may know, is a hard time for most prisoners.

Most of my letters inquire about how I’m doing. It’s a complicated answer, of course. For starters, I’m really busy working my job as an orderly 6 hours a day, working hard on my Master’s degree, working out and taking many of the classes the prison offers (such as German I or Job Skills). If anything, my time is going fast as I’ve established quite a busy routine. In here, routine is your friend. On another level, life is deeply frustrating as I watch from the sidelines as the atrocities of normalcy persist - our country’s occupation of nations far away, continued exploitation of ecosystems and

every other form of life on this planet and the myopic and ‘ostrich’s head in the sand’ approach of many in our society to these issues. Cooperating codefendants in my case refuse to take real accountability for their actions choosing to instead minimized their collusion and instead point fingers at those who made significantly different choices than they did. That, I’ll address at another time, though.

My friends have been great about keeping me updated on what is going on outside in our movement(s) and society, in general. I cherish my updates on other political prisoners, environmental campaigns and the continuing developments in “Green Scare” cases. With that information though, comes the constant reminder that I am here, not out there, and my advocacy is limited to writing. One organization I am continually impressed by is the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society who is presently (as of this letter) in the Antarctic Whale Sanctuary attempting to disrupt the pirate whalers of Japan (perhaps, ‘poach’ is the better term considering a sadly voluntary moratorium on whaling since 1986. Japan, along with Iceland, Norway and a few small island nations continue to support this slaughter of highly intelligent and sentient marine mammals). This year, there has been much drama including Japan’s refusal to release two Sea Shepherd crew members who boarded their ship with a declaration condemning Japan’s poaching. Like last year, the Greenpeace ship, *Esperanza*, is there documenting the kill, taking photos for their lucrative direct mail campaign but as per usual, refusing to cooperate with Sea Shepherd in any way, including the sharing of coordinates. Oh my, Greenpeace - what have you become? The fight to protect Antarctic’s whales may be over by the time you read this but please check out their website and consider donating, or even better, crewing with them.

So, reading accounts of direct action against whaling and local initiatives in my home town of Brooklyn makes me itchy but I’m throwing myself into my studies and writing with renewed vigor. I have been happy to see so many other political prisoners writing publicly these days. Specifically, my codefendant and some of the Shac 7 defendants who, like me, have a blog and similar website names. Additionally, the *Earth First! Journal* has consistently published political prisoner writings lately focusing largely on the variety and differences of the prison experience. While I enjoy hearing all of these responses, I specifically hope to hear more from my codefendants on the debates surrounding my case and the cooperation of so many people.

Overall, I’m doing well and dealing with the cold (it hit -5 degrees last week!). Luckily, I am provided for very well by my family and friends and my stacks of books, magazines and my frequent visits are a testament to that fact. Thank you again for all of your letters and support. Please continue to support the Green Scare defendants and all political prisoners especially in the next month when we see Jeff Luers and Eric McDavid’s sentencings and the start of Briana Waters’ trial in February.

Filed under Environmental, Eco, Friends, Prison | No Comments »

2007

Remembering William Rodgers

Source

by Daniel on December 21st, 2007

This is a eulogy, two years too late, for my friend William Rodgers — known to friends, family and the movement as Avalon. Avalon took his life on December 21, 2005. This was just two weeks after our arrests in the Operation Backfire case and, by no coincidence, the Winter Solstice. In his absence, much has been made of his role in our Earth Liberation Front (ELF) group. Not surprisingly, the prosecutors in the case have painted him as a leader who recruited young, impressionable activists to do his bidding. This is not only false, but also insulting to the younger people in the case, who did get involved on their own. Snitches in the case have used his inability to respond to dramatically maximize his role in certain actions in an attempt to lesson the consequences of their own actions. One person went so far as submitting to the judge video evidence and testimony that has not been made public because it was deemed too personal for public consumption. Others on the margins have chosen to focus on Avalon's flaws by spreading rumors or even by talking to the private investigators hired by the snitches.

I first met Avalon in the months leading up to the World Trade Organization (WTO) protests in Seattle in late 1999 and developed a friendship with him instantly. His sly grin, easygoing and warm personality and humility impressed me, and I was happy to see that this quiet, older enviro was up to more than attending the EF! gatherings at which I first saw him. His rationality and quick thinking prevented disaster for our affinity group during the Seattle protests (I'm proud to say we took part in the Black Bloc). I distinctly remember getting ready to leave Seattle, and hearing his suggestion to "keep in touch." Well, we did keep in touch. Much has been said of what we did in the years after that, but that will be told elsewhere.

Like so many of us, Avalon suffered from depression and despair, fueled by the realization of what our species is doing the planet. Living underground, juggling details of planned actions and double lives, and eschewing many of the things that our movement allies had access to is stressful. I know because I did it, and yet Avalon's experience in that underground life dwarfed mine. I can't help but think that this isolation and despair were major factors in his suicide. We moved on, and yet the cruel hand of the past — in the form of old friends and a Joint Terrorism Task Force — pulled us all

back into our secret histories. Maybe for Avalon, it was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back. We will never know for sure. I remember seeing his name in a list of arrestees in a *New York Times* article while sitting in a New York City jail. It gave me some hope — I thought we could all fight these charges together, as a group of people who had lifelong solidarity with each other, as people who honored the oaths we made to each other. Sometimes, I lie there at night asking the questions I try to avoid: Could Avalon have stemmed the tide of informing? Would he have been the person who, having known some of the snitches for much longer than I, could really reach them — beyond their fears and to their core? I'll never know these answers, but I do know this: Avalon would rather die and make a jailbreak than cooperate in any way with this immoral and unjust process.

The prosecution, knowing only hierarchy and bureaucracy, cannot conceive of a group without a leader, a pecking order and strict rules. Without Bill around to protest and because he was older than all of us, they found their puppet master. Suddenly the so-called “book club” was his invention and was deemed a “training school for arson.” Meyerhoff and Gerlach, grand quislings that they are, had the audacity to say with a straight face that Avalon pretty much did the Vail arson all by himself. Just reading about the ski resort's geography, the large amount of fuel that was used and Bill's slight stature made me laugh bitterly to myself about these lies. On some level, it's the way the game is played for snitches. The government tells them what it wants to hear, and the cooperating witnesses jump through hoops like the well-trained pets that they are. To be clear, everyone involved with these actions and the “book club” are people like you and me. We have skills — some of us excel at one thing, others of us at another. However, there was no formalized hierarchy as suggested by the prosecution, and William Rodgers was no kingpin or leader of the ELF.

Avalon, like all of us, had his flaws and made mistakes, both personally and politically, in the way he lived his life and how he resisted environmental destruction. Our group attempted to deal with one of these areas — an accusation of sexual misconduct — and I'm sorry to say that we failed, due to not being equipped with the right ideas and strategies. It is all too easy to assuage our guilt about our own shortcomings by attacking others. I think it's a better idea to focus on what we are doing in this world, rather than criticizing people who are not here to defend themselves. I thought of this often in court when I looked at my family, seeing the pained looks on their faces as they listened to attacks on me. Bill's family and partner have had to endure a lot of grief in the last two years.

So when I think of Avalon, I don't believe the hype spewed by aggressive and narrow prosecutors. No, I think of a soft-spoken, caring person who would give you the shirt off his back or carry a snake off the road; an avid, even obsessive recycler; someone who supported indigenous struggles and really got the connection between Earth-based cultures and ecological action. I knew Avalon was involved in the struggle against the Mount Graham telescope, but only after his death did I find out that he

and his infoshop, The Catalyst, supported the campaign to protect the San Francisco Peaks (see *Earth First! Journal* May-June 2005).

When snitch Jacob Ferguson recorded a conversation with me through a wiretap in 2005, I asked him how Avalon was. He lied to me (big shock!) and told me that Avalon was happy and lived in an intentional community in Canada. I remember being really happy for him and hoping to run into him again one day, but for different reasons than why we last saw each other.

Avalon has been gone two years now, and yet it still isn't real to me. Since I haven't seen him for years, I can't really take it all in without getting upset. Yes, one of our own betrayed us, and that action caused the death of my friend. How do I reconcile the truth? I don't have a good answer except to say that we need to talk about these things and confront death in our movement. We need to grieve for our friends. Most of all, we cannot forget. This is my contribution to never forgetting William Rodgers: radical environmentalist, ELF activist, cave lover and sweet, kind man. I miss you, buddy.

—As printed in the *Earth First! Journal*, November-December 2007 issue.

Filed under Animal Rights, Environmental, Eco, Friends, Repression | No Comments »

Victory! Changes made to crack sentencing guidelines

Source

by Daniel on December 19th, 2007

Recently, the US Sentencing Commission released changes to sentencing guidelines for crack cocaine offenders (November 10, 2007) and on December 11th, applied them retroactively – a major reform in the way crack offenders have been sentenced since 1986. The gist of this change is that crack offenders sentenced under 201.1 will now receive a 2-point reduction (or, more accurately will be eligible for) to their base offense level under the federal sentencing guidelines. Depending on one's sentence, this could be a significant reduction - leading to years off many peoples' sentences. This is a major reform and could result in 19,500 people going home earlier in the next 30 years (currently, the federal prison population is about 200,000). In March 2008, when the change becomes official, over 3,800 people will be eligible for release in 2008 alone. A similar number will be eligible for release in 2009.

This change is only *one* that needs to happen but it's a great step toward a more sensible drug policy in the U.S. The new change doesn't affect the 5 or 10 year mandatory minimum sentences related to crack and it doesn't affect every crack offender. Each individual will need to petition their federal judge for a sentence reduction and make sure it applies to their specific case. The guideline change unfortunately *does not*

change the 100:1 ratio between powder cocaine and crack cocaine (i.e. in sentencing, 100G of powder is treated the same as 1G of crack). The problem with this ratio is that it treats identical botanical and chemical substances disproportionately when it comes to sentencing. It has been criticized as racist – when you consider 85% of crack offenders are black and that ratio punishes them so much more than powder cocaine offenders. While it’s great to see more reasonable minds slowly prevailing on crack, I cannot help but see the same dynamic happening nationwide with methamphetamine – what I call “the meth/crack heads are going to eat your children” propaganda – just think of the early 90’s film, *New Jack City!*

I don’t want to downplay the harm done by drug abuse – both from the culture associated with their use and the legal ramifications of their use, plus the destructive role addiction plays in many peoples’ lives. Growing up in a neighborhood with its fair share of crack, I can say I’m no fan. I neither felt safe nor appreciated the dealers with their pitbull guarded yards, antisocial attitudes and ‘stick up kid’ activity. My experience does not lead me to advocate for more punitive sentences for crack offenders. Locking up people and sending them to prison is a much worse alternative than intensive drug treatment for users and addressing the economic realities that underlie so much of the choices people make. The federal prison system has a drug treatment program but I’m not sure if recidivism/drug use rates are studied or even collected (never mind peer review or other less biased sources of evaluation).

I read about an act that recently passed the House of Representatives called The Second Chance Act of 2007 (*Senate bill 1060, House bill 1593*). The bill has many reform-based provisions dealing with increased half-way house time, more money for re-entry, family drug treatment and provisions that allow elderly prisoners to be released earlier. Please take some time to write or call your senator urging them to vote for this. While I don’t believe in giving up your power to “representatives,” I also live in *this* world and know there are things we can do *now* as opposed to waiting for long-term systematic changes which can make changes in peoples’ lives. You can find more information about this bill here and contacts for your senators here.

It’s rare that good news comes out about the state of prisons. The new crack changes are a good first step as are the recent Supreme Court decisions that address the extent of judges’ discretion in sentencing. What we need now is the removal of mandatory minimum sentences and the reinstatement of federal parole.

