

the SHADOW

INFORMATION IS STRENGTH • KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

STOP THE ICE GESTAPO!

By Frank Morales

The mercenaries of ICE [United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement] who have invaded cities across the US are a lawless gang of trigger-happy thugs relying on deception and brute force. An ill-trained so-called "federal law enforcement agency" under the supervision of the Department of Homeland Security [DHS], ICE was created as part of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, absorbing prior functions of the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the United States Customs Service. They have been given a free hand to utilize all means of violence, including murder, to force their way.

Numbering in the tens of thousands, ICE "police" and their associated partners in crime, including ERO [Enforcement and Removal Operations], DHS [Department of Homeland Security], SRT [Special Response Team], HSI [Homeland Security Investigations], BORTAC [Border Patrol Tactical Unit], CBP [United States Customs and Border Protection], USBP [United States Border Patrol], as well as the FBI, DEA and ATF, are a danger to the citizenry, a stark violation of Constitutional norms, a violent social pathology masked as "law enforcement."

On January 7, Iraq "War" veteran and now ICE agent Jonathan Ross of ICE's "Special Response Team," shot single mom Renee Good in Minneapolis, MN, as she attempted to drive away from ICE agents trying to pry open her minivan door. Ross, who later claimed that Good had run him over with her vehicle, shot her three times from the front left of her vehicle, where he was in the clear, killing her almost instantly. As Good's vehicle careened toward a pole and parked cars, where it crashed, Ross was heard on a video he was making with a cell phone held in his hand before, during and after he shot Good, muttering "Fuckin' Bitch" as she crashed. NO ICE agents came to Good's aid and they prevented a local doctor from helping her. By the time medical assistance arrived, it was too late.

Though Ross was seen on multiple videos walking to and from the site of Good's crash with no difficulty before getting into his vehicle and leaving the scene of the shooting, president trump declared that Ross was hospitalized for "leg injuries." DHS later said it was for "internal bleeding." DHS secretary Kristi Noem quickly announced to the media that Renee Good had "weaponized" her vehicle against Ross, committing "an act of domestic terrorism." Video evidence provided by several witnesses, including Ross' video, prove that trump and Noem are both LYING.

On January 24, male nurse Alex Pretti was killed in Minneapolis by ICE agents who shot him at least ten times as was on his knees. In videos shot by witnesses from several angles, Pretti was seen filming ICE agents from a distance before he was sprayed in the face when he attempted to get between them and a woman they were shoving to the ground. In seconds, several ICE agents were seen piling on top of Pretti, beating him. One agent grabbed

Pretti's licensed pistol from his holster and left the scene. At that moment, an agent shot Pretti in his back. That shot was followed by four and then by five more rapid shots unloaded into Pretti's prone body by the ICE agents. One ICE agent, looking at Pretti's dead body, was heard on a video, mockingly saying "BOO HOO."

Before Pretti's body was cold, DHS secretary Kristi Noem held a press conference shortly after the shooting. Reading from a prepared script, Noem declared that Pretti "approached US Border Patrol officers with a 9mm semi-automatic handgun," that Pretti "reacted violently" when they "attempted to disarm him" and that the agent, "fearing for his life, fired defensive shots." She further asserted that Pretti "arrived on the scene in order to inflict maximum damage on individuals and to kill law enforcement." She also claimed that "about hundreds of protesters showed up" and "began to obstruct and to assault law enforcement officers." Diminutive "Border Patrol Commander" Gregory Bovino held a press conference of his own the same day, reading from the same script, repeating Noem's claims with a straight face, practically word for word. Again, video evidence provided by several witnesses prove that Noem and Bovino are both LYING.

A November 17, 2025 NPR [National Public Radio] report states that "97% of hundreds of undocumented immigrants swept up in Chicago's recent immigration raids had no criminal record at the time of their arrest." Once detained, ICE throws immigrants into inhumane, abusive ICE prisons and disappears people so that families and lawyers have no idea where they are. And people are dying. In 2025 alone, more than 30 people died while in ICE custody.

Members of Congress have called "Alligator Alcatraz," an immigration detention facility located at Dade-Collier Training and Transition Airport inside Big Cypress National Preserve in Ochopee, Florida, that opened in July 2025, an "internment camp," have reported on deaths linked to medical neglect, and have documented ICE denying children medical attention and forcing pregnant women to sleep on floors in overcrowded intake cells. ICE currently holds a record 66,000+ detainees in its prisons, the majority being held in Texas. And the agency wants to expand into warehouse-like "mega detention centers."

Federal immigration raids executed by masked and anonymous ICE agents wearing various insignias have spread fear throughout workplaces across the country. ICE has torn through construction sites, restaurants, schools, daycares, farms, factories, and the parking lots of big box stores. In the process, they are damaging local economies. Against this harsh reality unions and workers are responding.

United Farm Workers has been pushing employers to protect workers after the violent ICE raid of a California farm in July 2025, which led to the arrest of 361 workers and one death. Child care workers are building a resistance network against ICE after reported incidents of agents drag-



ging teachers and daycare workers away in front of groups of kids. The largely Latino workforce at a packaging plant in Chicago recently organized a strike centered on the demand that their employer refuse to allow ICE into their workplace without a warrant, demanding that the owner refuse to allow the deportation of fellow workers, shipped to who knows where to be disappeared.

On September 25, 2025, Democracy Now reported that as of late August 2025, about two-thirds of the 1,800 immigrants being held at "Alligator Alcatraz" since July have gone missing from the ICE online database, their families and attorneys unable to locate them. Despite efforts to close the concentration camp, it continues to operate as an extrajudicial black site, along with hundreds of makeshift black sites in local jails, abandoned buildings, re-purposed warehouses, and off-the-books detention wings, where immigrants, asylum seekers, and even US residents are held by ICE without transparency.

These detentions are reaping large financial returns for a handful of contractors. Politically-connected Goths LLC won a \$33 million contract to run "Alligator Alcatraz." Companies such as CoreCivic and GEO Group, federal contractors for immigrant detention, are raking in record profits. CoreCivic is generating over \$2 billion in annual revenue. According to a November 6, 2025 report from Tennessee Lookout, the private prison operator saw a 55% increase in immigration detainee contracts and that the "Brentwood-based company has signed over half a billion dollars worth of new contracts with the federal government since President Donald Trump took office."

Of course, like the "military industrial complex" that requires wars, their business model only works if beds stay full. That

means more raids, more detentions and more people locked away for as long as possible. These corporations make billions each year while families are torn apart, asylum seekers are traumatized, and people are caged for trying to build a better and safer life.

According to a December 12, 2025 Intercept report, ICE has hired 10 contractors to carry out its immigrant bounty hunting program. The firms include companies that have had previous deals with spy agencies and the military, private investigators that boast of their physical surveillance skills, and a private prison giant. ICE is recruiting and hiring private sector "skip tracing" services, where corporate investigators use digital snooping tools and on-the-ground surveillance to track immigrants.

Under the plan, bounty hunters receive "monetary bonuses," depending on how successfully they track down their targets and how many immigrants they then report to ICE. The way it works is that companies hired by ICE are given bundles of information on 10,000 immigrants at a time to locate, with further assignments provided in increments of 10,000, up to 1,000,000. ICE procurement records indicate the agency will be targeting as many as 1.5 million immigrants in the US.

Taken together, records show that the 10 companies have been paid over \$1 million to date and stand to make over \$1 billion by the contract's end in 2027. The 10 companies include: Bluehawk, EnProVera, Gravitas, Capgemini Government Solutions, Constellation Inc., SOS International, and Fraud Inc. Among the more novel firms in on the bounty hunting boom is AI Solutions 87, which says it can

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SHADOW EDITORIALS

IMPERIAL BOOMERANG

The murders of unarmed civilians on the streets of Minneapolis, including the killing of the intensive-care nurse Alex Jeffrey Pretti, would not come as a shock to Iraqis in Fallujah or Afghans in Helmand province. They were terrorized by heavily armed American execution squads for decades.

It would not come as a shock to any of the students I teach in prison. Militarized police in poor urban neighborhoods kick down doors without warrants and kill with the same impunity and lack of accountability. What the rest of us are facing now, is what Aimé Césaire called imperial boomerang.

Empires, when they decay, employ the savage forms of control on those they subjugate abroad, or those demonized by the wider society in the name of law and order, on the homeland.

The tyranny Athens imposed on others, Thucydides noted, it finally, with the collapse of Athenian democracy, imposed on itself. But before we became the victims of state terror, we were accomplices. Before we expressed moral outrage at the indiscriminate taking of innocent lives, we tolerated, and often celebrated, the same Gestapo tactics, as long as they were directed at those who lived in the nations we occupied or poor people of color.

We sowed the wind, now we will reap the whirlwind. The machinery of terror, perfected on those we abandoned and betrayed, including the Palestinians in Gaza, is ready for us.

-- Chris Hedges



ALL BY DESIGN

What looks like disorder under Trump is actually design, with an election just close enough to make the timing impossible to ignore. At this point, there is no reasonable way to read what Donald Trump and his lieutenants are doing as incompetence or overreach. Chaos is the goal. Disorder is the instrument. And violence is the accelerant.

Less than three weeks after federal agents shot and killed Renée Nicole Good, a U.S. citizen, in Minneapolis, they killed another American – ICU nurse Alex Pretti – just miles away. A normal government, one with even a performative respect for public legitimacy, would have slowed things down. Issued guidance. Pulled agents back. Called for calm. This one did the opposite.

Instead, officials rushed to smear the dead. Within minutes. Before bodies were cold. Good was labeled a "domestic terrorist." Pretti was said to have "attacked" agents – despite video evidence showing he was on the ground, disarmed, posing no imminent threat. Ten bullets later, the messaging was already locked in.

When armed federal agents watch their leaders immediately justify lethal force – no pause, no investigation, no doubt – the lesson is unmistakable: shoot first, the narrative will follow. This is how rules erode without being formally repealed.

And the context matters. ICE has been massively expanded. Its budget was tripled. Its ranks doubled – and are about to double again. These agents are not being sent to friendly terrain. They are being sent into Democratic-led cities, into neighborhoods where they are unwelcome, into situations guaranteed to produce confrontation. That is not law enforcement strategy. That is provocation. Protests follow.

Rage builds. Someone eventually crosses a line. A federal agent gets hurt or killed.

Then comes the moment Stephen Miller has been waiting for. Emergency powers. Federal crackdowns. Curfews. Checkpoints. "Restoring order." Not everywhere, of course – just in the right places. Blue states. Blue cities. "Problem" regions. Red America will be fine. They voted correctly.

This is why the military is not the tool of choice. The armed forces have rules of engagement. Chains of accountability. A culture that still understands unlawful orders. ICE does not. It operates in masks, without visible identifiers, with elastic authority and political cover. That is not an accident. It is a design choice.

Now look ahead to 2026. Trump cannot cancel elections outright. But he doesn't need to. Elections don't have to be stopped to be broken. They just need to be destabilized – made unsafe, contested, delayed, legally entangled. Voter databases "reviewed." Polling locations disrupted. Federal "oversight" imposed in the name of security.

Chaos becomes the pretext. Chaos becomes the permission structure. This is not about immigration anymore. It's not even about repression alone. It's about shaping the conditions under which democracy is allowed to function – and deciding where it won't.

If this feels familiar, it should. Authoritarian systems rarely announce themselves with a single dramatic rupture. They arrive through escalation, normalization, and exhaustion. Through people saying "surely they wouldn't go that far," right up until they do. The question isn't whether this ends badly. It's whether enough people recognize the pattern before the next body makes it undeniable.

THE AMERICAN EMPIRE IS DYING

Commentary by Adam Miller

The ruling class of the United States, severed from a fact-based universe and blinded by idiocy, greed and hubris, has immolated the internal mechanisms that prevent dictatorship, and the external mechanisms designed to protect against a lawless world of colonialism and gunboat diplomacy.