Resources:

- 1) Drug Policy Alliance
- 2) US Sentencing Commission
- 3) Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM)
- 4) *New York Times* article on crack law change
- 5) The Sentencing Project
- 6) Prison Legal News

Filed under Prison, Repression, Social Justice | No Comments »

Visits

Source

by Daniel on December 17th, 2007

Visits are really tough – both for the prisoner and for those coming to see their friends, brother, or spouse. I spoke recently to a friend who visited me who told me she was depressed. When I inquired why, she reported that the visit stripped her of the little things she tells herself to make the situation tolerable. This I can relate to, as it's a coping method I use daily. Somehow, despite the circumstances of the last 2 years, I've become pretty optimistic, even hopeful at times. I have a plan on how to do my time, tell myself, "Hey, at least I'm in a low [security prison] – it could be worse," calculate my good time, figure out when I'm eligible for a half-way house and what I want to do when I get out. These are good things to ponder for sure, but they also insulate – even distract – me from my life. At its core, the situation is pretty simple – I'm in prison, kept far from my family and friends, and cannot control my own life. Visits remind me of these simple facts every time.

Visits are a big deal here, and many people do not receive them. I am certainly one of the lucky ones here. When I got here, I put in a ton of effort into getting visitor forms sent out along with visiting tips, directions, motel and food info and places to visit in Minneapolis/St. Paul. The night before a visit, I'm always nervous, wondering how the visit will go. (Will I be able to find stuff to talk about? Will I remember what I want to tell them?) Sleep doesn't come easy, but I'm up early in order to eat breakfast. The food available at visits is from vending machines (chips, ice cream, soda) and is all garbage, so I try to at least get a decent meal in. One of the many reminders of my status as a prisoner is that we are only allowed to use the bathroom once an hour – with the guards behind us. Needless to say, I try to time my early meal with my visit so as to limit any embarrassing situations to a minimum!

The first visit with anyone is awkward, at first. I haven't seen most of my friend for four months, and I was free then, with my street clothes on. Now I come into the room with my prison khakis on, and generally, feel pretty homogenous. I realize that these little things are just that – inconsequential and irrelevant – but it's difficult nonetheless. They allow us a hug and kiss at the beginning and end of each visit, and aside from your arm around your visitor, that's it. It's a reminder to me on every visit how much we all need human contact and how we relate to our friends with hugs, horseplay, and touch. What cracks me up speaking to my friends is how prison distorts my sense of the outside world. It's another world in here, and I feel out of touch discussing the outside.

Everything in the room is a reminder to both my visitor and me that we are different – that I am an "inmate" and that my behavior needs to be regulated. The funnies part is going to the vending machine. There is a red line on the color about 3 feet from the machine, with signs reminding you every 5 feet. Because we are not allowed to handle money, the line is not to be crossed. Watching my visitors try to figure out the

70's style coffee machine and burn their hands on the hot cups – while being stuck on the other side of the line – can be frustrating! As I alluded to before, we use a separate bathroom than visitors, and we can only use it once an hour. I say this not to complain, but to show how the little things drive home the message of where I am at every moment. It's enough to trip away the defense mechanisms I put in place to cope. The visits are great, but, of course, when the clock strikes 3:30pm, you go one way, and your visitors go another. As a last reminder, I'm strip searched before I'm allowed back to my unit.

Overall, visits are great, and I am so lucky to get them. Being 1200 miles from home – it's a long trek, and I'm appreciative of the effort. It's great during the visit – sitting with friends, drinking coffee – but the entrance back to my prison life is always so jarring. Some prisoners don't want visits, as they feel it slows their time down, I'm not sure if this is true for me, but even if it did slow the time down, I wouldn't give them up for anything.

Filed under Friends, Prison | No Comments »

2 years, 1 week later

Source

by Jenny on December 14th, 2007

Friends and supporters,

We didn't want December 7th to completely pass everyone by without any acknowledgment. Two years ago (plus a week), Daniel was first taken away from his family, his friends, his home, his job, his school — his life.

Last weekend there were events held all over the country to commemorate the multiple arrests that took place on December 7, 2005.

These events aimed to educate others on the past, present and future. A number of us in NYC spent last Sunday in one of the busiest intersections of Manhattan spreading the word about a troubling new piece of legislation called “The Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act”

Please take a few minutes to read all of the extremely important information found here: <http://www.supportdaniel.org/act/>

We hope to keep adding relevant information to this page over the next few weeks. Please call your senator, spread the word, stop this Act.

Thanks,

Family and Friends of Daniel McGowan

Don't forget to send letters to Daniel's non-cooperating co-defendants:

Jonathan Paul

#07167-085

FCI Phoenix

Federal Correctional Institution
37910 N 45th Ave.
Phoenix, AZ 85086
Joyanna Zacher #36360-086
FCI Dublin
Federal Correctional Institution
5701 8th St - Camp Parks- Unit F
Dublin, CA 94568
Nathan Block #36359-086
FCI Lompoc
Federal Correctional Institution
3600 Guard Rd.
Lompoc, CA 93436

Filed under Animal Rights, Environmental, Eco, Friends, Repression, Social Justice

| No Comments »

Reflections on December 7th

Source

by Daniel on December 7th, 2007

If I could, I would wear black today, not because it's my preferred color (which it is), but because today is a day I mourn. Not in a traditional sense of mourning a person's death but a day to mourn the end of one part of my life the day I said goodbye to a part of my life no one in my life knew about. Some people order their lives into 'before September 11' and 'after September 11' — for me, it's before and after December 7, 2005, the day of my arrest.

Sometime around 4:15 on that day, my past caught up with me in the form of 3 federal agents standing in the entrance of my cubicle at my job. I was not quite sure why they were there but I had a feeling it was going to be bad. Although I sensed nothing that day, I had experienced anxiety in weeks prior about (then) hypothetical matters like "Who would do x if I was gone?" or "Do I really need all the Jeff Luers campaign materials, original master VHS tapes, et cetera?" I chalked it up to anxiety — the holidays were coming up and I was woefully behind on getting gifts for my family; plus the first semester midterms in my graduate acupuncture program were approaching. The perfunctory "Are you Daniel McGowan?" along with the macho and unnecessary declaration, "You're going back to Oregon!" snapped me out of my stupor. The office holiday cards were dropped, I was cuffed and led outside into the frigid air without a coat into an unmarked car. It hit me at that point that my life would not be the same. The feeling of my secret past colliding with my present and all I could do was slip into survival mode. My inner voice screamed, "be quiet! Don't say a word to them! You know people care about you and they will have your back, hire a lawyer

and you'll fight this." I am grateful to all the lawyers and legal workers who put on legal trainings as it really came in handy then.

Here I am, two years later sitting in federal prison; if all goes well, I'll be out in about 5 years. When December was approaching, I wondered what this date means to me and how I would feel when it came. Last year, I was insulated from it all as my community held a rally for me at Foley Square in downtown Manhattan, near the FBI headquarters I was brought to and the jail I was housed in for a week. So, Dec 7th is here and it has brought up a number of feelings: frustration, anger, fear, nostalgia, loneliness and hope. I fear that as time goes on, people will move on and focus their attention elsewhere; that by being out of sight in prison, that I'll be out of mind. I'm scared that people will forget what it is we were (and are) fighting for — that this 'Green Scare' is not just about punishing us but about preventing them from advocating for a culture that doesn't destroy every ecosystem and see our planet as something to profit from. We are here as trophies for the government and symbols to you that scream: "mess with us and our god of private property and we will crush you. Talk about stopping our plans and we will label you a terrorist and when we catch you, we'll offer some of you reduced sentences for selling your friends out."

In the absence of information, it's hard at times to figure out whether or not this strategy the government uses is having an impact or whether it's backfired (Sorry, I couldn't resist the pun!). Recently, I read an excellent book by social justice activist, former editor of *Onward!*, (and someone who I met last year), Dan Berger called *Outlaws of America*. It focuses on the Weather Underground and their actions against US imperialism in the late 1960's and 1970's. Dan argues that the WU's significance is not in the property bombings of US government buildings and corporations — albeit spectacular and daring actions. The significance and legacy to today's social and ecological resistance movements is the politics and beliefs behind the actions, not the details of the bombings, how each site was chosen or the devices themselves. As I read this, it raised a familiar frustration in me — that no matter how hard I tried, the things people remembered about the ELF wasn't the rationale behind the actions but were, the rumors mentioned in court, who slept with whom, how much damage the fires did and other trivial matters. There is a problem with the dominant idea of the ELF and our actions as 'activists who burn things' or as the government labels us, 'arsonists' or 'terrorists.'

For me, the tactics were not the driving force in my actions but were the means to an end. In fact, the use of fire caused me great anxiety and I felt it was generally used with little strategy as we were trapped in a self-created race to be more "effective." This led to strategy and ideas taking a back seat to the 'why,' which is infinitely more important to any discussion of what we were trying to do. I should say that I speak for myself on this issue and my opinions may not be similar to any of my codefendants — cooperating informants or otherwise. My point then is that similar to the Weather Underground, the significance of the ELF actions was not the arsons, but the beliefs behind them.

I suppose in reflecting on actions I have taken and how they were perceived, it made me think I need to write more about them. If all people took from the actions were the sensational aspects – then we have failed. It is our rationale for engaging in such extreme action that matters, not the tactics. People have asked me about the actions and I’ve been very cautious about saying things for a variety of reasons. One – I don’t want what I say to be taken out of context. I’ve been screwed by the government using an interview I gave to Amy Goodman on Democracy Now! as justification for opposing motions for me to stay out on bail longer. Secondly, I have my own perspectives on what went down and I am neither ELF cheerleader nor detractor. I will not be used by others to criticize people who choose the same tactics I chose no matter what my personal opinions may be. Unlike the critics, I know where they are coming from and I can empathize. Nor do I want my words to be used by people whose main goal seems to be to encourage young people to do actions they will support but lack the courage to do themselves. I’ll do my best to avoid these dynamics and instead try to explain the complexities of one’s motivations and where we were coming from, to the extent I can.

December 7th reminds me that this fight is not over. On the legal front, many of us are in prison with long sentences to do plus years of probation and multi-million dollar restitutions. One person is going to trial in early February 2008 in a related ‘Operation Backfire’ case (see supportbriana.org). The government has convened a grand jury in Minneapolis regarding ELF actions and Eric McDavid is facing 5-20 years in prison after losing his September trial. US environmentalist Tre Arrow is fighting extradition from Canada for very similar charges I faced although he has proclaimed his innocence. Jeff ‘Free’ Luers gets re-sentenced soon as well. Please take some time to educate yourself about the cases and extend your solidarity to these people and others. Perhaps more importantly, this government and its corporate friends continue to destroy ecosystems here and abroad in pursuit of unfettered profits. People may be opening their eyes to the perils of global climate change but much effort is needed to fight for real alternatives – not fake ones like bio-fuels, nuclear power, or straight-up “green capitalism.”

*Many of these ideas will be expanded on in a zine I am writing — hopefully out within the next year

Filed under Environmental, Eco, Prison, Repression, Social Justice | No Comments
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Focus on: Books through Bars – NYC

Source

by Daniel on December 5th, 2007

Books through Bars (BTB) NYC is an organization that’s main objective is to send free books and reading materials to prisoners all over the country I federal, state, ad

local prisons and jails. It is an all-volunteer collective, formerly run out of ABC No Rio in NYC's Lower East side and now runs an office out of the NYC AIDS Housing Network at 80A Fourth Avenue, between St. Marks & Bergen Streets in Brooklyn. The goal of BTB is to provide quality books to prisoners, many of whom only have access to the Bible and standard mass-market paperbacks (à la Danielle Steele, Stephen King, and James Patterson) if anything at all.