Our democratic institutions are moribund. They are unable or unwilling to restrain our ruling gangster class. The lobby-infested Congress is a useless appendage. It surrendered its Constitutional authority, including the right to declare war and pass legislation, long ago. It sent a paltry 38 bills to Donald Trump's desk to be signed into law last year. Most were "disapproval" resolutions rolling back regulations enacted during the Biden administration. Trump governs by imperial decree through Executive Orders. The media, owned by corporations and oligarchs, from Jeff Bezos to Larry Ellison, is an echo chamber for the crimes of state, including the ongoing genocide of Palestinians, attacks on Iran, Yemen and Venezuela, and the pillage by the billionaire class. Our money-saturated elections are a burlesque. The diplomatic corps, tasked with negotiating treaties and agreements, preventing war and building alliances, has been dismantled. The courts, despite some rulings by courageous judges, including blocking National Guard deployments to Los Angeles, Portland and Chicago, are lackeys to corporate power and overseen by a Department of Justice whose primary function is silencing Trump's political enemies.

The corporate-indentured Democratic Party, our purported opposition, blocks the only mechanism that can save us – popular mass movements and strikes – knowing its corrupt and despised party leadership will be swept aside. Democratic Party leaders treat New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani – a flicker of light in the darkness – as if he has leprosy. Better to let the whole ship go down than surrender their status and privilege.

Dictatorships are one-dimensional. They reduce politics to its simplest form: Do what I say or I will destroy you.

Nuance, complexity, compromise, and of course empathy and understanding, are beyond the tiny emotional bandwidth of gangsters, including the Gangster-in-Chief.

Dictatorships are a thug's paradise. Gangsters, whether on Wall Street, Silicon Valley or in the White House, cannibalize their own country and pillage the natural resources of other countries.

Dictatorships invert the social order. Honesty, hard work, compassion, solidarity, and self-sacrifice are negative qualities. Those who embody these qualities are marginalized and persecuted. The heartless, corrupt, mendacious, cruel and mediocre thrive.

Dictatorships empower goons to keep their victims – at home and abroad – immobilized. Goons from the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Goons from Delta Force, Navy SEALs and Black Ops CIA teams, which, as any Iraqi or Afghan can tell you, are the most lethal death squads on the planet. Goons from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) – seen escorting a hand-cuffed President Nicolás Maduro in New York – the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and police departments.

Can anyone seriously make the argument that the US is a democracy? Are there any democratic institutions that function? Is there any check on state power? Is there any mechanism that can enforce the rule of law at home, where legal residents are snatched by masked thugs from our streets, where a phantom "radical left" is an excuse to criminalize dissent, where the highest court in the land bestows king-like power and immunity on Trump? Can anyone pretend that with the demolition of environmental agencies and laws – which should help us confront the looming ecocide, the gravest threat to human existence – there is any concern for the common good? Can anyone make the argument that the US is the defender of human rights, democracy, a rule based order and the "virtues" of Western civilization?

Our reigning gangsters will accelerate the decline. They will steal as much as they can, as fast as they can, on the way down. The Trump family has pocketed more than \$1.8 billion in cash and gifts since the 2024 re-election. They do so as they mock the rule of law and tighten their vice-like grip.

The walls are closing in. Free speech is abolished on college campuses and the airwaves. Those who decry the genocide lose their jobs or are deported. Journalists are slandered and censored. ICE, powered by Palantir – with a budget of \$170 billion over four years – is laying the foundations for a police state. It has expanded the number of its agents by 120 percent. It is building a nationwide complex of detention centers. Not solely for the undocumented. But for us. Those outside the gates of the empire will fare no better with a \$1 trillion budget for the war machine.

And this brings me to Venezuela where a head of state and his wife, Cilia Flores, were kidnapped and spirited to New York in open violation of international law and the U.N. Charter.

We have not declared war on Venezuela, but then there was no declared war when we bombed Iran and Yemen. Congress did not approve the kidnapping and bombing of military facilities in Caracas because Congress was not informed.

The Trump administration dressed up the crime – which took the lives of 80 people – as a drug raid and, most bizarre-

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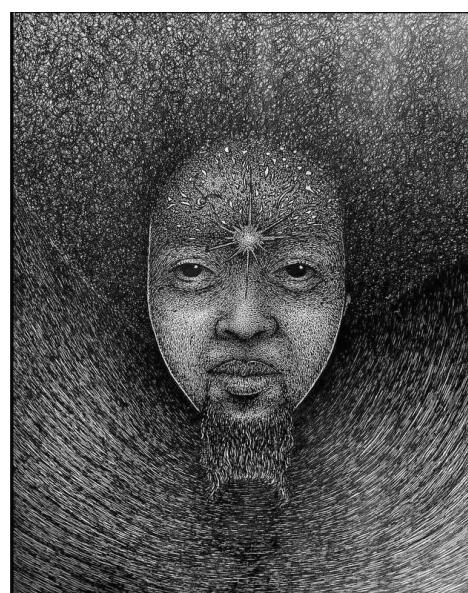
MAC McGILL: 1958-2025



Our dear friend and fellow SHADOW artist Mac McGill suddenly passed on September 28, 2025. During Riot Years, from 1989 through the early 1990s, when our community was under siege by "New York's Finest," used by the city in order to pave the way for the gentrification to come, we had riots and skirmishes with cops just about every other week. So much was happening at once, on so many fronts - our activist community rose to the occasion with opposition, demonstrations and exposure. Mac joined us in hurriedly putting issues of The SHADOW together, illustrating articles and literally pasting text onto blue-lined sheets (no InDesign back then!) with rubber cement. We had so many all-nighters in those days, fueled by food, herb and adrenaline, always having a ball. In the weeks before he passed, Mac was working on a new slideshow performance and on a new book he hoped to get published. Mac was a good, gentle soul, and one of the kindest and most decent people I have ever known. -- Chris Flash

I was absolutely gutted to hear that my dear friend, comrade and legendary artist, Mac McGill had passed away. Born on May 5, 1958 and a native New Yorker, I met Mac in the early 90's when he arrived in the Lower East Side and moved into a squat called Umbrella Haus on Avenue C. I've known him for so long that I feel like we sorta grew up together in many ways. Both of us were part of the World War 3 Illustrated Collective; a radical political art and comics magazine. Both of us lived in neighborhood squats in the late 80s and 90s; devoting much of our time rebuilding the crumbling tenement shells. In 2002, we were able to unite with 11 other squatted buildings working with an organization called UHAB to convert from squat status to legal low income co-ops. It was an incredible victory which we fought for long and hard but had doubts we would ever see that day. It was a real triumph for our community. Those were some wild and unstable days, but hanging with Mac was always calm and grounding. I used to never sleep and I would often run into him in the very early morning as he was returning from graveyard shift at a youth center, coming through Tompkins. We would hang out sometimes talking about art and life and survival and what was happening in the hood or in the world, fcktup things... beautiful things... He put all of his heart and soul into his art giving it a life of its own. The way that he drew, in the "hypnotic pointillistic" style, was very meticulous and time-consuming, but the result was transcendent. He drew stories of the buildings, bringing them to life... All of his stories and illustrations intertwined the souls of humanity within the forces of nature, as well as the inanimate structures that make up our world. Putting that calmness, beauty and positivity out into a world starving for empathy and peace... Mac was one of the subjects of my long running PEOPs Project (portraits and stories of people). I did two sessions with him (2001 and 2008) in which he told me stories about his life. So I would like to let Mac now speak to you directly about growing up, finding his purpose and his peace. In Mac's own words:

"OK... I'll tell you the story of Mac. It starts out in South Jamaica near the Famous Forty Projects. I did my first freelance art job when I was 16 years old. I got paid to paint the backs of the jackets for this gang called "7 Crowns". The design was a crown with leaves on the bottom and snakes on the side. It came to be my first assignment so I wouldn't get beat up.



Art by Mac McGill

I did it to get a good rapport with these guys and their associates. I was scared as hell living in that neighborhood. I got paid \$50, which was a lot of money back in the early 70s y'know... The subway was only a quarter back then. I met some good people hangin out in that neighborhood even though it was scary. Every day was another adventure. At the same time I was doing underground comics. Soon after that job, we moved to Baltimore for a few years. I was in high school at an all-black school called Fredrick Douglas High School. It was a good time for us to get out of New York. It was a trip that everyone was black at that school. It was cool. We were there for 2 years and it was like a fantasy land. I finished high school in NYC, back in Jackson Heights. Then I went to the School of Visual Arts. I got a job at a disco as a busboy. My boss also ran a Disco Magazine so I started doing cartoons for it. I was making enough to get my own place in Queens. There was a lot of partying at the Disco Magazine. Then I went into the Air Force and lived in Italy for 4 years. I drew comics for the Base Paper, smoked lots of hash and hung out with some great artists. I came back to NYC in 1983 and started to get serious about art. In the mid-80s I was working for the Guardian Radical News Weekly as a production assistant. The offices were on 17th St. but we would go for drinks at Mona's, on 13th and B, with a good friend of mine, Mast, who lived in a Squat on 6th St. Another friend of mine lived there too and at the time. I was briefly on my own at that; sleeping on my brother's couch in Long Island City and also crashing at 6th

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JOHN "The Communist" POTAK: 1958-2025

Everyone in the Tompkins Square Movement during Riot Days, from the mid-1980s through the mid-1990s, has a memory of John "the Communist."

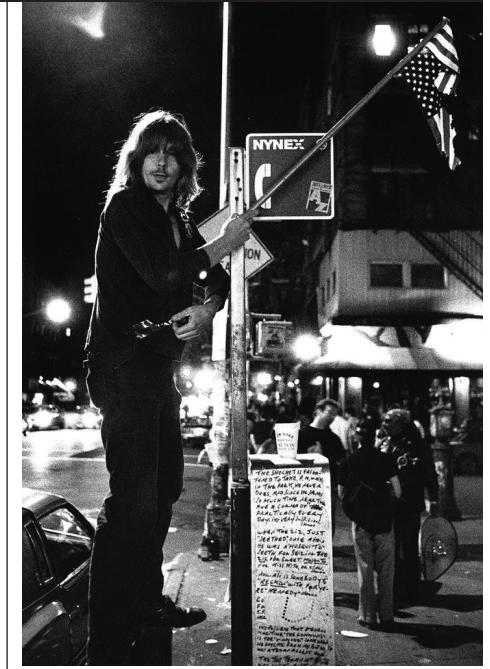
For about ten years, John was an integral part of our community's response to the city's use of police in order to pave the way for the gentrification to come. We were all in the streets together, fighting back when we encountered Police State repression, stopping evictions of squats, responding to suspicious fires in and illegal demolitions of squatted buildings, protecting the homeless from being removed from the park, opposing the latest US wars and dealing with yuppie encroachment, in countless actions, demos and confrontations with "New York's Finest."

Whenever something heavy went down, which seemed to be about every week, John would usually start a fire in the street or in the park (fueled by wooden police barriers) and hold up one of his many custom-made banners (black spray paint on bed sheets). For this purpose, he always carried a small can of lighter fluid in his pocket. He once told me "I'm a pyro." Cops, overheard by our people on their transmissions as they surveilled John, called him the "Viking."

Because cops decided that he was a trouble maker, John was often busted during or sometimes even before a demo, skirmish or mini-riot got going. As a result, John got good at disguising himself. On one occasion, when skinheads were unleashed in the park by ninth precinct kops, who told them they had a free hand to attack our people, a few of them came up to a group of us, demanding "Where is John the Communist?" John was right there, wearing glasses and a different jacket.

LES squatter activist Kenny Toglia first met John in Washington Square Park in 1985. "John was a renegade from the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade in Allentown, PA. I'm a trained agitator," he liked to say. Tall and striking, his one concession to bourgeois culture was his mane of blond hair, and he carried a brush with him at all times, even, somehow, in the Tomb's holding cells, the many times we were arrested together."

Kenny recalls that John first squatted with him at 537 East Fifth Street, just west of Avenue B: "For Christmas, 1986, HPD [NYC's mis-named Department of Housing Preservation + Development] raided and closed the building. We camped out on the sidewalk for a week, under the stern gaze of Seth Tobocman's portrait of Eleanor Bumpurs, the victim of an infamous police shooting in October 1984. Whenever the police showed up to tell us to vacate the sidewalk, John would wave the portrait like a flag. A week later, fueled by popular support, we held a rally and broke back into the building: the squatter movement's first big public victory. John took a turn swinging the sledgehammer. Paul DeRienzo's dramatic photos made it look like the Lower East Side squatters' raising of the flag over Iwo Jima!"



After HPD returned in March 1987 and closed the building, Kenny and John and others organized the Squatter Festival of Life, which ultimately became the first Lower East Side Squatter May Day. After police tore down a teepee they put up in Tompkins Square Park, they rebuilt it on Ninth street in an empty lot, where Jerry the Peddler had a fire pit. Over the course of that summer, and after the city's subsequent attack on La Plaza Cultural at the corner of Ninth and Avenue C, the camp evolved into the celebrated Rainbow Kitchen, run by the charismatic Kalif Bacon, subject of the documentary "Stone Soup." In the summer of 1988, John was one of the original organizers of the Tompkins Square Park curfew protest, which led to the infamous and historic police riot of August 6, 1988. In the chaotic months that followed, he was always at the forefront of every march.

John's partner Maria met him on the night of the Tompkins Square Riot of August 6, 1988, on her way home after working as a cook in a nearby restaurant. "I was hearing a lot of noise, whistles, screams, seeing bottles flying in the air, and then, all the cops -- so after having been told what the protest was all about, the closing of the park at night, I placed myself in the front row of the demonstration. In that very instant this tall, long-haired guy asked if I wanted to hold one of the corners of a banner that read 'GENTRIFICATION IS CLASS WAR, FIGHT BACK' - in a split second, I said yes."

Maria was with John for the following two years. "We did book tables, went on poster runs, organized demonstrations, threw poop at a community board 3 meeting, tried to stop evictions at different squats, chanted JUMP! JUMP! outside the Christodora House [a luxury apartment house that was a former Settlement House built in the 1920s to serve poor and needy immigrants arriving on the Lower East Side] on Avenue B, fixed concerts in Tompkins Square Park, arranged

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John and Maria holding a banner at one of many demos with fires on Avenue A

TRUMP DECLARES NEW BLOOD-FOR-OIL WAR

By Greg Palast

[November 30, 2025: Donald Trump just announced he will pardon the former President of Honduras, Juan Orlando Hernandez, serving time after his conviction for flooding the US with cocaine – while at the same time, all but announcing he's going to murder Nicolas Maduro, President of Venezuela. Trump has declared a "no-fly zone" over Venezuela and laid siege to the nation, in acts of war.]

I first met with Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez just days after he was kidnapped. I'll tell you about that, and the current President Nicolas Maduro's visit to my New York office. But first, you must know three things about Venezuela to understand why Donald Trump has openly ordered the overthrow of their government.

1. Venezuela has the largest reserves of oil on the planet.
2. Venezuela has the largest reserves of oil on the planet.
3. Venezuela has the largest reserves of oil on the planet.

Look it up: According to OPEC's own site, Venezuela's 303 billion barrels in proven reserves are four times the reserves of Saudi Arabia.

(By the way, Donald, when you announce a "covert" operation, it's no longer covert. But never mind.)

For years, I was BBC Television's correspondent covering Venezuela and US attempts to overthrow their elected government. Trump invented nothing. This is at least the fourth US-backed attempt at overthrow and assassination of a Venezuelan president.

The first attempt was in March 2002 when I was tipped off that Chavez would be overthrown in a military coup. Indeed, in April of that year, he was kidnapped by renegade officers who had the fantasy, shared by the US State Department, that the public hated Chavez and would celebrate his overthrow. But it turned into another Bay of Pigs after tens of thousands of angry Venezuelans surrounded Miraflores Palace while the coup leaders "inaugurated" Exxon Oil's lawyer as "President." George W. Bush's Ambassador to Venezuela attended this wacky inauguration of the faux president.

But then the plotters, with Exxon's man and the US Ambassador, fled the Presidential Palace after the coup leaders, fearing for their lives, returned Chavez by helicopter, safely to his Oval Office.

I met days later with Chavez, who told my BBC audience that, while he was in the helicopter, he clutched his rosary because he expected to be pushed out into the sea. Instead, he was returned safely by the frightened coup leaders back to his office. Chavez then chose to let his kidnappers escape without punishment.

In 2004, Maduro, the future president, was sent by Chavez to meet with me at my office in New York to review the evidence that Wackenut Corporation (now called GEO, a major operator of ICE detention centers) had planned to assassinate Chavez.

Venezuelan intelligence had secretly taped US Embassy contractors in Caracas talking in spook-speak: "That which took shape here is a disguised kind of intelligence... which is annexed to the third security ring, which is the invisible ring." ("Invisible Ring"? Someone at the State Department has read too many John le Carré novels.)

The State Department under George W. Bush also tried to purge voters from Venezuela's election files (and those in Argentina and Mexico) using the very same company, Choicepoint Inc., that purged voter files in Florida in 2000 to hand Bush his baloney election "victory."

Third try: During Trump I, the US attempted to bully Venezuelans into electing a white guy named Juan Guaidó (who

lived in the US) whom Trump hoped would defeat Maduro in an election. But the Black and Indian population of Venezuela, after they finally elected one of their own, Chavez, were not going back to white minority rule which had crushed them for 400 years. Guaidó never even ran for President, but the US government, nevertheless, declared him the true President and gave this grifter all the US assets of CITGO, the Venezuelan oil company.

Today, we are at the fourth attempt to overthrow Venezuela's government by kidnap (again?!?) or assassination. This time is different. Because President Maduro really did lose his third re-election bid for the presidency. But Maduro has simply refused to leave office. (Hey, you'd think Trump would admire that.)

No question, Maduro has become a dictator. But, if the US thinks it can invade Venezuela, or appoint Maduro's replacement, you don't know Venezuelans. They are patriots and they are all armed. How many Americans will Trump send to their deaths to get his hands on Venezuelan crude?

Democracy

The saddest thing is that Maduro has corrupted and destroyed the robust democracy that Chavez brought to Venezuela. In 2006, I joined Chavez's opponent Julio Borges, a decent guy, on the campaign trail. Borges would get just two or three supporters in a town. Then I joined Chavez who, in the same town, would appear and draw thousands.

Chavez was wildly popular because, as an opposition journalist told me, derisively, "Chavez gives them bread and bricks!" – that is, he gave the public food, housing and medical care by using the nation's massive oil proceeds for public services. Under the old regime, the oil wealth was siphoned into the pockets of wealthy Venezuelans in Miami.

I have little sympathy for Maduro, who like Trump, has taken office through vote manipulation. But the invasion or assassination of either head of state should scare and horrify us all.

Why not Saudi Arabia?

Trump and our National Security Advisor Marco Rubio have said that Maduro must go because he has threatened democracy in Venezuela and is trafficking fentanyl into the US.

Think about it. If Trump wants to save democracy, why attack Venezuela, not the dictatorships of Saudi Arabia or Abu Dhabi or the Emirates? Let's not forget that Arabian Peninsula "royals" are merely dictators in bathrobes.

Why Venezuela and not the Arabian Peninsula potentates?

Let me count the ways: Qatar has bought \$2 billion of Trump crypto coins that will go into Trump family pockets. And there's that little gift from Qatar of a 747 jet for The Donald, not the US government. And there's the \$2 billion in easy squeezy from the Saudis for Jared Kushner.

Maduro a "narco-terrorist"?

Trump has accused Maduro of running a cartel dumping fentanyl into the US, an accusation as credible as Trump's claim against that other alleged narco-terrorist nation, Canada.

I am no fan of my once-friend Maduro, now a brutal authoritarian and vote thief, a Venezuelan Putin. But drug lord? No sane drug dealer would run drugs from Caracas to Miami. In fact, according to the latest UN World Drug Report, Venezuela is neither a major drug producer nor a key trafficking corridor to the US.

Trump's troops have slaughtered more than two dozen people who were suppos-

When Venezuela's De Facto President Delcy Rodriguez Banged on my Door at 2AM

By Greg Palast



[January 3, 2026] It was 2002 when Delcy Rodriguez, whom Trump said was sworn in today as President of Venezuela, came to my apartment in London well after midnight to tell me, a BBC television reporter, that the US was planning to kidnap, and likely assassinate, the then-president of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez.

The coup, Rodriguez said, was planned for March, but I could not get the BBC to send me there on the basis of Rodriguez's inside info. In fact, there was no coup in March. Chavez was seized on April 2.

President Chavez was kidnapped and flown by helicopter to a prison on Margarita Island off the Venezuelan coast. But President George W. Bush had let Venezuelan plotters operate the coup, and they were incompetent.

Chavez, the first Black and Indian president in Venezuela's history, was guarded by a young soldier who was the same color as Chavez. He handed Chavez his cell phone. Chavez reached his Air Force generals who made it clear to the plotters – most of them white (race matters here) – that they would be bombed into oblivion unless Chavez was returned in 48 hours to his desk. The coup leaders brought back Chavez within hours.

But today it's clear that President Donald Trump took no chances, ordering US troops to kidnap Chavez's successor, President Nicholas Maduro.

I knew Maduro well, and I have to be straight about the fact that he is not the brightest bulb in the socket. Unlike Chavez, who was elected and re-elected in model democratic polling, Maduro won his re-election only by manipulating the count.

And, unlike the late President Chavez, Maduro does not understand that there is a limit to how much one can taunt Uncle Sam's oil companies.

The late president Chavez knew that, saying, "Greg, I'm a very good chess player."

Maduro is not.

The excuse for seizing the president of another country is that Maduro was supposedly some type of "drug kingpin" according to Trump. But the United Nations annual drug trafficking report says that Venezuela neither produces nor is a transit point for drugs going to the US.

So what's it about? Venezuela has the world's largest reserve of oil. Venezuela has four times the reserves of Saudi Arabia.

The night President Rodriguez came to my home, she also told me that Chavez refused to give Pat Robertson, the Right-Wing televangelist, a gold mining concession. (Most Americans think of Robertson as the guy who made his money fleecing his born again flock with vitamin Ponzi schemes and huge fees for speaking directly to the Lord on behalf of the Christian coalition schmucks who bought his hoodoo.)

Robertson's big money came from diamond mining, but Chavez wouldn't give him a gold mine concession. So Robertson, on his popular cable show, unashamedly called for Chavez's assassination, pointing out that Venezuela had parked itself on top of "our" oil.

President Rodriguez understands what Maduro does not. You can't eat or drink your own oil. The US embargo has literally forced 7 million hungry Venezuelans to emigrate because of the siege stopping Venezuela from selling its oil.

President Rodriguez, who is actually to the left of Maduro, has told Trump that he can, as Trump demands, "run" Venezuela because that's the reality to stop the starvation.

Maduro foolishly blocked British Petroleum from taking over the French oil concession, allowing the UK to seize \$10 billion in Venezuela's cash reserves.

The US then seized Venezuela's assets here, all Citgo gas stations and refineries.

How does this end?