I have friends in BTB and have always been impressed with their dedication to the thankless task they set themselves. The group gets hundreds of requests each month for books and now has three nights each week to send books out. They focus on sending out books on politics, history, social science, and black liberation/history (which is a very common request from prisoners). They don't fill orders for religious books or mass-market fiction, since these books are the easiest to find in prison, nor do they send out legal or trade books, as they become dated so easily.

I've been to a few "packing nights" at BTB – both when they were at ABC and now at their new space. Often, I've gone when I was reminded of the project or when I really wanted to do something concrete, going to a packing night is fun – when you're done, there is a pile of books packed up, ready to go to prisons all over. You know that, in a week or so, your contribution is helping make someone's life inside just a little bearable. People pack into the small room/office/library BTB maintains, open letters, and spend time perusing the stacks of books looking for a good match. (BTB encourages requests for genres of books, not specific titles.) You find one or two books, weigh them, stuff them with some info – such as a National Prisoner Resource List or a zine – and then wrap, seal, and address the package. Because BTB is real grassroots and shoestring – it is funded primarily by donations – and because of the rapid increase in postage, volunteers find books to use up all the available weight for the media mail (or book) rate. I have spent some time trying to find the right combo – just 1 lb or 2 lbs can be a challenging task. The group has a steady stream of regulars, but it is also easy to show up and volunteer.

Prison book programs grew out of the experience of prisoners and prison activists in the late 60's and 70's – a time during which prison libraries either didn't exist or were too sparse and devoid of political content. Prisons had study groups amongst themselves, and there was thriving resistance in US prisons. The books programs were set up to help those on the inside meet their educational needs as they resisted the inane practices of their jailers. Books through Bars NYC is one of several programs that exist in the US – you can find a list of them here. Last count I did, there were about 15 or so of these projects nationally although, sadly, some of them come and go. BTB-NYC sends books to most states in the US and shares letters with other groups for requests for books in states they don't send to. For instance, the 12 state prisons of the Oregon prison system present a real challenge to activists sending books in. Oregon requests are handled by Books to Oregon Prisoners or Portland Books to Prisoners. Inside books in Austin, Texas only sends to Texas prisoners and Books to

Prisoners-NOLA only send to those in Louisiana. Arise! Books in Minneapolis, MN runs a program for female and trans prisoners.

As someone on the inside, I can say with certainty that books and quality reading materials make a huge difference in my day-to-day life. They can distract from the tedium as well as assist in self-managed educational pursuits. Prison libraries are notorious for being narrow and poorly stocked, as well as being devoid of political books and decent classics. By all accounts, this prison has a good collection, compared to what I've seen county jail and from what others have told me. Nonetheless, the collection – which consists of seven stacks of fiction, one biography and true crime, one native American, one non-fiction, and a huge amount of GED instruction books – is paltry for a population of over 1,200 men. The prison library doesn't seem to buy any books, but instead relies on the generosity of prisoners who donate the books they've read. County and city jails and immigrant detention centers have horrible libraries due to having smaller budgets and an indifference to/disdain for people who won't be there long or who come from marginalized communities. However, as many will tell you, people are often held in county jails 1-2 years before trial if they don't make bail (like 2 of my codefendants) and that weekly trip to the library makes a huge difference. State prisons vary by the institution, but are likely to be worse than federal prisons.

The ideal situation would have organizations set up to cover specific regions of the US or particular states. I can certainly see that there are some states that are missing access to good books. Immigrant prisons are also missing that access, which is complicated by the dearth of non-English books. The good news is that although the projects are autonomous (despite having similar names), there is coordination among prison books programs, which lead to a listserv, which is used to coordinate, and a recent conference.

Check out the National Prison Resource Listing online or via the Prison Book Program, c/o Lucy Parsons Center, 1306 Hancock St., suite 100, Quincy, MA 02169 for a listing of programs. There may be one near you that either needs book donations or volunteers willing to fill requests from prisoners. Any prison book program can use donations of books of stamps, packing tape, envelopes, and markers.

Books Through Bars NYC packs on Mondays 7:30-9:30pm, Thursdays 7:30-9:30pm, and Sundays 5-8pm in the basement of NYCAHN at 80A Fourth Avenue, between St. Marks & Bergen Streets in Brooklyn. Call 212.254.3697 ext. 26 email btb [at] abcnorio.org. BTB's mailing address is c/o Bluestocking Books, 172 Allen St., New York, NY 10002. They also hold benefits and movie nights from time to time and are always looking for donations.

Filed under Prison, Repression | No Comments »

Some Books

Source

by Daniel on November 17th, 2007

Some interesting books I have read in the past few months:

The Omnivore's Dilemma by Michael Pollan

Durutti in the Spanish Revolution by Abel Paz

The Book of Five Rings by Miyumoto Musashi

Guns, Germs, and Steel and *The Third Chimpanzee* both by Jared Diamond

The World Without Us by Alan Weisman

Fledgling by Octavia Butler

The Harry Potter Series (7 Books) – J. K. Rowling

The Weather Makers by Tim Flannery

Evasion by Anonymous

The Secret Servant by Daniel Silva

Army of None: Strategies to Counter Military Recruitment, End War and

Build a Better World by Aimee Allison and David Solnit

Ecoholic by Adria Vasil

Thought to Exist in the Wild: Awakening from the Nightmare of Zoos

by Derrick Jensen (Author) and Karen Tweedy-Holmes (Photographer)

In the Spirit of Crazy horse by Peter Matthiesen

An Inconvenient Truth by Al Gore

A People's History of the United States: 1492-Present by Howard Zinn

Five Families: The Rise, Decline, and Resurgence of America's Most Powerful Mafia Empires by Selwyn Raab

Dam Nation: Dispatches from the Water Underground Edited by Cleo Woelfle-Erskine, Laura Allen, and Oskar July Cole

Mad Bomber Melville by Leslie James Pickering

Neverwhere: A Novel by Neil Gaiman

Aftershock: Confronting Trauma in a Violent World, a Guide for Activists and Their Allies by pattrice jones

Filed under Prison | No Comments »

300 minutes

Source

by Daniel on November 13th, 2007

The prison allots me 300 minutes a month to use on the phone. 300. Sounds like a lot at first, but it's nothing really. It works out to 10 minutes a day, roughly. 5 hours a month in 10 minute increments. Does this sound like a humane amount to you? On

any given day, before I was imprisoned, my partner Jenny would come home from work and we'd spend 4-5 hours together before going to bed. A lot of this time was spent talking, catching up on the day's events and sharing dinner. Now I'm 1,200 miles from home, in the unfamiliar Midwest and I can only speak to her about 10 minutes a day. Oh, I work that number. Sometimes we speak for 15, but then we have to skip a day or two. This example doesn't take into account that I like to call my family weekly and friends from time to time. It's become apparent that as time goes on, I will be calling only a short number of the 26 phone numbers on my call list. With 300 minutes a month, how can I justify calling someone to "chat" or pass the time? A major goal of mine is to leave here with my relationship with my wife and partner intact— not just intact but healthy. Sometimes I think I'm naive. How can I hope to maintain a relationship on 10 minutes a day?

Well, that's not really the goal of the Bureau of Prisons (BOP). Oh, they aren't conspiring behind my back to destroy my marriage (although sometimes I think to myself, Minnesota? and think WHAT THE !). No, they just don't care. It's all quite irrelevant to them, really. We're here to be warehoused, to be kept apart from society and to punish us for transgressions of the law. I'm not being too rhetorical— the term warehouse is on bop.gov! Family ties? Community Connections? Housing one within 500 miles of their home? Rehabilitation? That doesn't fit the equation here. Never mind that people with close ties to their family and community, with frequent visits and meaningful programs to participate in have significantly lower recidivism rates. Sometimes I get the acute sense the revolving door of these federal prisons really doesn't bother those in charge.

This month (and December), we have 400 phone minutes, presumably because it's the holidays. Is it mercy? Compassion? I don't know, as the memo about it only states facts, not rationales. (I mean, we're "inmates" so no need to explain anything to us!). I don't look forward to January when I'm counting minutes, nervously staring at my watch and cutting people off rudely to tell them "one minute left." For now, I'll take what I can get—an extra 1.5 hours on the phone with my sweetie is something to savor.

Phone calls are rather expensive: 23 cents a minute for long distance calls. Please consider donating much-needed funds to my co-defendants so that they may pay for calls to their family and friends.

Jonathan Paul's support folks can be reached at:

Friends and Family of Jonathan Paul

PMB #267

2305 Ashland Street, Suite C

Ashland, Oregon 97520

E-mail: friendsofjonathanpaul at yahoo dot com

supportjonathan.org

Sadie's and Exile's support folks can be reached at

solidaritywithsadieandexile at gmail dot com

Filed under Friends, Prison, Repression | No Comments »

New blog up and running!

Source

by Jenny on November 11th, 2007

Welcome to the new Support Daniel blog! Please take some time to read all the of the entries posted below since a number of them were never posted previously. Enjoy the new layout. Special thanks to Mike who got this created so quickly! (He's also the superstar behind the design of the whole site).

Filed under Uncategorized | No Comments »

The Green Scare

Source

by Daniel on October 23rd, 2007

I just wanted to send a little note to say hi to everyone who has written and let you know I truly appreciate the support. It is functionally impossible for me to respond to all the notes, cards and packages, but they are getting to me and they really make me happy. Oddly enough, I seem to have sprained my thumb! I know, I can imagine the bad jokes now as I type this! It seems to be rather swollen and it's certainly from writing too much. So, I appreciate your kind words and letters but between my job, studies, and my poor fat thumb, know that I may not be able to respond.

I wanted to share some news about some court cases I have read about recently and perhaps update people on the latest happenings related to the Green Scare. If that term is unfamiliar to you, I'm sorry. I think myself and many of us have just chosen to use that term because its easy to name it per se than to describe the full set of circumstances. What I mean is the US government's obsession with investigating, harassing, prioritizing and prosecuting activists involved with environmental and animal rights activities. I'd like to think that this behavior on the part of government officials is just about illegal activity but sadly, it's not. As Will Potter has pointed out on his informative blog, greenisthenewred.com, these campaigns of harassment, indictments, overzealous legislation, targeting by industry front groups, all create a chill around activism. "Will they come after me next? I don't burn things down, but that Animal Enterprise Terrorism Bill seems so broad.."

Well, as you may know, a lot of people were arrested and indicted in my case- what the agents dubbed "Operation Backfire." (Get it? It's a joke- on us! Like, you know, our tactics/actions backfired! Nice one, secret agent boys!) Although it seems that our case is wrapping up, a Midwest grand jury was to convene (and was then postponed) regarding ELF actions in that region. You can read more about this on a new site:?

A few weeks ago, there was good news and bad news with two Green Scare trials. The good news is that former ALF prisoner, Rod Coronado, got a hung jury in his free speech case in San Diego. Rod was charged with an old law that alleged that he

was instructing people on how to use incendiary devices. From the accounts I read, this so-called instruction was Rod speaking at a public event and a question was asked about an action he was involved with years prior (and which he had already done time for). The jury was deadlocked in favor of acquittal but ended up being unable to come to any decision. At this point, I am unsure whether or not the government will continue this vindictive behavior and file charges again. In either case, check out his support site at www.supportrod.org to donate or find out more.

Sadly, Eric McDavid was found guilty by a jury in the Sacramento ELF case. Eric was charged with conspiracy and was sold down the river by his two co-defendants who testified against him and will now receive a maximum of 5 years. Eric faces 5-20 years. It should also be noted that a woman only known as “Anna,” was not only the key witness but also a blatant provocateur in the case— constantly pushing the three young activists into planning actions. The judge denied the entrapment motion even though evidence kept showing up that “Anna” seemed to really want an action to happen so that she could please her FBI handlers. You may ask, “Why is the FBI recruiting 17-year old college students to push people into doing ELF type actions, even going so far as to pay her \$70,000, rent and outfit a cabin for planning the actions, etc.?” That’s a good question. Eric is filing an appeal and last I heard needs help with legal costs and continued access to vegan food.