I fear that President Rodriguez will also be overthrown and replaced with Trump's puppet Maria Corina Machado, who just won the Nobel Peace Prize. (A weird choice for a peace prize. Machado called for the invasion of her own country, which could've led to Civil War, costing the lives of thousands of your countrymen. And that may still happen.)

And I have one more warning. It's not a prediction, just a warning. Trump's overthrow of Venezuela's government may just be practice for the overthrow of America's government. The date? How about January 6, 2029?



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Giải Phóng Vietnam: 50 Years Since Reunification

By Paul DeRienzo

I arrived in Vietnam in late April 2025, in search of my political roots and was honored to participate with a multitude of Vietnamese people in the 50th anniversary of giải phóng, the 1975 liberation of Vietnam. I departed from San Francisco already turned around, arriving at the airport to discover I was an hour early and a day late, trying to figure out flights that left just after midnight. Thanks to the endlessly patient and quite wonderful staff of EVA airlines, I was soon riding standby across the endless blue of the Pacific Ocean.

I was in search of answers to my own nightmares, things that have kept me up at night since 1968 when I was 12 years old. Where was Vietnam? What was this long spindly coastal land? Who were these people who refused to back down and defeated the mighty force of the world's most powerful military? Why did they fight so hard?

I matured through those days of fire and bombs, learning about mass murder at My Lai, the Christmas bombing and the Tet Offensive, all occurring prominently long before my first day of High School. After the Kent State Massacre in 1970, the war at home took off into a frenzied rush into what seemed like imminent revolution. The combined effort of the Vietnamese people to end the American war, the last stage of a 30 year war for independence, beginning with the defeat of Imperial Japan in 1945, and the drive to force out the brutal colonial rule of France in 1954.

The anti-war feeling in the United States was growing through the 1960s as the horrid "poverty draft" spared the children of the rich and privileged, forcing the poor, the powerless and minorities into fighting a rich man's war. United States Marines played a new role as land warriors, riding helicopters into battle against the wily Vietnamese soldiers.

The war was broadcast into every living room of the United States, and millions believed the candidate when Richard Nixon said if elected he'd bring "peace with honor." His campaign slogan was another lie and provided more cover for a morally bankrupt war that killed 3 million Vietnamese and 58,000 US soldiers. The US Air Force and Navy fliers dropped more bombs than World War 2 and the Korean War combined.

Psychologically-damaged US troops rebelled against their officers after years of abuse, and fearful of a pro-peace populace, America pushed the horrific war from memory, even as it was refought, and this time won, in Hollywood movie after movie.

In the spring of 1975, North Vietnamese soldiers and their comrades in the National Liberation Front in the south, broke through South Vietnamese army lines and flooded towards Saigon, the southern capital. On the morning of April 30, 1975, two North Vietnamese Army tanks painted with large white numbers 390 and 843, crashed through the gates of Independence Palace as helicopters lifted off rooftops carrying refugees, including humiliated United States ambassador Graham Martin, to waiting ships. The Vietnam war was over and North and South Vietnam were reunified after 30 years of resistance, as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Fifteen hours in the air with a flight change in Taipei, Taiwan, my Vietnam Airways jet touched down at Tân Sơn Nhất airport outside Ho Chi Minh City. I hopped a cab and was whisked away to a small hotel on a quiet side street in District 1, the busiest part of the city.

The heat was monumental, it was like being hit by a blast furnace. I could imagine US troops arriving, disconcerted by heat amidst the noise and chaos of war. Today the buzzing engines of countless motorbikes and scooters on the streets are the dominant sound, and the relative lack of traffic lights the primary source of confusion and chaos.

A cab dropped me at a small, comfortable hotel with good air-conditioning, free wi-fi and a friendly staff. I tossed my stuff in a closet and headed out in the evening heat in search of the real Vietnam. When the south fell to the NVA, the United States had been

spreading dark physiological propaganda, claiming that the northern army would perpetuate massacres and abductions, but in fact, reunification of north and south was as peaceful as could be expected after decades of war. Soldiers of the north reconnected with families in the south and trepidation and fear soon turned to homecomings and feasts.

While reconstruction after the devastation of murderous American bombardment and the deadly toxins of Agent Orange would slow initial development, Vietnam rebuilt as most Americans tried to put the war behind them. I would flip the script and take Vietnam full on.

Vietnam is one of the most interesting places I've ever visited. Its people combine intelligence and business sense, spiritualism and socialism, revolution with a desire for peace with a determination I've never experienced anywhere else. The early morning of April 30th brought massive crowds and groups of teenagers singing patriotic songs, smiling, wearing the red and yellow star of the national flag. Hammer and Sickle flags flew everywhere, including above the doors of a local McDonald's restaurant. A common incongruity. Women wore the lovely Ao Dai,



Mary Ann Vecchio cries over the body of Jeff Miller, shot and killed by the Ohio State National Guard at Kent State University on May 4, 1970

the pencil thin dress and symbol of women's independence in Vietnam and emblazoned with flags, maps of the sinewy country. It was Vietnamese women who made the difference against the Americans in the war.

No one slept, food and blankets were spread among the crowds thronging the streets and the happiness was infectious. An older woman stared at me and I thought she must want money, so I offered an American dollar. I couldn't have been more wrong. She took the bill but harbored a look of, "what kind of barbarian are you." I realized I had a lot to learn about Vietnam.

In the daylight, I got close to the dais where dignitaries and citizens gathered. I heard a sound in the sky and looked up to see the outlines as a wing of jet fighters passed overhead. Old veterans in their starched uniforms ambled through a park, their chests weighed down by medals for battles fought long ago and we saluted. The veterans seem to cherish an opportunity to clasp hands with an old enemy. I wanted to have the language skills to tell the veterans that Vietnam was never my enemy.

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ICE GESTAPO

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autonomously track people of interest and map out their family and other associates more quickly than their competitors.

Perhaps the most provocative bounty hunting firm is BI Incorporated, an immigrant-tracking subsidiary of GEO Group, the for-profit prison giant, whose fortunes have rapidly climbed following trump's re-election and the funding boom for deportation operations. With lucrative contracts for both hunting and imprisoning immigrants, their bounty hunting work could net them \$121 million by 2027.

Recently, ICE has expanded "at-large" arrests in parking lots, workplaces, and routine check-ins, and in homes, where they gain access through telling lies ("ruses") that they're trained to use. Immigrants who have followed every rule have been trapped and deported. Agents have targeted immigrant-heavy neighborhoods, conducted raids at schools and daycares, and have escalated force, while federal officials openly signal that accountability does not apply to them.

Trump's DHS has even removed previous restrictions on sensitive locations, meaning that ICE can now operate at churches, hospitals, and courthouses, threatening the inherent sanctuary of these spaces, which are meant to be safe for children, survivors and vulnerable people, turning them into enforcement zones in order to ambush innocent people, which is a violation of state laws that protect privacy, safety, and due process.

Indeed, such unlawful violations are rampant throughout the country, with ICE agents breaking state laws during raids, arrests, protests, and everyday operations. They enter homes without warrants, assault bystanders, zip-tie children, obstruct legal observers, and then hide behind their masks and federal badges, as if that makes them untouchable.

Such blatant lawlessness is happening because state officials rarely use the power they already possess. Governors, attorneys general and local prosecutors can arrest ICE agents when there is probable cause that they have violated state criminal law. That includes assault, unlawful detention, trespassing, and obstruction. They have jurisdiction. They have the authority. What they need now is popular pressure forcing them to use it! ICE agents claim "federal immunity," but no such immunity exists. Federal officers can be charged for violations of state criminal law. They can be arrested. They can be tried. And convictions under state law cannot be pardoned by the president.

While elected officials, from mayors to governors to senators and congress members all over the US have chosen to stand down, doing nothing as DHS and ICE have a free hand to do as they please, with no repercussions, tens of thousands of people all across the US have been taking to the streets to confront ICE thugs where they appear, especially since the murder of Renee Good by ICE agent Jonathan Ross. Sadly, her killing by ICE was not the first.



Anti-ICE Demo NYC -- Jan. 10, 2026

Photo by Paul DeRienzo

On July 10, 2025, farmworker Jaime Alanis García was fatally injured when he fell 30 feet from atop a greenhouse while fleeing an immigration raid in Camarillo, California. On August 12, Roberto Carlos Montoya Valdez, a father and grandfather from Guatemala, was hit by a car and died while attempting to escape an ICE raid at a Home Depot in California. On September 12, 2025, 38-year old Silverio Villegas González was shot and killed by an unnamed ICE agent while allegedly trying to flee a traffic stop in Chicago, Illinois. On New Year's Eve, Keith Porter, a father in Los Angeles, was fatally shot by an off-duty ICE agent.

An Act of Congress created DHS and ICE. Congress funds them. Congress has a responsibility to hold ICE agents accountable for their behavior and to put an end to their abuses of power. Here in New York, we must insist that Governor Hochul and Attorney General Letitia James arrest ICE agents who break state laws and protect immigrants from ICE. In addition, Hochul should be encouraged to rally the New York State Assembly to ban so-called "287g agreements," which allow ICE to "partner" with the NYPD in order to arrest and detain people. These "agreements" are an attempt to force the NYPD to collaborate with the illegal and criminal dictates of ICE thugs. It was on the very first day of his second administration that trump issued his executive order "Protecting the American People from Invasion" (Section 11), calling for the dramatic expansion of 287g agreements.

Activists are aiming to stop social media platforms from glorifying and recruiting for ICE. One platform is Spotify, the digital streaming service used by millions, that has been running paid ICE recruitment ads. One ad contains the following: "In too many cities, dangerous illegals walk free as police are forced to stand down. Join ICE and help us catch the worst of the worst, with bonuses up to \$50,000 and generous benefits." This is not harmless recruitment language - it is outrageous and dehumanizing propaganda that calls on music listeners to enlist in the ICE gestapo. Spotify CEO Daniel Ek, whose North American headquarters is located at 4 World Trade Center, 150 Greenwich Street, 62nd Floor is encouraged to drop ICE ads and promotion from Spotify.

In New York City, preparation has been ongoing with the looming threat of an ICE and Pentagon invasion of our town. A myriad of groups and organizations are consolidating their efforts to defend our immigrant neighbors and the residents of this city. The New York Immigration Coalition has prepared an info sheet on rights in the workplace which you can access here: <https://www.nyic.org/resources-training/kyr/>

NYC residents who are concerned for the well-being of our immigrant neighbors are encouraged to contact NYC ICE Watch if they see any suspicious and potentially dangerous ICE activity: NYC ICE Watch-DM via IG @nycicewatch

Defend the Immigrant Community, Defend One Another! Defund the ICE Gestapo! Justice for Renee Good and all the victims of ICE terror!

TRUMP THREATENS INSURRECTION ACT

According to a CBS news report (1/15/26), president trump tweeted: "If the corrupt politicians of Minnesota don't obey the law and stop the professional agitators and insurrectionists from attacking the patriots of I.C.E. ... I will institute the INSURRECTION ACT ... and quickly put an end to the travesty that is taking place in that once great state."

A nationwide federal declaration of the Insurrection Act of 1807 could lead to a declaration of martial law. The Act gives the president broad authority to deploy troops and enlist state militias to carry out "law enforcement" functions whenever and wherever he determines that "unlawful obstructions, combinations, or assemblages, or rebellion against the authority of the United States, make it impracticable to enforce the laws of the United States." Trump could deploy troops "as he considers necessary to enforce those laws or to suppress the rebellion," says Joseph Nunn, a counsel at the Brennan Center for Justice. How long troops can be used is up to trump. "There are no procedural requirements ... It's just open-ended. The president does it. He does it on his own say so, and he doesn't have any particular criteria to follow."

The 1878 Posse Comitatus Act generally forbids use of the military for such "law enforcement" purposes. But the Insurrection Act provides a statutory exception -- invoking it means that Posse Comitatus does not apply.

If US troops, abiding by the Constitution, balk at trump's illegal orders and/or popular resistance of democratic and revolutionary forces across the US becomes a serious concern for trump and his coterie of thugs, the wannabe dictator can then invoke martial law, which allows for the suspension of Habeas Corpus, the right to be brought before a court to determine if one's imprisonment is lawful.

Habeas Corpus is a foundational law that guarantees crucial protection against unlawful detention and tyranny by forcing the state to put forth a valid reason for holding someone. In the event that trump moves to assert a state of martial law, he will seek to have military government replace civilian authorities, the rationale being that civil government cannot or is refusing to follow his orders.

Once martial law is declared by trump, the military takes over executive, legislative, and judicial functions in the affected area, say New York City, in which case civilian courts and local government are suspended, while military tribunals replace civilian courts.

Hey Mayor Mamdani, issue the call: All hands on deck, the fascists are coming!

-- Frank Morales

[For more on this, see: <https://www.counterpunch.org/2025/09/12/is-martial-law-coming-next/>]

MELTING ICE!

Every time rogue thugs from various government agencies and militarized sub-groups assault or spray or kidnap or shoot at members of your community, DHS Secretary Kristi Noem, the gestapo barbie doll clown, is ready with a media announcement that blames victims of said abuses, labeling them as "domestic terrorists," while praising her mercenary predators.

Every time she has done so, her LIES have been exposed by photos and videos made and posted on social media by eyewitnesses. Now more than ever, it is paramount that encounters with thugs of the State are documented and exposed, in order to counter the State's LIES, to study their methods of operation, to identify perpetrators and to acquire evidence for future civil suits and criminal charges:

- Get CLEAR shots of license plates and vehicles (makes, models, colors) used by State thugs
- Get CLEAR shots of gear used and worn by State thugs, including identifying insignia, patches and badges, that show what agency or group said thugs are from
- Get CLEAR shots of faces and tattoos (if any), especially if and when masks are lowered by State thugs or not in use by State thugs
- Do NOT shoot video or photos that can be used by authorities to identify demonstrators - if necessary, use apps that blur faces
- Save your photos and videos on flash drives so that your camera memory is not depleted
- If possible, LIVE STREAM and/or upload your video somewhere as it is being shot, in case your camera or phone is grabbed or destroyed by State thugs

FILM ICE

DOCUMENT ATROCITIES
PROTECT YOUR COMMUNITY



In addition, you must protect your identity and privacy and thwart use of ICE tracking programs that can be used against you:

- Do NOT bring your personal cell phone to demos or protests
- Get a pre-paid mobile phone with a SIM card or a burner phone that has NO record of your name, address, credit/debit card or other personal info on you or your friends or family that you can use for recording videos and photos and for communicating with fellow demonstrators on their burner phones
- Turn off your burner phone or store it elsewhere before returning to your vehicle or home or anywhere that might reveal your identity - if you carry both your regular device and a prepaid one with you, the location of these devices can be correlated and compromise your anonymity
- If you must use your vehicle to drive to demos or protests, park far away from the action where no one can see you coming from or going to it - Automated License Plate Reader systems [ALPRs] record license plates of cars driving through an area, along with the exact time, date, and location
- Wherever possible, keep your face, hair and eyes covered, as well as identifying features, such as clothing and footwear with logos and tattoos on your body - fake tattoos, hats, goggles, wigs and inter-changeable clothing and shoes are a good idea

MY FIRST 72 HOURS IN MINNEAPOLIS AND HOW I GOT AN ICE AGENT TO SCREAM “MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN”

The activists on the ground are doing the work that should give you hope.

By Chris Armitage

Author's note: All identities have been anonymized and names changed to protect the privacy of involved parties.

[January 12, 2026] I've been in Minneapolis for three days now. It started with an open call to my Substack looking for someone to help show me the situation out here since the January 7 murder of Renee Good. A suburban mom picked me up from where I was staying. She takes days off during the week and gives up her weekends to do this work, fitting resistance into the same schedule as raising her kids and running a household. She's one of the most effective grassroots activists I've ever met. She introduced me to a handful of the 13,000 trained legal observers operating in the Twin Cities, people embedded in networks of up to 1,000 volunteers who respond to ICE reports within minutes. When a sighting comes in, they honk horns and blow whistles to warn neighbors. They show up. They bear witness.

Over 72 hours, I watched these networks mobilize again and again. Calls came in from everywhere. We responded to an apartment complex where residents reported ICE agents going door to door, with accounts of agents kicking doors in. We went to a high school where armed agents had been spotted walking the perimeter of school property carrying rifles. Nurses called from a hospital saying agents were circling the building while they hid frightened children inside. At every location, the same pattern: agents cursing, screaming, physically threatening people, saying they'd arrest observers who weren't committing any crime.

Reports came in of community members being followed by ICE agents. People were being driven off the road. Agents were escalating their threats and their force.

I spoke with a pastor's wife, who has been coordinating mutual aid efforts and responding to locations where agents were screaming at observers. She told me a local church had to cancel their Christmas Eve service because a family in the congregation had gone missing and the entire community was paralyzed with fear. She told me about a Hispanic school teacher, an American citizen, who was badly beaten by ICE agents and then released. The teacher took her family and fled the area because they were too scared it would happen again. Later that day, two other people mentioned a teacher who had been beaten. I said I'd heard about that. They said no, this was a different teacher.

A big march happened while I was there. I watched Native Americans in traditional regalia, saging the streets and leading the procession. There was something powerful about Indigenous people, who know better than anyone what it means to have armed agents of the state come for your community, taking the lead in this brutal moment.

Later that day, I called Attorney General Keith Ellison's office. I left a voicemail asking why there wasn't an arrest warrant out for Jonathan Ross [the ICE agent who shot and killed Renee Good]. I asked why his office wasn't calling for arrests when masked, unidentified individuals assault members of our community. I mentioned Renee Good, whose murder looked for all the world like a carjacking gone wrong. I'm still waiting for answers that don't feel like they come from an alternate reality where our government functions properly.

We went to the Whipple Federal Building, where ICE stages out of and also where activists have had a near 24/7 presence for days. When I arrived, Representative Ilhan Omar was inside for a meeting. ICE agents started screaming at the demonstrators. "Get back, bitch," one

of the agents yelled. A protester responded with "you are monsters." The agents began shaking their huge pepper spray canisters and one gave a quick spritz of pepper spray while another fired a couple of pepper rounds into the crowd. None caught their mark and they seemed more like warning shots.

Later in the day, someone in the crowd showed me a video of an agent provocateur at that same location, who had slipped in among the protesters. He walked up, burned an American flag, and immediately left. People followed him, asking questions. He refused to answer and disappeared. He was there for exactly one reason: to create a news clip for oligarch media to use as propaganda.

Then we got the call: ICE was harassing patrons at a gym. We responded and found plainclothes officers walking out, putting on their face coverings as they exited. Calls had come in that they were inside harassing Hispanic patrons, saying they were ICE, demanding papers. I tried to film quietly, just observing from a distance. One of the officers clocked me immediately. "You're not slick," he said. The video has the full play by play, but the exchange led to me saying, "I just don't want to get shot." That's when he screamed it. "MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN BITCH." I repeated myself. "I don't want to get shot." "Are you threatening me?" he demanded. "I'm using my First Amendment rights," I said. "You want to get arrested?" "For saying don't shoot me?" Him and another officer had their hands on their guns now, moving toward me. I shut my mouth and walked away.

Here's what I learned: you want to make an ICE agent angry? They didn't care about people shouting "NAZI" at them. Didn't faze them at all. But tell them you don't want to get shot and watch them melt down like the MAGA snowflakes they are. That phrase, that simple expression of wanting to stay alive, sent this guy into a rage. These guys can murder and get away with it. They can arrest people for any reason or no reason. Do they have jurisdiction or authority to do so? No. Will they be punished for it? I'm not seeing any evidence they will.

On the ground, one person told me



Friend Eric J Garcia on facebook or follow at [@instagram](https://www.instagram.com/elmacheteillustrated).

"they could do a George Floyd or a Renee Good every single day and face no consequences. And the people most capable of stopping it, our state Attorneys General and Governors, are 'prepping the national guard' and 'giving people tip lines to track this info.' We are past 'prep' and 'document.' We need to actually do something."

I couldn't help but see some truth there. These agents are masked and unidentified. You think they're going to jail after a few election cycles pass? You think democracy can co-exist with this? Renee Brown was a suburban mother turning her car around. If we tolerate this, we are done.

I keep getting asked: why aren't the politicians doing anything? My take? Some are compromised. Some are cowards. Some are paralyzed by procedural thinking in a moment that demands moral courage. But here's what I do know: they don't hear our demonstrations unless we're in front of their offices. Protesting at

ICE facilities is good and necessary work, but 1,000 people per day contacting the Attorney General and the Governor with specific demands will get traction. It really will. Even more so if we take the time to learn the names of state reps and contact them. If we let all these people know we need emergency executive orders to use any and all resources to protect our entire community.

Don't sue first. Do first. Why don't you let the fascists take us to court and start putting them on their heels, rather than the other way around? Why don't we make the courts stop us from putting out arrest warrants for Jonathan Ross and having all law enforcement and national guard forces in blue states shift focus to protecting the human rights and constitutional rights we have? And if the corrupt SCOTUS rules against freedom and democracy, then let them enforce that ruling.

Don't let anyone make you feel stupid

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WEAPONS MADE AND SHIPPED TO ISRAEL FROM NEW YORK + NEW JERSEY

CHALLENGE GROUP, MAERSK, IFS, G&B, CRYE PRECISION, EASY AERIAL

By Mary Jae

The United States has played an essential role in enabling Israel's genocide of the Palestinian people, serving as the backbone for financial support and military supplies. This complicity has been particularly evident in New York City, through our arms manufacturing and transportation industries. The New York-New Jersey metropolitan area is home to four of the major hubs for military cargo shipments to Israel, two of which are regulated by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

One site is John F. Kennedy International Airport in Queens [JFK]. Located adjacent to Terminal 8, Challenge Group is an international air cargo group that includes Challenge Airlines IL (Israel). Palestinian Youth Movement [PYM] researchers have concluded that Challenge Airlines IL shipments from JFK to Israel began increasing significantly after the events of October 7, 2023 at the border of Gaza and Israel, which resulted in exponential attacks by Israel on Gaza since then.

In 2025, "between July 2 and July 23, at least six arms shipments from JFK to Israel were verified through waybills, flight data, and internal records". These shipments have included firearms, tear gas, ammunition, missile launcher parts, tank parts, lasers, radars, explosives (nitrocellulose), and notably, parts for F-35 fighter jets. The "F-35I Adir" is a specialized Israeli variant of the high-precision F-35 plane manufactured by Lockheed-Martin, designed for aerial strike operations. Commonly referred to as "bunker busters," these jets can carry about nine tons worth of bombs and are known to target densely-populated civilian zones in Gaza, particularly refugee and "safe" zones.

On the local level, the shipments have raised various concerns for the safety of airport employees and unknowing travelers. Researchers from The Ditch have explained that, "The concentrated amounts of nitrocellulose are notable and prompt safety concerns for both civilians and workers". These containers travel alongside unsuspecting commuters, whether in trucks on highways or under passenger aircraft. They are often deceptively labeled and mixed in with regular cargo, presumably to prevent outcry and to protect the image of the cargo companies. In an interview with Mondoweiss, an anonymous JFK cargo worker described the process of working with these shipments: "When pallets show up wrapped and labeled 'confidential' or 'secret,' we know not to ask questions. They bypass normal screening. We just load them."