See www.supporteric.org for more information.

There are also a few ongoing cases associated with the Green Scare:

Tre Arrow: This American environmental activist is fighting extradition from Canada and has been held for three years now trying to clear his name and is being tried on very serious charges in Oregon state. The authorities claim he was involved in an ELF arson of the Ross Isnald Sand and Gravel company in Portland, OR and an arson of three logging trucks. Three people who have received reduced sentences claim Tre Arrow was involved although there doesn’t appear to be any evidence other than this. He was a well-known forest defense activist in Oregon and even ran for Congress. He sits in a jail in British Columbia and is appealing an extradition order. He needs your support. Contact his crew at www.trearrow.org If sent to the US, he will be facing life in prison like I was.

Briana Waters: This case goes to trial on February 4th, 2008. She is facing 35 years in prison and is accused of participation in the UW arson claimed by the ELF in 2001. More information: www.supportbriana.org

Finally, my friend Jeff Luers has been sent to Eugene for resentencing in his case. An Oregon appellate court ruled in favor of part of his appeal last year and Jeff faces a significant reduction in the length of his sentence. By now, he may have already been sentenced, but either way, check out www.freefreenow.org

There are websites that have much more information than I can convey. Check them out:

www.greenscare.org

www.cldc.org

Portland Indymedia's Green Scare page

greenisthenewred.com

www.ecoprisoners.org

shac7.com

Twin Cities Eco-Prisoner Support Committee

Filed under Animal Rights, Environmental, Eco, Friends, Repression, Social Justice

| No Comments »

Remembering Brad

Source

by Daniel on October 16th, 2007

On October 27, 2006, my friend, fellow activist, and independent journalist Brad Will was murdered by paramilitaries (as well as off duty police) while documenting protests and riots in Oaxaca, Mexico. He was filming the struggle by the teachers union (APPO) against policies of the mayor of Oaxaca and the unrest in the streets. As I write this, Brad's killers walk free after their token arrest shortly after his murder. Others have written more eloquently about the situation in Oaxaca (leftturn.org, Narco News) so I'll stick to what I know - Brad, and the gap in our NYC activist community he left behind.

I first met Brad in the fall of 1998 when he gave a slideshow on the Fall Creek Tree Village at ABC no Rio, two days before a planned move to California for me. I had big plans to participate in the campaign to save Headwaters Forest, but Brad attempted to talk me out of going to northern California with tales of Cascadian resistance to old growth logging at Fall Creek. He told me how the dogma and rigidity of nonviolence codes just didn't exist at Fall Creek (that's not to say protesters were violent because they weren't. They did eschew guidelines that prevented them from defending their bodies from physical harm doled out by angry loggers or Forest Service cops). Brad was a cornucopia of information on the forests, advising me on how to waterproof my backpack, move quietly in the forest, where the hot campaigns were and how to get there, as well as tales of his two months in the trees. I ended up going - or trying to get to - Headwaters Forest. Sadly, an activist named David "Gypsy" Chain was killed by an out of control logger while I was en route.

Over the years, I started to see Brad everywhere. (This was funny to me years later when Brad contributed to an Anthology called *We Are Everywhere*. I remember thinking, "you certainly are!") First, I saw him at the WTO protests in Seattle, then at Earth First! Gatherings, in random Midwest cities, and back home in NYC when I came to visit. You could always count on Brad to come zooming by a protest with a huge grin on his face. When we went to the Mexican consulate the night after he was killed, people joked that they expected him to show up at any moment. The energy there that night was definitely something he would have wanted to be a part of.

I won't canonize Brad either, because that would be a disservice to his memory. There was a potluck at my house once that Brad showed up to with empty hands and much later that night, he drained 3/4 of the last bottle of wine while singing that annoying song that doesn't end! But, I'll take no wine with Brad any day over the alternative which, sadly, is reality right now.

Instead of that, I think about our interactions during my legal court case. Even when I was facing life, he was super positive with me – at a time when it was very easy to slip into despair. He passed legal fund donations to me from the sale of rather sketchy and provocative patches and always offered to post my legal updates on 10 or more Independent Media Center websites. My last email from him was in response to a request for people to translate materials into Spanish about the Green Scare. It was simple and in his style: “Send it over, b.”

With Halloween approaching, I can't help but think of Brad - it was a random phone call from a friend I expected to see at the Times Up! Halloween party later that night who gave me the news. Seeing the photo of Brad on the La Jornada website, plugging the words into a Spanish translation website, and trying to tell myself it wasn't him was my way of coping - a vague attempt to tell myself, No, they took another one from us.

When Brad was murdered, the NYC activist scene lost a special person - a catalyst who connected people to each other, seemed to know everyone, and took special interest in new activists, trying to make them feel comfortable in the movement. He pressed for US activists to take concrete actions and offer mutual aid to the global sound. He documented the struggles of the landless workers in Brazil, almost getting beaten to death in the process. People will remember his stand on the 5th Street squat in the Lower East Side, where Brad stood down a wrecking ball years ago. He is more than the sum of his actions, though.

So, as Halloween approaches and the anniversary of our friend's death nears, take a moment to remember Brad Will or read about who he is. Join the efforts of those here and in Mexico who are continuing to put pressure on the government of Mexico to arrest his murderers. Don't ever let them forget that we know who is responsible for these deed.

Rest in peace, b. You are missed.

For more information, see:

Friends of Brad Will

APPO

Narco News

Left Turn

P.S. Brad would be happy to know that Fall Creek (what the Forest Service call the Clark Timber sale) was cancelled weeks ago, thanks to the efforts of hundreds of activists using direct action, lawsuits, and public outreach.

(Note/Update from a friend: The Fall Creek sale hasn't been canceled yet unfortunately. It was supposed to be part of a package deal of cancellations, but that sale got left out in the end. Its not in danger of being cut, but still is not canceled.)

Filed under Environmental, Eco, Friends, Human Rights, Repression | No Comments »

Independent media and publications

Source

by Daniel on October 11th, 2007

One thing I noticed sitting down at my computer, about a month before I self-reported to prison, was the decreasing number of magazines and newspapers on my prison wish list. What started out as rather large list that I hoped to get some of, dwindled into a much smaller list seemingly week by week. While each successive e-mail or statement seemed to downplay the trend, it certainly seemed that 2006/7 was not a good year for independent media.

As an obsessive reader and current prisoner, this trend scares me. Over ten years ago, I remember early computer zealots trumpeting the call of the 'paperless office' and online magazines and newspapers replacing print. Despite my ecological leanings, this sounded like a really bad idea. There is just something about a physical zine or newspaper— maybe it is the ease in which they are shared with others. Maybe it just seems more real. Any attempts to read more than a 200 word article online did (and does) make my head spin. So I opted for getting subscriptions, checking out a new zine at my local bookstore and eschewing the internet for this purpose at least.

Flash forward to 2007. I peruse my list, striking Clamor, Lip— two magazines whose failure seemed to mark the beginning of this issue making it on my radar. Weeks pass, and I find out the veritable hardcore zine Heartattack is wrapping up, as well as Punk Planet. Each successive issue of the punk zine, Slug & Lettuce, writes about the increased cost of postage and printing, the decrease in ads bought and questions whether people even value the print zine anymore (The time will come when I will no longer be able to read the zine with its 8pt font, but until then, I enjoy the reviews and columns!) A few months later, comes the retirement of the militant, grassroots focused No Compromise (spanning 10 years and 30 issues) and the animal rights/environmental and social justice focused Satya (spanning 13 years and over 150 issues). These two publications, which are so connected in my mind with my entry into activism, were stellar and there are no replacements. So, even though I am assured it wasn't finances but the natural death of their projects, its no consolation.

The death of Alternative Press Review and the Ashville Global Reporter as well as the closing of the Independent Press Association all seem to further this trend. What does this mean for radicals? Do we want a movement that in its quest to blog as its main outlet, leads to a lack of support for all things print? Has the seemingly "free" nature

of news on the internet created the subscription phobic behavior that seems to be the norm? It has gotten to the point where some magazines, notably the defunct Satya as well as Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed offer online subscriptions in PDF format. Whether people will go for it has more to do with the honor system— since there is nothing stopping anyone from sharing the files thus negating the magazines’ attempts to be able to continue printing.

I read a lot of different publications, from single-issue magazines like Bite Back and Cultural Survival Quarterly to lefty liberal ones like Mother Jones, to independent newspapers like the NYC Independent. While I may agree with only some of what is published (or not!), its their contribution to heterogeneity and diversity in our movement(s) that I appreciate. More voices, more perspectives, more solutions. One no, many yeses (thank you Zapatistas for that one). To the extent we can mimic the diversity of “nature” and strive toward a multiplicity of voices, we can enable a healthier and more vibrant movement- not one in which we have a small number of homogeneous voices. (Just think of communist newspaper sellers standing outside events.)

I don’t mean to be doom and gloom—there are a lot of bright spots on the horizon including new publications like Upping the Anti (a Canadian zine/book that comes out twice a year) to international ones like Abolishing the Borders From Below(a pro-immigration zine for lack of a better term) and controversial/pioneers like \$pread (which I still struggle with and which has led to many interesting conversations). Here are some reviews of 3 zines I really like— writing a review of a magazine seems very self-indulgent but I’ll try anyway!

1) Rolling thunder: Put out by the CrimthInc. Ex-Workers Collective (or some other permutation of their network), and this is by far the most attractive magazine I have ever seen. I almost don’t want to crease the cover when I get it and I’m certain advertisers would salivate to have their designers on their team! The articles are in-depth focusing on campaigns (like the defense of the South Central Farm in LA), stories of working in the wage economy as an anarchist, the problem of sexual assault in our communities and the pitfalls of using the state to solve these and other problems, as well as a healthy self criticism and humor. Recent issues have had great sections on cop watch, international trade summits, and the really really free markets held around the country. Full color glossy, thick, and cheap (\$5) but well thought out also. If absurd stereotypes of young punks or trust funding anarchists come to mind when you hear CrimthInc.—this zine is for you. It will dispel that nonsense!

CrimethInc./Rolling Thunder; P.O. Box 494; Chapel Hill, NC 27514
rollingthunder (at) crimethinc (dot) com
www.crimethinc.com

2) Left Turn: Billed as not just a publication but a “national network of activists engaging and fighting the consequences of global capitalism.” This magazine, now 26 issues strong, offers consistently well done articles with in-depth coverage of Palestine, Africa and anti-racist campaigns, as well as critical pieces on the anti-war movement, the non-profit industrial complex, and US imperialism and war. It balances the global

with the local— although I would like to see them solicit articles from outside their networks, especially in NYC. The books reviewed and the reviews themselves are always strong. I hope to see more coverage of environmental issues in future issues, including many of the strong environmental justice campaigns doing great work in urban and rural areas all over the country. (\$5)

Left Turn; P.O. Box 445; New York, NY 10159-0445

nyc (at) leftturn (dot) org

www.leftturn.org

3) Earth First! Journal: if your idea of Earth First! is an anti-immigrant, parochial, redneck for wilderness thing, its time to update your definition of Earth First!. The Journal, in its 27th year of publishing, is run by a small group of poorly paid and overworked editors in Tucson, AZ, and covers ecological issues in a passionate and unapologetically radical way. Reports from local EF! groups, reviews, longer analytical pieces, and a great letters section (called Dear Shit fer Brains) makes for a great read every issue. You will read about stuff you won't read anywhere else but in the Journal—including struggles against mountaintop removal and coal mining, news from the front lines, and occasionally a great section called “Dear Nedd Ludd” (about direct action). I've read this magazine for the last 10 years and lately have been a frequent contributor (must be all the time on my hands!) A new format, which really is a return to their old format, has made for a larger publication more suited to being distributed as an activist tool in big stacks rather than at the local Borders. Get your hands on this one even if you don't identify as a radical environmentalist. (\$4.50)

Earth first! Journal; P.O. Box 3023; Tucson, AZ 85702;

collective (at) earthfirstjournal (dot) org

www.earthfirstjournal.org

Filed under Friends, Repression, Social Justice | No Comments »

My visit with Daniel

Source

by Jenny on October 8th, 2007

It's been a while since a proper update has gone out, so I wanted to use this opportunity to tell everyone about my visit with Daniel last weekend. Since many people reading this have never visited a prisoner, I thought it would be helpful to also provide an account of my experience doing so. Over the past 2 years, I have gone to see Daniel at county jail (in Eugene) and at a detention center (in Brooklyn), but this was the first time I had been to a prison, or what is officially called a “federal correctional institution (FCI)”. I was able to visit Daniel on Saturday and Sunday from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. FCI Sandstone is located about an hour and a half from Minneapolis by car, which is pretty much the only way you can get there. It's a fairly straightforward drive

with not much to see along the way. I stayed in Hinckley, the town next to Sandstone, since there seemed to be slightly more amenities there.

Saturday morning I headed to the prison. The most beautiful landscape that I saw on my entire trip was, ironically, on the way to the prison. I noticed an entrance to the Sandstone National Wildlife Refuge about half a mile from the point the trees and the road opened up to the complex of FCI Sandstone. Upon my arrival, I found a parking spot and then a guard in a truck came by to tell me I should wait at least 5 minutes before going in because I was early. Apparently others don't feel the need to 'beat the crowds' and be the first one in – my NYC brain didn't comprehend this! So after waiting 5 minutes, I got out of the car and walked past the employee parking towards the front door. The outdoor prison yard and track is right next to the parking lot (separated by a tall barbed wire fence) so there are a number of signs telling you that communicating with anyone on the other side is strictly prohibited.

I entered the building and was greeted by a woman behind a desk. She seemed to have been settling in just then (she was turning on her computer, hanging up her jacket, etc.). I think she was a little surprised to see someone there so early. But, nonetheless, she greeted me with much more pleasantness than I had experienced when last visiting Daniel in Brooklyn. What was familiar was the procedure of "checking in." All visitors must fill out a basic form with their own info, the prisoner's name and register number, your car license plate, model, make, color, and a yes/no checklist of potential contraband that you have on you. Of course, if you're not checking "no" to all these things, don't count on getting in! One thing that many people don't know, due the portrayal of prison visits on TV or in movies, is that you CANNOT bring ANYTHING into a prison except money for vending machines. In Sandstone the maximum amount you can take in with you is \$20 and you must carry it in a small, clear plastic baggie and present it before going in. There are certain allowances made for mothers of small children to bring in diapers and baby wipes, but there is a limit to these things too. They even sell tampons in the vending machines since visitors cannot even bring those in! All items you bring in when you walk in the front door you must check into a locker in that room. You are given a key for your locker and you will put everything in there but your baggie o' money. After all that is sorted, you are walked through a metal detector, your hand is stamped with invisible ink and then you're cleared to move into the next room. There is never just one door between the waiting/check-in area and the visitors' room - there are always intermediary rooms (there's only one here, but in Brooklyn there were 3 so you felt like you were being herding around).

The first day I got there, Daniel was already in the visitors' room waiting, but the second day I was there first. Unlike MDC Brooklyn, once you get into the visitors' room you are free to pick where to sit. It varies whether you make it in there before the person you're seeing does or not. Daniel and I got the same seats both times in the back corner of the room. The room consists of a guards' desk on the side of the room, about 8 or so rows of plastic chairs, a few vending machines, a change machine, 2 microwaves, men and women bathrooms for visitors only, a miniature bookcase with

cards, UNO and some old tattered games and a very small children's play room with coloring books and a TV. The rules of federal prison regarding couples' behavior are very strict. When you greet hello and say goodbye you are allowed to "embrace" (kiss/hug) briefly. The rest of the visit is limited to holding hands and putting your arm around the other person – but you have to do this while sitting right next to each other. For me, it was a challenge to feel comfortable and relaxed as if you would at home, given you're in such a rigid environment. Also, the penalty for breaking these rules is extremely harsh – a visiting husband or wife could be banned from visitation for up to a year and anyone else could be banned for the entire sentence.

After I had been there for about an hour or so I began to feel a little more comfortable. Unfortunately, since you can't leave the room the entire time, you are at the mercy of the vending machines. Daniel and I ate so much crap it's ridiculous. It was like being on vacation, but so NOT like being on vacation. In between trips to the vending machines, we were able to catch up on the last month or so. It was really refreshing to be able to just talk. To talk and to breathe. When Daniel was in transport for around 2 weeks, we talked a total of about 1 minute. Even when he's been at places (like Sandstone) where he has greater phone access, the calls are always limited to 15 minutes. So, when we were able to sit for hours, we weren't rushed and panicked, we didn't have to struggle to make every second count or feel like we were losing precious time if we didn't fill it with words. It was such a content feeling to sit and chat and LAUGH. There were times I sort of forgot where I was. We were back at home, we were cracking up about something really stupid or, at times, we were even debating about something. But whatever it was, we were doing it together, face-to-face, and it made a world of difference.

Daniel seems to be adjusting well. He has a gift for figuring out exactly what he needs to do in order to make his life the best it can be at a given time or in a given situation. He has enrolled in some of the courses and certificates they are offering at Sandstone (and will resume his Master's coursework in January). He's started a workout routine and he's really trying to get himself more physically fit. As much as he can, he watches what he eats there. It's not easy since all meals are disproportionately carb-heavy, but he's trying to balance things out the best he can. Vegetarian options are available at every meal, although that doesn't mean they're necessarily palatable! In a previous update I said that Daniel got a job as a clerk in the psychology department but I was mistaken. He's actually an orderly in the department and will be one until the person in the clerk's position leaves. Still, it's a room with AC and the psychologist there seems like a decent person. Overall, Daniel is adjusting and I am trying to adjust with him along the way.

The hardest part of my trip was saying goodbye. I hope to go back at the end of next month for my second visit and will keep everyone posted.

Thanks for all your continued support,
Jenny

PS – A friend of mine passed this article along to me. It's the first article I've seen in a mainstream magazine that deals with having a partner (here, a husband) in prison. Go here to read if you'd like.

Filed under Prison | No Comments »

Immigration

Source

by Daniel on October 2nd, 2007

Lately, I've been reading a lot of newspapers and magazines since I've been here. Invariably, there are articles on things of interest to me, but I find myself surprised at the slant or perspective offered by newspapers like the NY Times or the factoid-driven USA Today. (Why this is, probably has much to do with a long-term withdrawal from corporate news - the fact that most newspapers and sources of news mimic the perspectives and opinions of those in power shouldn't surprise me!) One of the issues covered in such a shallow and non-questioning manner is immigration - often it's the "problem of immigration" or theorizing on "how to seal the border."

While I don't expect mainstream news sources to question the existence of borders (or as I like to call them, "lines on a map"), I hope for more than the ICE-loving, immigrant demonizing that passes for coverage on a really complex issue. The articles focus on people who die crossing the desert from Mexico (a not-so-subtle "you're next"), raids on businesses/factories that employ a majority of immigrants without any criticism of how armed raids and the destruction of families is a horrendous affair and, of course, more propaganda about how out "leaders" are going to "build a better fence!"

What is lost in this barely under the surface reporting is the fact that we are speaking about people. I'm ashamed to say that it took events happening to a friend of mine to break through my lack of concentration on this topic. My friend Maria (not her real name), was traveling in the Southwest with her family on Greyhound when it was boarded by a *migra*. Her papers were checked, allegations were made that she and her parents are illegal, and they are now in the federal legal system (trust me - it's a Kafkaesque place to be) fighting to stay in the United States. To top it off, they want to deport my friend to Mexico - where she has not resided since age 5 and her parents to *another country*. Her court dates are set for where the charges were filed, not her resident state - which is leading to immense travel expenses in addition to the legal bills. The US knows that defendants worn down with threats, financial debt and numerous delays are easier to deal with - it's systemic, successful, and by all accounts, very successful.

As many of us have noted before, the United States has collective amnesia. Here we are - a nation of immigrants built on the (ongoing) genocide and ecological exploitation of this continent's indigenous peoples, made rich by generations of chattel slavery that argue for sealing the border to brown people and Central and South America. (That's

really what makes the debate is about. Surely, the US is unconcerned with “white” or English speaking immigrants. Just go to Ridgewood, Queens or Greenpoint, Brooklyn and you’ll see what I mean!)

Growing up in NYC, almost everyone I knew had parents and grandparents who were immigrants - Irish, Puerto Rican, Italian, Dominican, German, and Caribbean families - and were 1-3 generations removed from their respective nations. My Irish grandfather, coming to the US in 1916 at the time of low Irish immigration did not have to deal with “Irish need not apply” signs. However, being a newcomer with only his sister as family here, he took the job he could get - as a laborer at a natural gas power plant in Brooklyn, NY. He worked that job for 50 years. His blood, sweat, and tears put food on the table during the Depression and supported a family of four.

When I think of my Poppa, his hard work and his reasons for coming here (impending civil unrest in Ireland, no opportunities), I can’t help but think of today’s immigrants. It is shameful enough that the US has destabilized and harmed much of South and Central America in the 1980’s (Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Peru) fueled by Reagan’s domino theory and the neo-liberal and Democrat-supported NAFTA of the Clinton years (affecting Mexico, perhaps, most of all).

Maria has been here for over 15 years - her parents employed as teachers and herself, a vibrant part of the NYC activist community. Is it fair to send her to a country she does not remember? Shouldn’t common sense prevail here? It’s the dehumanization of immigrants that allows things like this to happen. Fueled by propaganda and fear, municipalities promote ordinances that levy fines against people who hire “illegals,” people become snitches and call ICE on individuals or businesses, rednecks harass day labor sites. Meanwhile, the silence on the part of so many white people is astounding - even as, in my city, people sleep in hotels cleaned by, ride in taxis driven by, and eat vegetables picked by and animals slaughtered by immigrants. The May 1 protests of two years ago should have been a wake-up call - an invitation off the fence and a reminder that, aside from native peoples, we are all immigrants here in the US. Like a funny shirt I saw last year, “Who are you calling immigrant, Pilgrim?”

To be clear, it’s not the “immigrants are useful to me” debate that drives me (in the same vain as I value trees for their own inherent value. This is called ‘deep ecology’ in the environmental realm. What then would we call it regarding respect and consideration for people independent of such silly criteria as “national origin?”) It’s my friend Maria and her mother and father - people with names, lives, goals, and dreams. To give credence to borders over people is a freedom-destroying choice. The rhetoric of immigrants “draining the resources of the US” is laughable coming from a country that spends millions of dollars a day to fund an illegal and immoral war in Iraq and devoted 1/2 of its overall budget to the military!

Don’t use my previous excuses for not taking a stand on what this gov’t is doing to people fighting just to leave. Get off the fence and wade into what seems, at first, to be a complex issue. Meet and work with immigrant groups for justice. Learn Spanish! Don’t forget that, chances are, your family was immigrants too.