Another shipping hub is located in Port Elizabeth, New Jersey, owned and operated by APM Terminals, the port operating company for the world's second-largest shipping conglomerate, A.P. Møller - Maersk (Maersk). Maersk has been crucial in supplying the Israeli military with its deadliest weapons-they've "shipped the wings for every Israeli F-35 delivered since at least March 2022, including those for five more Israeli F-35s scheduled for delivery by 2028." They were caught facilitating the expansion of illegal Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territories by conducting shipments for businesses in the United Nations' Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR) database, such as Comasco, EXTAL, and Twitoplast. As these businesses have provided the materials for and expedited the Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Syrian Golan Heights, Maersk's involvement is a direct violation of international law.

In June 2025, the combination of extensive research reports and public pressure from the PYM's "Mask Off Maersk" campaign scared the company into finally complying with the UN OHCHR regulation by halting cargo and business activity associated with the settlements. However, Maersk continues to facilitate arms ship-

ments for Israel in Port Elizabeth through cargo ships such as LARS MAERSK and MAERSK STRALSUND, which have been labelled as carrying Hazard A (major) materials, the classification for high-level hazards that pose serious risk for environmental damage.

In March 2025, the Port Authority extended its lease with APM Terminals as part of the "Port Master Plan 2050," investing over \$500 million to double or triple cargo capacity within the next thirty years. 2025 has been one of the busiest years for the Port Authority to date, with its export rate already exceeding 8 million tons per year. Not so coincidentally, many on the Port Authority board have extensive histories of backing Israel and the military-industrial complex, including Winston C. Fisher, a member of the United Jewish Appeal's committee, a group known for its long-standing fundraising in support of Israel, and Marie Therese Dominguez, who oversaw policy and budget direction for the Army Corps of Engineers at the US Department of Defense.

In late November 2025, PYM and Progressive International [PI] released a shocking joint report confirming that one privately-owned warehouse in Jersey City has been responsible for providing the Israeli Ministry of Defense [IMOD] with 91% of all Israel-bound arms sea exports that haven't passed through a US military base. This warehouse is run by three companies: Interglobal Forwarding Services [IFS], G&B Packing Company, and G&G Services. IFS controls logistics and administrative tasks, G&B handles packages and loads supplies into trucks, and G&G uses its trucks to ship gear to local ports, working directly with cargo carriers, like Maersk and ZIM at Port Elizabeth and JFK Airport.

The start of the IFS and G&B family companies dates to the Grossman family in 1947, the exact year when the IMOD was founded. The IMOD operates a major purchasing and logistics office in New York City called "The Mission," which, its website explains, is to efficiently perform procurement for the Israel Defense Force [IDF] and help strengthen Israel's security in times of calm and crisis. In the 1980s, IFS expanded into arms shipping to Israel with Interglobal Shipping 3001 and Interglobal Cargo (their related entities), and, around 20 years later, began contracting with the US Department of Defense.

Currently owned by Lawrence and Stanley Grossman, this singular operation has processed about 878 tons of sea cargo and up to 525 tons of air cargo every week, from January to August 2025, averaging over 1,000 tons of total military cargo per week. These shipments have included, but are not limited to, Merkava tank parts, MK-84 bomb bodies, rifle ammunition, F-16 aircraft parts, HEMTTs and FMTVs (tactical trucks), armored personnel carrier hulls, and about 364 tons of highly explosive smokeless powder.

In 2008, IFS came under investigation for failing to obtain licenses, a federal offense indicative of their shoddy business practices. As almost all their military shipments are sent out to Israel, IFS, and all of its associates, have now violated the Leahy Law, the US War Crimes Act, the Geneva Convention Implementation Act, the Arms Export Control Act, the Foreign Assistance Act, the Arms Trade Treaty, and the Genocide Convention, which all prohibit any authorization of shipment and supply of arms that are used for war crimes and genocide.

Along with the steady stream of arms shipments in our air terminals and ports in New Jersey and Queens, military manufacturing, research, and development for Israel is happening right by

the East River at the city-owned Brooklyn Navy Yard complex, with tenants such as Nanotronics, Honeybee Robotics, Newlab, Qunnect, Pliant Energy, Nanov Display, Crye Precision, and Easy Aerial. While all these companies have ties to Israel, Crye Precision and Easy Aerial have been singled out by activists as the most egregious offenders. Crye Precision (located at Building 128) is an industry-leading supplier of military apparel and accessories that has provided the IDF, US police departments, and the Department of Homeland Security [DHS], with comfortable, practical, and protective tactical gear and camouflage. Building 77 is used by Easy Aerial, which calls itself a "fine art/photography" business on the Brooklyn Navy Yard website. In reality, Easy Aerial is an American aerospace company founded by ex-Israel Occupation Force [IOF] soldier Ido Gur that "specializes in design, development, and manufacturing of robotic systems that automate monitoring and surveillance".

The drones they manufacture, utilizing artificial intelligence and surveillance data, monitor Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories and automatically trigger security alarms. Without the need for a human operator, these drones make it easier to scope out potential targets with lethal accuracy. During an event for the launch of the NYC-Israel Chamber of Commerce in March 2022, Easy Aerial announced a collaboration with then-Mayor Eric Adams, offering automated drones to the NYPD with a "goal to put an eye in the sky in zero time" to enhance security across New York. Their devices have already been used by US Customs and Immigration and Customs Enforcement [ICE] to oversee the Mexican border.

In November 2024, the newest AI drones began being used by police precincts in primarily working-class black and brown neighborhoods, such as Tremont, East Flatbush, Crown Heights, East New York, Prospect Lefferts, and Cypress Hills, as part of the NYPD's "Drone as First Responders" program. Out of all the tenants at the Navy Yard, Crye Precision and Easy Aerial are two of the largest military tech manufacturers, providing plenty of material for not only the murder of the Palestinian people, but also the mass deportation of immigrants in America, and heightened state surveillance of New York's communities most vulnerable to police brutality.

Since the immense build-up of information about New York City's active military supply chains, several movements have emerged to resist complacent local institutions. Demilitarize Brooklyn Navy Yard [DBNY] has been organizing since 2024, with weekly pickets and outreach, pressuring local government (councilmember Lincoln Restler) and the Navy Yard's leadership (CEO Lindsay Greene) to evict Crye Precision and Easy Aerial. Their calls for anti-imperialism and anti-militarism have garnered serious attention, with support from New York City Councilmember Chi Ossé and New York State Senator Jabari Brisport, and eight arrests at their protest and blockade during the Brooklyn Navy Yard's board meeting on September 15.

In the summer of 2025, the New York City chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America [NYC-DSA] launched its arms embargo campaign "Break the Chain" as part of a larger call for a People's and Labor Arms Embargo. The campaign aims to mobilize a community of New Yorkers against the East Coast's largest supply facilitators in the Gaza genocide, through a combination of labor organizing, research, collaboration with similar groups, and garnering public pressure. More recently, autonomous

groups of action have emerged immediately following PYM's release on IFS and G&B arms shipments. During the early morning of December 8, 2025, a protest was held outside of the warehouse at 1A Colony Road in Jersey City.

While the resistance against military shipping and supply for Israel in New York is still relatively new, there is hope. In 1982, one million people marched as part of an anti-nuclear campaign, from Central Park to the UN, in America's largest protest to date. A year later, the New York City Council established the city as a Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone, prohibiting nuclear weapons from the city's territory. In recent years, arms embargoes around the world on Israel have been instrumental in interfering with the systematic ethnic cleansing of and warfare against Palestinians by cutting it at the source. Israel has demonstrated its refusal to respect ceasefire agreements, violating them at "least 738 times from October 10 to December 12".

Numerous countries have taken the responsibility upon themselves for policy change, leading by example and paving the way for others to stop funding war crimes. In 2024, French President Emmanuel Macron called for a halt in weapon deliveries to Israel in response to its involvement in Lebanon, followed by Italy's (Israel's third largest weapon supplier) announcement of its suspension of arms exports (despite admitting to honoring contracts signed before October 7, 2023). In July 2025, the Hague Group (Bolivia, Cuba, Colombia, Indonesia, Iraq, Libya, Malaysia, Namibia, Nicaragua, Oman, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and South Africa) agreed to halt any military supply or funding to Israel in order to prevent genocide. A month later, Slovenia imposed a ban on all arms trade to Israel as a diplomatic message and form of pressure to other European Union members and Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez formally announced the country's total arms embargo shortly afterwards. These halts would not have been successful or even possible without initial public pressure from smaller movements that accumulated awareness and sustained outreach.

Political action of any kind has ripple effects: it starts with groups like "Demilitarize Brooklyn Navy Yard" and "Break the Chain" working within their communities, where issues fly up the cultural ladder, and eventually, it can result in entire countries rewriting international agreements.

Targeting the financial capital of the world and its manufacturing and transportation sectors, in the country that accounts for two-thirds of arms imports to Israel, is necessary resistance to the systematic genocide of the Palestinian people and a crucial step towards severing the strongest link sustaining Israel's war machine.



**MASK OFF
MAERSK**



BDS



**PALESTINIAN
YOUTH
MOVEMENT**

BREAKING

LOGISTICS GIANT MAERSK ADDED ON OFFICIAL BDS LIST

The Palestinian Youth Movement and the Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC), have partnered on the Mask Off Maersk campaign, which will include updating the official BDS Priority Targets for Institutional Pressure list to include Maersk, the logistics giant responsible for transporting military cargo to fuel the US-enabled Israeli genocide in Gaza.

ARMS EMBARGO NOW

PALANTIR, ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, AND THE PRIVATIZATION OF TYRANNY

By A. Kronstadt

Among the biggest corporate pioneers in Artificial Intelligence today is Palantir Technologies, with total assets of \$6.03 billion as of June 30, 2025, as stated in their SEC reports. Palantir CEO Alex Karp became \$6.8 billion wealthier over the course of 2024, based on salary and stock valuations. More secretive about his annual compensation, Palantir Chairman and former CEO Peter Thiel has a net worth of \$20.8 billion as of May 2025. Thiel has managed to accumulate \$5 billion in a tax-free Roth IRA over the course of his career as founder of PayPal and as a Facebook executive, among other lucrative jobs. Thiel's resume closely parallels that of Elon Musk, going back to the founding of PayPal, and Thiel even shares a common South African background with Musk, dating back to the apartheid era. Neither of these future plutocrats was on record opposing any of the apartheid regime's policies.

What does Palantir do?

Palantir produces "software as a service," which means that it installs software on other people's computers from a master location that they own--their own cloud system--by means of which Palantir, not the client, maintains control of the software. They describe themselves as purveyors of "data aggregation systems" or "data mining systems" for managing and searching through large masses of data. However, these tools are not simply better search engines to enable the average internet user to obtain needed information. What they represent is a solution to a particular problem that the government runs into when they are surveilling us--they do not have enough human spooks to go through all of the data that they collect from scouring our e-mails and web search histories. Identifying which of us to pick as targets for further spying and harassment therefore becomes a tedious process for the Surveillance State.

Palantir's data systems are directly aimed at this problem. They enable aggregation of sensitive data on Americans across multiple agencies. US spy agencies such as NSA, CIA, FBI, and ICE, as well as state and local police, have employed Palantir to connect databases between their departments that were previously "siloed" or stored in separate data spaces that were not linked or mutually accessible among one another.

Palantir is a dominant corporation in the public sector, vying with Tesla, CVS, DoorDash, etc., for the greatest amount of capital and the most richly-remunerated top brass. Yet Palantir is largely a creation of the CIA, using government provided venture capital.

Palantir precursors: John Poindexter and Total Information Awareness

Palantir represents the continuation, in privatized form, of Total Information Awareness [TIA], a mass detection program started in 2003 by the United States Information Awareness Office.