Addendum: The solution being proposed currently is that young people whose parents came here when they were young can gain citizenship by joining the military. This is appalling and needs to be resisted fully. They see this as a win-win - helping horribly low military recruitment numbers and reducing the numbers of illegal. But no one should have to die to be allowed to live in the US.

Filed under Immigration, Repression, Social Justice | No Comments »

Products and Paper

Source

by Daniel on September 23rd, 2007

As many of you know or may have heard, I live a rather austere life on the outside. Perhaps it has to do with my genesis as an activist as I was introduced to groups that made significant changes to their lifestyle (yeah it's a loaded word) to reduce their impact on the environment and animals. Other times, I think lowering my consumption and eschewing large amounts of material goods is my version of prefigurative politics - "I'm not going to let them tell me what I need to be happy, I'm going to live my life *now* as I want the world to be."

However, in prison I have been confronted with a situation - albeit a minor one overall - that has proven irksome. Our commissary, unlike groceries or health-food stores on the outside, offers very little choices and there is no way to avoid products sold by companies that test on animals. Additionally, in order to write letters to the outside world, my only option is a pad of bone white, cheap and thus, I assume, non-recycled writing paper. Of course, I need to brush my teeth, wash my hair/body, and write to friends, family and community, but nonetheless, my lack of options troubles me.

Like in the outside world, there is more than enough discarded paper here for me to use but there is no alternative to the animal tested products. In the past, I've joke about particular prisoners' requests to have people only write them on reused, discarded or tree-free paper. There is nothing like prison to give you an altered perception of things and now I find myself making a similar request and - in effect - *eating crow*.

My request then is pretty simple and I apologize if this request seems to you as bizarre or annoying as it did to me before I came here! If you write to me, I humbly request you to use either discarded paper (paper that was printed on one side), tree-free or 100% post consumer recycled paper, and if those options are not achievable, that you write on both sides of the page. The first option (using discarded paper) is pretty much free as any work, school, library or other recycling bin is overflowing with this sort of paper. In addition, using small margins, smaller font and lower ink levels on your print-outs will reduce the ecological impact even more.

Since I'm in a position where buying animal tested products is not optional, my other request is to educate yourself on vivisection and cosmetic testing and look for

alternatives. PETA has a comprehensive list of companies that Do and Do Not test on animals, available on their website. You can easily find these products at any grocery or health food store. I realize that animal issues may not be ‘your issue’ and that is fine but all I ask is that you educate yourself on the unnecessary practice of testing consumer products on animals and cease funding this cruel and unethical practice. Compassion and advocacy for animal nations is congruent and consistent with the struggle for social justice and environmental protection.

Again, I apologize for my self-indulgent requests to you. Prison offers little opportunity for activism and advocacy and it dawned on me that my advocacy and agitation expressed to you could have a much greater impact than just my own actions.

For more info:

Dogwood Alliance

Native Forest Network

PETA’s Caring Consumer webpage

Close HLS

Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty

Filed under Animal Rights, Environmental, Eco | No Comments »

FCI Sandstone

Source

by Daniel on September 18th, 2007

Whew, so I finally made to FCI Sandstone—a low security prison in northern Minnesota and my home for the next couple of years. It’s been a rough couple of weeks—2 flights, 2 long days in a bus, 11 days in the hole and not having a clue when I would be moved. Transit in the federal prison system is disorienting and frustrating but I’m here now and things are starting to normalize. Big thanks to everyone who wrote me in Oklahoma, Terre Haute, and Oxford—the letters are starting to catch up with me this week. I am way behind on correspondence and at times feel like I will be for a while.

How to describe Sandstone. Well, it has fences and barbed wire but it’s not Oz! The first couple of days here were tough—trying to figure out what to do, where to go, how to do mundane things that others know already. With some help, I’m adjusting and each day gets easier by far. I hear once you learn how everything works, the boredom sets in but I’m doing all I can to keep busy by reading, preparing for my master’s program, running and signing up for classes.

I want to thank everyone who came out for the September 1st benefit in Brooklyn, NY that was held to help me pay for tuition. From what I heard, it was a lot of fun and really successful— I can’t wait to see the photos.

Finally, I want to ask you for your participation in this year’s Leonard Peltier Annual Holiday Toy Drive for the children of the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota. This

project has gone on for years and I'm happy to be part of it this year in a supporting capacity. My support crew will be creating a registry of toys that will make it simple for you to buy a toy or two for the Native children on the Pine Ridge reservation. I'm honored to be working on a project initiated by Native political prisoner Leonard Peltier and run by the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee— true allies in the struggle for political prisoners and environmental protection. Please participate as much as you can to make a real difference in the lives of these children who live on one of the poorest reservations in the nation and also by lending your support to the struggle to free Leonard Peltier. Check www.supportdaniel.org and www.leonardpeltier.net for more information in the near future.

Thanks for all the letters and support!

Daniel

Filed under Friends, Prison | No Comments »

There are Alternatives to Marching Against the War(s)

Source

by Daniel on August 26th, 2007

My indictment and subsequent arrest in December 2005 disrupted many things in my life: my schooling, employment, relationships with my family & friends, and my activism. At the time I was working on a budding counter-recruitment campaign in New York City— one that ultimately ceased to exist as everyone working on it threw themselves into legal and other support activity for me. After a lot of trial and error with anti-war activity— trying to push for more militant and less rigid anarchist contingents at mainstream marches to insane amounts of pre-Iraq war stickering and outreach to a totally unsuccessful effort to block streets the day after the bombing commenced, I was frustrated.

Coming home every day to my collective house, I would see a military recruiter always hanging around the huge high school on my block. Like any predator, he was there right before school got out and undoubtedly made conversation and appointments with high school kids later on. I wondered why this school— a fairly progressive one at that, would let recruiters in and expose their children to their marketing tactics. I knew enough about the issue, or so I thought. Further research informed me of the No Child Left Behind Act, signed by Bush, which forced parents to “opt out” of military recruitment contact lists. Essentially, high school students' information was in the hands of recruiters— people who are legally allowed to lie to get recruits to sign a contract that is not binding on the military but is on the recruit.

This research along with the fact that I now saw recruiters everywhere—street fairs, subway stations, their posters and brochures at bodegas—led a friend and me to try to kickstart a campaign of counter-recruitment that we hoped would grow city-wide.

Why Counter-recruitment?

I saw counter-recruitment as a useful tactic not only for potentially starving the military of recruits—always a laudable goal for an anarchist opposed to war, but also to engage in dynamic activism that deviated from the predictable “big march, donate to us, go home” marches of the mainstream liberal/anti-war coalitions. With counter-recruitment, we picked the times and place and with so many public faces to the military, that was easy. It was also an idea that put us in potentially uncomfortable positions—outreach to communities of color that in some ways may share more in common with the recruiters in their neighborhood than with young, white anarchists. This, to me, was an exciting challenge and who can argue with talking to young folks about the choices potentially available to them— and how recruiters want to diminish those choices so as to better recruit them. Finally, the idea of a steady but unpredictable presence at my local recruitment center coupled with outreach to local high schools seemed to be a solid alternative to what was happening at the time.

I wish I could write about more than *one* actual protest. Sadly, that is all we pulled off, but it was successful. The use of the word anarchist in our press statement brought the gates down, an NYPD squad car on the sidewalk, and a gaggle of recruiters and cops waiting for potential mayhem. The “mayhem” was about 40 people holding banners, distributing pamphlets with some street theater and an unannounced trip to the Army National Guard office a half mile away. That day I thought to myself, “It’s a good start.” Of course, a few days later I got arrested and well, you may know that story. It ends with me here at MDC Brooklyn contemplating resistance, my own actions, and the usefulness of counter-recruitment as a tactic in the anti-war movement.

More than anything, I see post-9/11 counter-recruitment as representing an opportunity to break out of the bonds of boring, predictable and ritualistic anti-war activity into less chartered waters. In that way, it feels like what many called the “anti-globalization” movement to me because of the sense of dynamism, a refusal to wait for leaders to tell us what to do, and because, generally speaking, counter-recruitment makes sense and people get it.

We have a military that accepts people over 40, people convicted of crimes, those with neck and arm tattoos, and those who get “Ds” on the aptitude test to enlist. Of course, I’m not passing judgment on those people (how could I being a felon with a tattoo!), but it shows how desperate the military has become. This doesn’t even cover “stop loss” where folks are being sent back second and third times over in Iraq and Afghanistan. Counter-recruitment is a strong “no” not only to the wars the United States is currently engaged in, but also future wars and the 100+ U.S. military bases all over the world.

Resources

War Resisters League (WRL)

This organization had an influx of new staff members who are shaking up the organization and doing good work. I hear they have a new website and their newspaper is now called “Win” and its content and design is much improved.

DMZ Guide

This guide put out by the youth and counter-recruitment department of WRL (now sliding scale!) is the guide to counter-recruitment for students and a useful resource. It even features photos of our December 2005 counter-recruitment protest.

Pittsburgh Organizing Group (POG)

This radical and community-based group runs a consistent and vigilant counter-recruitment campaign. They also do support for anti-war political prisoners like David Segal (released!) and Brendan Walsh– write him

at:

Brendan Walsh

#12473-052

FCI Allenwood Low

Post Office Box 1000

White Deer, Pennsylvania 17887

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)

Great flyers you can download and order.

Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors (CCCO)

This group has excellent counter-recruitment resources and runs the GI Rights Hotline. They also publish “AWOL.”

Military Free Zone

The Project on Youth and Non-military Opportunities (Project YANO)

Eugene Peaceworks Committee for Countering Military Recruitment

The New Yorkers’ Guide to Military Recruitment

These guides are most useful to New Yorkers, but have great information for anyone and are FREE.

D.C. Anti-War Network’s (DAWN) Counter Recruitment Working Group

Code Pink’s Counter-recruitment Working Group

Includes their Youth Ally Guide and other useful ideas and resources

Filed under Counter-recruitment, Social Justice, War | No Comments »

Why Write?

Source

by Daniel on August 21st, 2007

It’s a question I have been pondering the last two months since I reported to prison and the clock started ticking. Why, indeed? What do I have to say that is new or fresh? Will I bore people with repetitive tomes about my case or the Green Scare? Do people want to read what I write? All these questions haunt me as I put pen to paper

attempting to deal with a ton of unexpressed thoughts and emotions made worse by a self-imposed silence during my legal proceedings. Where do I even begin? I doubt at times whether I can handle the release of these emotions—anger, frustration, betrayal, profound sadness. . . I fear that there won't be a lesson or a neat and clean conclusion to what I write about—that you'll get to the end and ask, “So yeah, that sucked—what am I supposed to do?” The idea that anyone might think I know also freaks me out.

As in all things though, you learn by doing. You start the journey with that first step, you are that much closer to leaving prison after the first day or month or year. I'm in prison so what sense is there in not trying to make sense of it all, to not risk failing or looking stupid or being wrong. So, I've decided to write—to not wring my hands endlessly, scared to release my writings. I've even figured out some damn good reasons to write too—I'm going to write because we need to be more flexible in our approach and if I can't be on the streets fighting my ass off for a better world, well, at least I can speak my truth on these pages. Because we live in a world where people who abuse women rarely go to prison and when they do, go in for a few years while people who destroy the inanimate property of multi-national corporations go in for longer, Because silence is complicity and I won't be bullied or silenced by prosecutors who brag that I was forced to self-report early because of my website and speaking on Democracy Now, Because I've lost some friends and comrades these past years and they can't, Because I never *for a second* will accept the label of “terrorist” for trying to call attention to what our species is doing to our planet, and because maybe *we* can all learn from mistakes I have made.

See, there really are some good reasons to write despite my fears after all. I don't know what this path of exploration will look like but I'll do my best to keep digging and fighting.