Poindexter has a long résumé in the business of government manipulation and violence, having been president Ronald Reagan's National Security Adviser during the Iran-Contra scandal, that centered on arms trafficking to Iran between 1981 and 1986, facilitated by senior officials of the Reagan administration. Poindexter was convicted of multiple felonies for his role in the clandestine scheme to fund Contra guerrilla forces trying to overthrow the leftist Sandinista government of Nicaragua by trafficking arms to America's perennial enemy Iran, thereby violating the law on both ends. Poindexter was acting on behalf of Reagan and his advisers in circumventing Congress' ban on aid to the right-wing rebels. In addition to being the liaison between the White House and other major figures in the scheme, Poindexter engineered a secret communications channel hooking up all of the principals. His convictions were reversed on appeal after a juror revealed that he had disobeyed the judge's instruction to ignore Poindexter's earlier admissions of wrongdoing to Congress, and had thereby voted to convict him based on inadmissible, albeit true, facts. Poindexter was thus guilty but got a get-out-of-jail free card.

In the wake of Iran-Contra, Poindexter

retired from the Navy in 1987. In subsequent years, he held a series of executive positions with private companies that had a close connection with US intelligence, particularly with [DARPA], the agency responsible for developing the rudiments of the Internet during the sixties and seventies. It is during this string of private gigs that Poindexter developed his interest in data aggregation and the analysis of big data to extract patterns and predict trends and outcomes.

The passage of the PATRIOT ACT after the events of September 11, 2001 heralded Poindexter's return to government service. He was appointed to lead the Information Awareness Office [IAO] in 2002, once again under the aegis of DARPA, and announced the creation of Total Information Awareness.

While managing the largely CIA-funded companies Syntek and Saffron Technologies, Poindexter conceptualized Project Genoa, which was formally commissioned by DARPA in 1996. Genoa consisted of a bundle of software applications that enabled government spooks to predict possible terrorist attacks by extracting patterns from information in big databases. In the pre-Al era, the project was predicated on the use of human analysts in the form of employees of DARPA. This led to complaints from the intelligence community that the Genoa system was too slow.

The Genoa project was subsumed under the IAO and re-baptized as Project Genoa II, involving eleven private companies as contractors, at least three of which had been headed up by John Poindexter himself during his period in private industry. At this point, the IAO still represented a government-led effort in contrast to the present reliance of the intelligence community on private companies, in particular Palantir.

The Total Information Awareness program was dedicated to "predictive policing." Its stated mission in the post-9/11 world was to anticipate and prevent terrorist incidents before they happened. Poindexter envisioned a system where massive amounts of electronic data would be gathered from electronic communications sources encompassing raw World Wide Web data: blogs, e-mails, chats, and texts. This data was routinely gathered by agencies such as FBI, CIA, and NSA, as well as army and navy intelligence. Each of these entities was granted access to TIA's infrastructure via a dedicated "node." However, in this early period, information was still in individual "siloes" associated with the agency that gathered it, and one of the main tasks assigned to the IAO, and later to Palantir, was to overcome this problem.

What we know about the extent of such data gathering, carried out chiefly under an infrastructure set up by NSA, called xKEYSCORE, comes from Edward Snowden's 2013 WikiLeaks revelations. xKEYSCORE, which remains a top government spying system, consists of a global network of approximately 700 servers spread over 150 sites. The Linux-based software application has been shared with a long list of traditional US allies, particularly the "Five Eyes" (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, UK, with the US as number five) and enables the integration of information gathered from spying devices, information obtained from US and foreign satellites, and information obtained from cooperation between the government and telecommunications agencies. This last activity has occurred on a massive scale ever since the Stored Communications Act of 1986 empowered the government to issue National Security Letters to telecom companies in lieu of a warrant, ordering them to disclose basic information such as name; address; local and long distance telephone connection records, or records of session times and durations; length of service (including start date) and types of service utilized; telephone or instrument number or other subscriber number or identity, including any temporarily assigned network address; and means and source of payment for service (including any credit card or bank account number) of a subscriber. All of this information would be compiled in xKEYSCORE.

In addition to the NSA's xKEYSCORE, Poindexter's IAO sponsored the Genisys project, whose purpose was described

officially by the IAO as the creation of "ultra-large, all-source information repositories." The data obtained from these post-9/11 snooping projects became the raw material for subsequent public and private efforts to create data mining software that would enable government employees to conveniently search through these mountains of information that were being compiled.

From TIA to Palantir: Poindexter meets Thiel

Palantir can be viewed as a re-imagining of Total Information Awareness and perhaps of DARPA itself, as part of the private sector. A mixture of public outrage about government snooping combined with a general bias toward privatization on the part of both Democrats and Republicans drove the transition.

Perhaps to the credit of Congress and the people of the US generally, the Total Information Awareness program had not been in existence very long before attracting scrutiny from the legislative branch. Owing to the work of Democratic Senators Russ Feingold and Ron Wyden, in February, 2003, Congress suspended the activities of the IAO, pending a Congressional report on its surveillance programs. In its ensuing report to Congress, the name of the program was changed to "Terrorism Information Awareness," and the part of the program dealing with information gathering on Americans was soft-pedaled, with Poindexter & Co. trying to spin the whole thing as a research program. Funding for TIA was permanently cut off on Oct. 1, 2003, when President George W. Bush signed the Defense Appropriations bill that included an amendment de-funding the program. Bush was not defending our civil liberties by doing this, but he and Poindexter had something else in mind.

At this point, Poindexter already had plans for outsourcing the projects essential to TIA to private industry. Poindexter was introduced to Peter Thiel via Richard Perle, alongside whom Poindexter had worked in the Reagan and first Bush White House, being best known as one of the architects of the 1990-1999 Gulf War. Poindexter explained to Thiel about TIA and the problem of sorting through the continually expanding silos of data being gathered to make the information accessible to the different law enforcement and espionage agencies who needed to use it. The central goal would be to reduce the number of human analysts needed to perform the still non-automated tasks of sorting the data and ultimately identifying the targets.

Palantir's "data aggregation" software is the evolutionary offspring of the programs that Thiel developed in concert with Elon Musk for security purposes when they both managed PayPal. The PayPal software detected patterns of anomalies which served as flags for illegal activity of interest to both the company and law enforcement. Typical Silicon Valley investors were shy about investing in expensive software platforms for large organizations, and perhaps of doing business directly with the government. In founding Palantir, Thiel ended up relying on his own money to the tune of \$30 million, combined with \$2 million from In-Q-Tel, the CIA's own venture capital firm.

If we wish to actually visualize the nexus at which capitalism is joined to the State and merges with it, we should take a good look at In-Q-Tel. It is a private company, ostensibly a non-profit, which was founded by and serves the interests of the CIA. The driving force in creating In-Q-Tel was former Director of National Intelligence George Tenet--its first CEO was video game mogul Gilman Louie and its first Chairman of the Board was Norman R. Augustine, the president of Lockheed-Martin aircraft. In-Q-Tel functions in much the same way as any other venture capital firm, except that it concentrates on technology that the CIA brass believe has potential with regard to the mission of the agency. In their own words, In-Q-Tel's executives view their firm as a "mission partner," bringing together government projects and up-and-coming private companies. With multi-billion dollar plans focused almost exclusively on selling sur-

veillance software to law enforcement and intelligence agencies, Thiel had greater need for In-Q-Tel as a mission partner than for their rather modest monetary investment of \$2 million.

Thus, we can see that Palantir, the hothouse and pioneer extraordinaire of the present expansion in artificial intelligence, grew directly out of the intelligence community in the early years of the 21st century. In evolutionary terms, the spying function is the backbone of all of its AI software, and utilization of Palantir's flagship product Palantir Gotham for any non-surveillance business purpose is an afterthought and perhaps even a deviation from Thiel's core mission. Business analysts who focus on the "AI bubble" despair that private industry lags far behind the government in the adoption of AI. But this is no surprise when we see that the main pipeline of AI research has been in the service of warfare and police surveillance, and retooling these systems, for example, to control assembly lines and do telemetry in factories, is a tedious process involving expensive human participation. Indeed, Palantir Metropolis, the company's main application that is intended for sale to private business, is a retooled version of the spying software Palantir Gotham, and is mostly noted for its ability to surveil e-mails and other office communications to detect disgruntled employees, with a view toward punishing them.

Palantir:

Total Information Awareness 2.0

Palantir Gotham replaces and re-embodies the following programs that were part of Poindexter's Total Information Awareness.

- Human identification at a distance: This includes, but is not limited to, facial recognition, a big part of Palantir's current business. Palantir software is not just geared to detecting individuals in a crowd, but to analyzing patterns of the appearance of multiple individuals in certain places in order to flag locations for police action, or even for a missile strike. Thus, facial recognition is bundled together with what Palantir calls "data aggregation."

- Unification of data depositories: Known as the Genisys project under Poindexter's Information Awareness office, the idea here was to unify all of the data collected by various agencies so that, for example, data gathered by the NSA is available to FBI agents via a simple search engine. The goal would be to eliminate the separate "silos" of data gathered by each agency.

- Evidence detection and link extraction: This project of TIA has morphed into what we have described above as Palantir's data aggregation business. Different data from different sources become linked together, e.g. facial recognition becomes linked to all manner of data gathered by different government agencies. A person walks through a door and a machine recognizes their face. You can then picture the face being linked to a big database of other information about the person, driver's license, immigration data, encounters with law enforcement. Furthermore, with Palantir products, if your name appears in the database of local police, that information is linked to the corresponding databases of the FBI, NSA, etc., and perhaps even to those of foreign agencies, particularly those of the "Five Eyes" powers.

Thiel and Karp have suggested as their ultimate goal that Palantir Gotham become the operating system for computers in general, replacing Windows and Mac OS and placing all data on earth in a spy database as soon as it is typed.

Palantir and Israel's War in Gaza

The above discussion summarizes the powers of Palantir Gotham, which is essentially Palantir's flagship product, with both military and spying capacities. Gotham is not just a specialized app, but a kind of operating system that can be adapted by the use of add-ons and reprogramming to serve more specialized purposes. Palantir Gotham was originally called "Palantir Government," but was given a less threatening name inspired by Batman comics. Indeed, the name Palantir itself was the

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Open Letter to Zohran Mamdani-Political Moderate

By Ralph Nader

Dear Mayor-elect Mamdani,

It should not come as a surprise to alert citizens that your decisive victory in the Mayoral race has prompted your opponents - the privileged super-rich and their indentured servants in City Hall - to label you as an "extremist," "radical," or, in Trump's view, a "communist." How ludicrous! Your affordability agenda is hardly immoderate. Many Democratic politicians have taken these positions over time.

Free bus fares exist in some municipalities in the US, including Kansas City, Missouri, Tucson, Arizona, and Alexandria, Virginia. Proposing half a dozen city-run grocery stores in New York City's "food deserts" (meaning a geographic area with limited access to affordable, healthy food options) is hardly radical. You could even have them structure these stores as consumer cooperatives (owned by consumers). Food co-ops have existed in numerous communities in the US for years. Your rent stabilization proposal is not uncommon - many large cities have rent controls to protect powerless tenants from avaricious landlords, especially from today's very large corporate landlords with their fine-print contract peonage. Also, there are cities in the US offering partially publicly-subsidized child care. New Mexico just launched a statewide universal child-care program.

The social democratic countries in Europe and other countries, including Canada, have long had much broader social safety nets that go far beyond what you have proposed.

What the oligarchy and large corporations really do not like about you is that you are projecting a consistent and wide-ranging voice for the people, the workers, the poor, and the powerless in the corridors of political power of City Hall. They have had long-game statism, or a corporate state, at the local, state, and federal levels, with little opposition by the two-party duopoly.

Regarding your self-description as a democratic socialist, that doesn't pass the laugh test. You are not arguing for nationalization of banks and insurance companies, utilities, nor even, to our knowledge have you called for a "public bank," which has existed so effectively in North Dakota (now a Republican stronghold) founded in 1919.