Filed under Prison, Repression | No Comments »

My friend Jonathan Paul

Source

by Daniel on August 8th, 2007

My time at MDC continues with little access to stamps and envelopes so I think these little entries on my blog can help me be in touch with as many of you as possible. Forgive me if I don't have new things to say about where I'm at – it's quite mundane and really, I have a tremendous backlog, so to speak, of things to write about. On that note...

I didn't meet Jonathan Paul until the Spring of 2006 – some 5 months after my arrest – a fact some may find amusing when you consider the government's propaganda about “the Family” (the name they love to use for dramatic impact in the media...and courts). Having lived in the Northwest, I couldn't help but know *of* Jonathan being lucky enough to have mutual friends and hear campfire tales of resistance to grand

juries, advocacy for what they call “fur animals” and integrity through it all. On some level, the government was right – we were both involved in trying to protect ecosystems and animals in the Northwest and thus, part of a big family. This family though wasn’t (isn’t?) the sensationalized image the government used in our prosecution but a community that valued life over property, compassion over greed and integrity over cooperation.

This is something not well known about the plea negotiations undertaken by the hard-working lawyers of the non-cooperating defendants in the “Operation Backfire” case. The plea was an all or nothing deal – either all of us took it or the deal was gone. Jonathan, unlike myself, Sadie (s/n: Joyanna Zacher) and Exile (s/n: Nathan Block) did not have the dreaded and absurd 924c counts (use of a destructive device). He was facing one conspiracy count and one arson count for his role in the arson of the Cavel West horse slaughterhouse meaning he could have gone to trial and conceivably faced 5 years. Myself, Exile and Sadie were facing life plus an insane number of years due to the all too typical over-charging by the feds. Jonathan could have gone to trial. He could have rolled the die and possibly won, but he didn’t. He refused to let us hang and lose the plea deal and for that I am eternally grateful to him.

These are the untold stories of this case – how ordinary people facing massive time can *still* act with honor. There is nothing unique or special about any of us and, in fact, I am constantly shaking my head at my mistakes I have made in life and with this case (Can you say wiretap?!)

My point is simple – Jonathan Paul is an excellent person and he deserves your support even though he won’t ever ask for it. He got sentenced to a 51 month sentence last week and will be reporting to prison in 2 months. Please make sure he is supported and do not forget the principled manner in which he conducted himself.

Finally, I want to thank the overzealous, Green scare-ing prosecutors and federal agents running the farce known as “Operation Backfire” for introducing me to Jonathan Paul. Our families and wives have been supportive of each other and I’m happy to have finally met Jonathan.

Jonathan’s info:

Friends of Jonathan Paul

PMB 267

2305 Ashland Street, Ste. C

Ashland, OR 97520

friendsofjonathanpaul@yahoo.com

Daniel

PS – It’s a wonderful postscript to this case that horse slaughtering has finally been banned and places such as Cavel West can no longer legally operate in the US.

Filed under Friends, Prison, Repression | No Comments »

The best support

Source

by Daniel on July 26th, 2007

I'm pretty convinced at this point, nearly 20 months after my arrest, that I am incredibly lucky to have the best support network I have ever seen, the aptly named *Family and Friends of Daniel McGowan*. No offense is meant to any other defendant (or prisoner) support group, but I've only experienced the love and support of my crew. That intense support - moral, legal, financial and otherwise - has made all the difference to me and it's why I write today with acceptance of my current situation and with clear conscience. Ok, maybe not full acceptance - I mean, I still have eyes and ears and can see what is going on in America's prisons.

I can remember a conversation I had in early January 2006 with my wife Jenny. I was in Lane County Jail in Oregon and my bail hearing was a few weeks off but she told me, "We put a website up for you - supportdaniel.org." That news helped sustain me through my 23 hour lockdowns knowing my friends had my back and the country would soon hear about the Green Scare being promoted by the good ol' US of A. To name or attempt to list the many things my support network has done would be a failure. The list is too long and surely I would forget many things. More than things I could list are the intangibles - the subtle and not-so-subtle hints - "Either way, we got your back", "I don't care if you did it or not", "We'll be here to the end". Most recently, I've had people remind me they will be there with a hug the day I walk out of these prisons.

This will sound cliché, and it is, but maybe that's a sign you are doing something right. Mail call is my favorite time of the day! You've heard this before, maybe from Josh Harper, Peter Young or Jeff Free Luers and others. Since I've been here at MDC, I have been embarrassed (in a good way) over and over, each and every day by the insane amount of mail, books and magazines I get. It keeps me reading for hours and although I cannot write people back right now, I at least have a mountain of mail to chip away at. I get this mail because my support network sends out countless bulletins on my list, myspace, IMCs, etc and has printed over 250,000 flyers with my mug on it and because my wife works her ass off on my website. I could go on forever praising people but it can never fully express how thankful I am for all of the support. Solidarity is what makes this term on the "disabled list" doable. (sorry for the sports reference - I stole that one from a friend.)

As always, please keep my codefendants Sadie (statename Joyanna Zacher), Exile (statename Nathan Block) and Jonathan Paul (set to be sentenced in early August) on your mind and in your hearts. All of us are or will be in federal transport soon - a very stressful and chaotic affair.

Finally, I've read a few good books lately and highly recommend them:

Dam Nation: Dispatches from the Water Underground by Cleo Woelfle-Erskine (Editor), Laura Allen (Editor), and July Oskar Cole (Editor) (2007). This anthology of

writings on water range from dam removal, international water struggles and Manifest Destiny to grey water system construction. This book made me long for the outside where I could set up a grey water system in my own backyard. Published by Soft Skull Press and available there or through AK Press.

The Fight in the Fields: César Chávez and the Farmworkers Movement by Susan Ferriss (Author), Ricardo Sandoval (Author), Diana Hembree (Author). I was so hopelessly ignorant of the plight of farmworkers in California before reading this excellent book. I still am but realize there is a tremendous amount to learn from this hard-working and fairly successful movement. It also made me think a lot about the recent campaigns against Taco Bell and Burger King by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers in Florida.

Love and rage,
Daniel

Filed under Friends, Human Rights, Prison | No Comments »

First entry

Source

by Daniel on July 9th, 2007

Friends,

Well, I have been here one week now and although I don't have any stamps yet, and writing with a 4 inch pen that bends is miserable, I thought I would write if only to say I'm OK. The two months I did back in 2005 did not, unfortunately, leave a lasting enough impression on me and my entrance back to prison has been jarring in many ways. A good place to start and a question you may have is "why did I have to report so early?" I'll start from my sentencing.

On June 4th, Judge Aiken sentenced me to a term in federal prison of 84 months, just 8 months less than what the prosecution wanted, citing my activism from 2001 to my arrest. When the Judge asked the Department of Probation person how long it would take for the BOP (Bureau of Prisons) to classify and designate me, she mistakenly said "30 days." I never objected to this despite the fact I knew the BOP takes 4-6 weeks to designate prisoners. Fast forward a few weeks. My legal team files a motion asking for me to stay out on bond pending designation. I thought it would be successful since my time on pre-trial release had been incident-free and both the Department of Probation and Pre-Trial services did not object. However, the prosecution objected citing three reasons:

1. They said my interview with Amy Goodman on *Democracy Now!* in early June showed I had no remorse from my crimes.
2. My support website, supportdaniel.org was "operational."

3. That had a link to sell a children's book which encouraged children to employ arson and sabotage as a tactic.

As luck would have it, I lost and was directed to report to prison on July 2. Regarding the prosecution's brief, my interview with Amy Goodman on Democracy Now! was quite long and I expressed regret at many points. I expressed regret in using arson as a tactic as well as not having people in my life at that time who could have steered me off the path I was on. My assertion that I did not do anything morally wrong seems to be the quote that got a reaction. The website, supportdaniel.org , run by my wife Jenny since January 2006 is online and last I checked, will continue to be online for the indefinite future. Since it's a website set up by people close to me who love and support me, I see no reason why it would be taken down.

As I write this, I realize that I am indeed opening up a can of worms. I have a 7 year prison sentence and a lot of time to write. Being publicly silenced to comment on my case has not been easy and I assure you I have a lot to say. We have a lot of time to cover all these topics. For now, I'm ok. I'm at the Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. It is a boring, lifeless jail housing over 2000 men either awaiting trial, or like me, awaiting designation. The prisoners (not inmates) are mostly alright and I have had lots of interesting conversations so far. Even the guards are chill and I'm swapping the meat off my plate for more veggies. I've been working out, shooting hoops and doing a lot of laps in the rec area. I should be here for a few more weeks before being transferred somewhere by the BOP.

There is no way I can adequately thank you all but please accept my heart felt thank you for the bottom of my heart for all the incredible support.

After a boring weekend I was greeted with 20 letters today!

Keep fighting and don't let them get you down.

With love from behind enemy lines,

Daniel

PS - Please don't forget about my fellow non-cooperating defendants Joyanna, Nathan and Jonathan. The first two, like me, are awaiting designation and Jonathan is to be sentenced on August 1st. More to say about my other codefendants later.

Filed under Prison, Repression | No Comments »

Write Letters

Daniel is only one of the many prisoners that needs letters of love and support. Please write to any or all of the following:

Marius Mason #04672-061

FMC Carswell

Federal Medical Center

P.O. Box 27137

Fort Worth, TX 76127

** Write Marie Mason on the envelope, but address your letter to Marius **
supportmarisumason.org

Justin Solondz #98291-011

FCI Loretto

PO Box 1000

Loretto, PA, 15940

Rebecca Rubin #98290-011

FCI Dublin

5701 8th Street - Camp Parks

Dublin, CA 94568

You can find an excellent list of political prisoners in the United States here.

Under no circumstances mention any illegal acts. Letters that mention other Green Scare prisoners may be rejected. Everyone must use their first and last name when writing. All letters must be entirely in English. Be sure to include your return address on the envelope. You should also write her name and prisoner number on each piece of correspondence, as the prison tends to discard the envelope and then may "lose" track of who the letter is going to.

For more ideas on how to help others and more prisoners to support, see the Links page.

Related Links

Green Scare resources

Green Is The New Red

Prisoner support groups

Eric McDavid

Marie Mason

Walter Bond

Steve Murphy

Justin Solondz

Jeremy Hammond

NATO 5

Yassin Aref

Tarek Mehenna

NYC - ABC

Denver ABC

Portland ABC

Jericho NY

National Jericho Movement

Prolibertad

Justin Solondz

Comitee Against Political Repression

Legal resources and Legislative efforts

The Civil Liberties Defense Center

Center for Constitutional Rights

Federal Cure

Donations

2011

We will be using the money that is donated from supporters towards Daniel's legal expenses, his prison commissary account, books for education and pleasure and whatever other needs might arise. Through your donation, you will help make Daniel's time in prison pass a little faster.

We will make sure that your donation is used where help is needed. If you would like your donation to go towards something in particular, please don't hesitate to let us know.

If you would prefer to use "snail mail" and send a check, please contact us for details.

You can, of course, continue to use our Paypal online donation button which is on the left hand side of almost every page on this site.

*

2017

We are no longer taking donations. Thank you to everyone who had generously donated toward Daniel's legal defense, commissary and expenses the last 8 years!

More Ways To Help

2009

HELP WITH DANIEL'S LEGAL FUND: Daniel is still very much in need of legal assistance. He continues to fight in the legal arena dealing with a variety of situations that have come up over the last year. Please help add to Daniel's legal fund by donating via Paypal.

GET A BEAUTIFUL 2009 CALENDAR: Order the Certain Days 2009 political prisoner calendar here.

GET A 'SUPPORT DANIEL' T-SHIRT: We have a wonderful design on sweatshop-free t-shirts in a variety of sizes and colors. Order yours here or through the mail.

``

GET ON THE ANNOUNCEMENT LIST:`` The list sends out the latest information. Get updates, info on benefits, pertinent articles and ways to help. Sign up at http://lists.riseup.net/www/info/supportdaniel_announce or email us and we'll put you on.

HOST A BENEFIT IN YOUR CITY: Plan an event to raise money and awareness. Any help that you can offer is appreciated. Events that discuss the political implications of Daniel's case and the "Green Scare" are important to educate people. December 7th marks the anniversary of Daniel's arrest. Go to the Green Scare website for more information on how to organize a benefit or event.

ADD YOUR NAME TO THE LIST OF SUPPORTERS: Email us with your name, profession (if any), affiliation (if any) and city/state/country and we will add you to our list of supporters.

CHECK OUT DANIEL ON MYSPACE AND FACEBOOK: Add Daniel as a friend and forward to others! Go to www.myspace.com/danielmcgowan and the Support Daniel McGowan group on Facebook.

LINK TO THE SUPPORT DANIEL WEBSITE: You can put the banners below on your blog/website and link them to www.supportdaniel.org.

Shirt design gif

Animated banner Use the following code for the banner if it's easier:

```
<a href="http://www.supportdaniel.org" title="Support Daniel"></a>
```

2017

CHECK OUT DANIEL ON FACEBOOK: Support Daniel's FB group and forward to others! Go to the Support for Daniel McGowan group on Facebook.

CHECK OUT DANIEL ON TWITTER: Check it out at Support for Daniel McGowan

Fundraising & Events

2011

In order to help Daniel, we have created a support network (Family and Friends of Daniel McGowan) to help fund Daniel's legal representation and to raise awareness about his case.

We're in the process of planning a number of events in various locations. If you are interested in planning an event or have any ideas on what else we could do, please email friendsofdanielmcg@yahoo.com. Also, feel free to send us any pictures from past events.

Next Events

JUNE 11, 2011 - SUPPORT OUR FRIENDS!

June 11 International Day of Solidarity with Marie Mason, Eric McDavid, and Long-Term Anarchist Prisoners

All info: www.june11.org/ Find an event in your city here: <http://www.june11.org/events.html>

Past Events

March 20, 2011: Solitary Confinement and Isolation in Federal Prisons: Cruel and Inhuman or Necessary? (Albany NY)

April 5, 2011: Isolation Units within US Prisons: A Panel Discussion (San Francisco)

December 7, 2010: Benefit Dinner and a Movie! (NYC event)

September 25, 2010: 5th Annual NYC Benefit Book Sale

December 12, 2009: Art Auction

September 12, 2009: Running/Rolling Down the Walls

December 5, 2008: NYC A Good Time for the Good Time Bill - Dinner, A Movie ("Hoot") and Conversation

April 18, 2008: Earth Day Benefit in NYC

December 7-9, 2007: Green Scare events nationally

November 17, 2007: DC Event - State Repression in the Era of the War on Terrorism

October 5, 2007: DC Benefit with Defiance, Ohio, The Max Levine Ensemble and The Andalusians
 Septebmer 7, 2007: Olympia WA Benefit for Imprisoned Eco-Activists
 September 2, 2007: NYC Benefit Book Sale
 September 1, 2007: NYC 'Back to School' Benefit
 July 12, 2007: Letter writing night and discussion. Washington, DC
 June 4, 2007: Support Daniel Meetup and Await Daniel's sentence. New York, NY
 May 5, 2007: 2nd Annual Support Daniel McGowan Booksale. New York, NY.
 March 3, 2007: Benefit show for Daniel and Jaan Laaman. Los Angeles, CA
 February 22, 2007: Benefit show for Daniel: Durham, NC.
 January 13, 2007: Benefit show for Daniel. Houston, TX
 December 8, 2006: Benefit show for Daniel and Andy Stepanian, Brooklyn, NY
 December 7, 2006: Dinner and Movies at Times Up!
 December 7, 2006: Rally for Daniel, New York, NY. See pictures [here](#) and [here](#).
 December 7, 2006: Tea party for Daniel, Jersey City, NJ
 December 2, 2006 Release party for World War 3 Illustrated
 October 16, 2006: Benefit music show and vegan potluck in Portland, Maine
 August 27, 2006: Music benefit in White Plains, NY. See photos.
 August 24, 2006: Info session on Daniel's case at Vox Pop Books
 July 29, 2006: Info session on Daniel's case at the Park Slope Food Coop
 July 27+28, 2006: If they come for you in the morning: Art Auction for Daniel McGowan. New York, New York. View photos.
 July 7, 2006: Info session on Daniel's case at Bluestockings Books
 July 2, 2006: NYC Book Sale Benefit at Book Thug Nation
 June 26, 2006: NYC NLG Green Scare symposium
 June 13, 2006: Benefit at University of Lausanne, Switzerland
 June 10, 2006: NYC: Resisting the Green Scare: film screening and discussion
 May 27, 2006: Freedom Fights on Empire Street: Providence, Rhode Island
 May 19, 2006: London benefit show/film screening for Daniel & Last Hours fanzine. See pictures [here](#).
 May 8, 2006: Seattle benefit show at Camp Nowhere
 May 3, 2006: DC benefit with Defiance, Ohio, the April Decca & the Max Levine Ensemble Orchestra
 April 28, 2006: Critical Mass afterparty/Brooklyn benefit
 April 8, 2006: Belgium benefit show
 March 9, 2006: NYC benefit screening of *This Revolution* and *The F Word*
 March 5, 2006: NYC Support Daniel @ St. Pat's for All Parade
 February 25, 2006: Gent, Belgium benefit
 February 11, 2006: NYC benefit - see pictures [here](#)
 February 10, 2006: DC benefit

Make sure to get on the announcement list to get the latest on forthcoming events such as concerts, auctions, readings and more.

Special thanks to all of you who have helped set up the events so far!

Contact FriendsofDanielMcG@yahoo.com with any questions.

www.supportdaniel.org

2017

Fundraising & Events

Past Events

NYC HOLIDAY AND HOMECOMING PARTY - FRIDAY DEC 7TH!

Family & Friends of Daniel McGowan have marked the anniversary of Daniel's arrest on December 7, 2005, with a variety of events in the past. This December, Daniel is finally getting released from prison and coming to a halfway house in Brooklyn. To celebrate, we are having a straight up **PARTY**.

Please come join our celebration the evening of **Friday, December 7, 2012, 7:00-11:00 pm** at The Commons.

We'll have music, snacks, and drinks, and lots of fun holiday surprises. Whether you're a long-time supporter or joining us for the first time, you're more than welcome and you don't want to miss it!

Friday, December 7th, 7-11pm

@ The Commons

388 Atlantic Avenue

Brooklyn, NY 11217

Map

By train:

Hoyt-Schermerhorn; A, C and G

Bergen Street; F

Atlantic-Pacific; B, M, Q, R, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Flatbush Avenue; LIRR

By bus:

B63 and B65

September 29, 2012: The OMFG Daniel McGowan is Coming Home Benefit Book-sale!!!

December 7, 2011: From the Red Scare to the Green Scare

September 18, 2011: 6th Annual NYC Benefit Book Sale

March 20, 2011: Solitary Confinement and Isolation in Federal Prisons: Cruel and Inhuman or Necessary? (Albany NY)

April 5, 2011: Isolation Units within US Prisons: A Panel Discussion (San Francisco)

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 McGowan. New York, New York. View photos.
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 July 2, 2006: NYC Book Sale Benefit at Book Thug Nation
 June 26, 2006: NYC NLG Green Scare symposium
 June 13, 2006: Benefit at University of Lausanne, Switzerland
 June 10, 2006: NYC: Resisting the Green Scare: film screening and discussion

Media

For media on the CMU, go to the CMU page.

August 31, 2009: Interview with Daniel McGowan, *Last Hours*

Lughnasadh 2009: Checking in With Family and Friends of Daniel McGowan, by J, *Earth First! Journal*

January/February, 2008: A Closer Look at the Green Scare by Daniel McGowan, Published in the *Earth First! Journal*, Jan-Feb 2008

And the Rest Is History...An Interview with Daniel McGowan, Part 2 by the EF!J Collective, *Earth First! Journal*, Jan-Feb 2008

December 31, 2007: 2007 in Review: Power, Politics and Resistance Pt. 1, *Democracy Now*

November/December, 2007: And the Rest Is History...An Interview with Daniel McGowan, Part 1 by the EF!J Collective, *Earth First! Journal*, Nov-Dec 2007

September 17, 2007: Enemy of the State: The Story of Daniel McGowan by Jessica Lee, *The Independent*

June 11, 2007: *Democracy Now* 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"

Listen to Segment | Download Show mp3 | Watch 128k stream | Watch 256k stream | Read Transcript | Go to page on *Democracy Now* and click around.

May 2007: 10 activists or terrorists? Judge weighs arguments. By Bill Bishop, *Register-Guard*

Federal prosecutors compare ELF arsonists to KKK. By Jeff Barnard, [AP](#).

[Prosecutors say eco-saboteurs are terrorists.](#) Bryan Denson, *The Oregonian*.

Terror Label: Feds seek to 'enhance' sentences for eco-saboteurs *Eugene Weekly*

Government Seeks "Terrorism Enhancement" for Environmental Activists by Will Potter.

Terrorist label rests with judge *Register Guard*

'Family' of defendants conspired in crimes *Register Guard*

Destroying property is not terrorism By Jonathan Paul's mother, Sarah Paul published in the *Register Guard* for Mothers' Day.

January/February 2007: *Orion Magazine* Green Rage by Matt Rasmussen

December 7, 2006: WBAI Evening News coverage of the Dec. 7th rally in NYC, listen here. (*Segment starts around the 10 minute mark.*)

December 2006: *Z Magazine* Testing the Limits of Dissent and Repression in the Green Scare by Dan Berger

November 9, 2006: Video of press conference with Daniel's lawyers following his plea hearing

October 11, 2006: CFRU FM Guelph, Ontario, Canada - Healing the Earth with Matt Soltys

Radio interview with Sen from Family & Friends of Daniel McGowan, listen here.

August 2006: *Satya* magazine, New York Activist Faces Life in Prison.

July 13, 2006: *Los Angeles Times* Crying Terrorist by Patt Morrison

July 2006: *4strugglemag Issue 7*

Jail Greens: US Government's Priority is to put Environmental Activists Away for Life

June 27, 2006: WBAI Evening News

Short segment on National Lawyer Guild's Symposium on the Green Scare by Marcelle Hopkins. Download audio here. (*Segment starts at 12:42*)

June 12, 2006: *The Brooklyn Rail*

Government Charges Local Man As Eco-Terrorist by Eleanor Bader

June 12, 2006: Press Release: The National Lawyers Guild condemns the FBI's Operation Backfire "green scare" tactics as an unconstitutional abuse of authority.

June 11, 2006: KPFT 90.1 Pacifica, Green Scare Radio special.

May 25, 2006: *Linewriter's Gazette* (Park Slope Food Co-op paper)

Former Member Under House Arrest on Charges of "Eco-Terrorism" by Hayley Gorenberg

May 24, 2006: CounterPunch

Operational Backfire - Criminalizing Dissent by Michael Donnelly

March 9, 2006: *Eugene Weekly* (cover story)

Who are the real terrorists?

February/March, 2006: *Fault Lines*

\$1.6 Million Bail: The Price of Freedom

January 17, 2006: *Free Radio Olympia* interview with friend of Daniel, Sean Listen here.

December 15, 2005: *Democracy Now!*

New York Activist Faces Life in Prison; Feds Accuse Him of Eco-Terrorism

Forward to the end to get to the segment about Daniel.

December 2005: Sourcecode special: *#1 Terrorist Threat?* View it online here.

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