You call for increasing taxes on the under-taxed super wealthy and large corporations. So do over 80% of the American people. Pretty normal.

Indeed, President Donald Trump has become a corporate socialist par excellence. As The New York Times reported on November 25, 2025 ("\$10 Billion and Counting: Trump Administration Snaps Up Stakes in Private Firms"), the Trump administration has de-facto partly nationalized an array of private companies for ulterior political motives under the contrived banner of national security. The companies include Intel, US Steel, Westinghouse, Vulcan Elements, and MP Materials. This invites bribery by other means, i.e. a Trump donation in exchange for an administration sweetheart investment. The fabled Central Intelligence Agency now features a venture capital firm, In-Q-Tel, ostensibly to fund commercial technologies to fortify the US intelligence community and the Department of Defense. But under Trump, partisan political motives likely will inform the CIA's investment portfolio.

As for taking a stand on pending

legislation ending the unconscionable daily electronic rebate of tens of millions of dollars in stock transaction taxes (a progressive tiny sales tax of one-tenth of one percent on stock sales), you have been AWOL, despite urgings by your numerous colleagues in the state legislature to sign on to a bill that would end the rebate and specifically allocate the many billions of dollars annually to mass transit, education, health care and environmental protection.

So far, your silence has put you to the RIGHT of former Mayor MICHAEL BLOOMBERG. During his presidential run in 2020, he said:

"Harness the power of the financial system to address America's most pressing challenges. Introduce a tax of 0.1% on all financial transactions to raise revenue needed to address wealth inequality, and support other measures - such as speed limits on trading - to curb predatory behavior and reduce the risk of destabilizing 'flash crashes.'

Note: Bloomberg goes beyond a sales tax on STOCK transactions, to include all financial transactions (such as bonds and derivatives).

In addition, a New York Times op-ed of April 17, 2000, by ROBERT E. RUBIN - big banker and former Treasury Secretary under Clinton - wrote, urging increasing revenues, "on a highly progressive basis, for example, by increasing corporate taxes, restoring individual rates, repealing pass-through preferences, AND IMPOSING A FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS TAX (our emphasis.)"

Some reporters may wish to ask you, "Why, as a democratic socialist, are you to the RIGHT of Bloomberg and Rubin when it comes to tiny sales tax mostly on Wall Street's high-frequency stock trades?"

As for your plans to expand the housing supply in New York City to make housing more affordable, all kinds of efforts are underway to do this around the country, including in the California high-priced housing market.

Check out the National Cooperative Bank in Washington, DC, which provides loans to consumer co-op models in housing, food and other areas of economic activity. The Bank was established in 1978 with our support, by the Carter Administration, and then spun off by the Reagan regime. It might be useful in funding your housing and grocery store initiatives.

There is one more example in which you are conventional. So far, you are part of the class of public servants, which we have described as "incommunicados" when it comes to working closely with progressive civic leaders and citizen groups. **[See "The Incommunicados" by Ralph Nader and Bruce Fein at: <https://incommunicadoswatch.org/>.]** Put simply, it is too hard for many progressive advocates to get through to you or your top aides. You may wish to assign a staffer as a liaison to these groups whose ideas, experience, and endurance can be of signal assistance to what will probably be a turbulent tenure.

Be guided by the adage that "**NONE OF US ARE AS SMART AS ALL OF US.**"

May you succeed and put forces in motion throughout the state and country of a deliberative democracy in successful action with sound civic engagement. The cardinal pillar of a democracy, worthy of the name, is JUSTICE, for without justice there is no freedom and liberty for the people. We anticipate your considered response.

WHY NEW YORK CITY NEEDS A PUBLIC BANK

By Ellen Brown

"We will build a city-owned bank - not to serve shareholders, but to serve you. A bank that invests in housing, in transit, in climate resilience. A bank that puts our money to work for our people."

-Zohran Mamdani, Victory Speech, November 4, 2025

New York City has elected a mayor who dares to challenge the status quo. Zohran Mamdani swept into office on a platform of affordability, municipal ownership and economic justice. But Mamdani's plan to fund his reforms through \$9 billion in new taxes on corporations and high earners is already bumping up against political and fiscal realities.

Income taxes are the province of the state, not the city, and NY State Governor Kathy Hochul is standing firm in her resistance to raising them. President Trump has vowed to "cut off the lifeline" to the city, pledging to reduce federal aid to the legal minimum. And Mamdani's proposals are said to be triggering capital flight. Wall Street is mobilizing. The city's budget is strained. So where will the money come from?

The Public Bank Alternative

Raising taxes on the wealthy is not Mamdani's only funding proposal. His vision for economic justice and municipal ownership also includes a public bank. In his June 2025 primary speech, he pledged to create a city-owned bank to fund housing, transit and climate resilience - calling it "a tool to break Wall Street's grip on our future." In his victory speech on November 4, 2025, he again referenced public banking as a pillar of his economic agenda. He described the election as "a mandate for change" and a rejection of politics "that answers only to the few."

These statements align with his legislative record. Mamdani was a co-sponsor of Assembly Bill A3352, the New York Public Banking Act, and he has consistently advocated for public finance alternatives during his tenure in the State Assembly.

What Is a Public Bank and What Can It Do?

A public bank is a bank owned by the people through their government (local or federal). It can hold public funds, issue loans for public purposes and reinvest profits in the community. This is not a utopian idea; it's a proven model. The proof is in an unlikely state, conservative North Dakota.

While New York City entrusts its public funds to Wall Street banks - paying billions in interest to private lenders - the state of North Dakota has taken a radically different approach. Its public funds are held in the Bank of North Dakota [BND], a state-owned institution that reinvests profits locally, finances infrastructure, and cushions the blow of economic shocks. While NYC relies on private-profit-driven banks to finance public needs, BND operates as a public utility - prioritizing resilience, affordability and sovereignty.

How North Dakota Escaped the Shutdown

This difference has become particularly evident during the 2025 federal government shut down. While other states suffered SNAP disruptions and budget shortfalls, North Dakota leveraged BND funds without waiting for Washington:

No state employees were furloughed, despite federal funding interruptions.

The BND launched the Furloughed Federal Employee Relief Program, issuing nearly \$1 million in emergency loans to federal workers, including those at Minot and Grand Forks Air Force bases.

It rolled out a \$1.5 million food assis-

tance package to offset SNAP disruptions.

It developed a debt refinancing program for farmers, responding to high interest rates, low commodity prices, and inflation.

BND's 2024 Performance: A Model for NYC

According to its latest annual report, the BND has over \$10.8 billion in assets and more than \$200 million in net income, much of it reinvested in agriculture, education, and sustainable development. More than \$1 billion was transferred to the state's general fund and special programs through 2018, most of it in the previous decade. That is a substantial sum for a state with a population that is only about one-tenth that of New York City (780,000 versus 8.3 million). The BND keeps interest payments in-state, funds infrastructure and cushions shocks that would seriously impair other states' budgets. In October 2024, Truth in Accounting's annual Financial State of the States report rated North Dakota #1 in fiscal health, with a budget surplus per taxpayer of \$55,600.

The average ROE(return on equity) of the BND from 2000 through 2023 was 19.4%. Compare JPMorgan Chase (JPM), by far the largest bank in the country, with \$2.4 trillion in deposits. Its average ROE from 2000-23 was 11.38% over the same period. New York City pays an estimated \$4 billion annually in interest to private banks - money that could instead be recycled through a municipal bank to fund housing, transit and clean energy.

How could the BND have outperformed JPM, the nation's largest bank? The BND has substantially lower costs and risks than private commercial banks. It has no exorbitantly paid executives; pays no bonuses, fees, or commissions; has no private shareholders, branches or ATMs; and has low borrowing costs. It partners with local banks in "participation loans," avoiding loan origination costs. It engages in old-fashioned conservative banking and does not speculate in derivatives, so it has no losses or risk from derivative trades gone wrong. It makes productive loans that are non-inflationary, avoiding loans that create bubbles and crashes.

An engaging video explaining what a public bank can do is on the website of the Public Bank NYC Coalition, which advocates for a NYC public bank [<https://www.publicbanknyc.org/resources>].

Another informative series of explanatory videos is on the Public Banking Institute website [<https://publicbankinginstitute.org/videos-podcasts/>].

How to Capitalize the Bank

New York City is well-positioned to capitalize a public bank. According to the Comptroller's FY2025 report, the city began the year with over \$10.4 billion in cash-on-hand, and it maintains an average balance of \$10.1 billion. Its annual revenues exceed \$100 billion, and its total assets—including real estate, infrastructure and pension funds—are even greater.

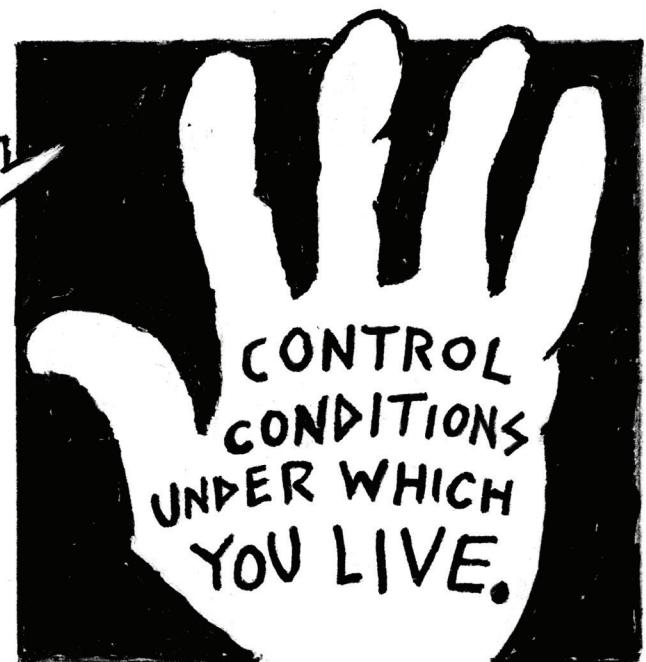
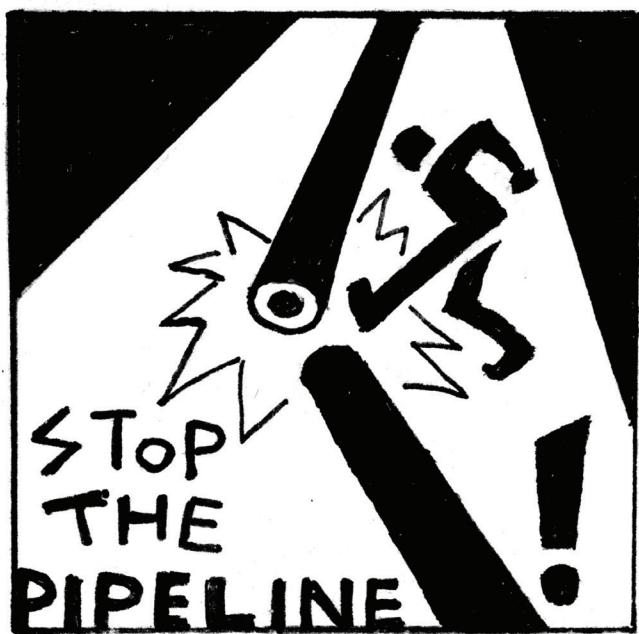
The pension funds alone are a vast reservoir of potential capital – managing nearly \$295 billion across five systems as of mid-2025. Scott Baker, Economics Editor at OpEdNews and New York State Coordinator for the Public Banking Institute, observes in a November 2025 article that current pension investments are seriously under-performing after fees. Former NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer produced a report showing that for the 10-year pension period ending in 2015, NYC pension funds generated zero ROI (return on investment) when he included \$2.5 billion in management fees.

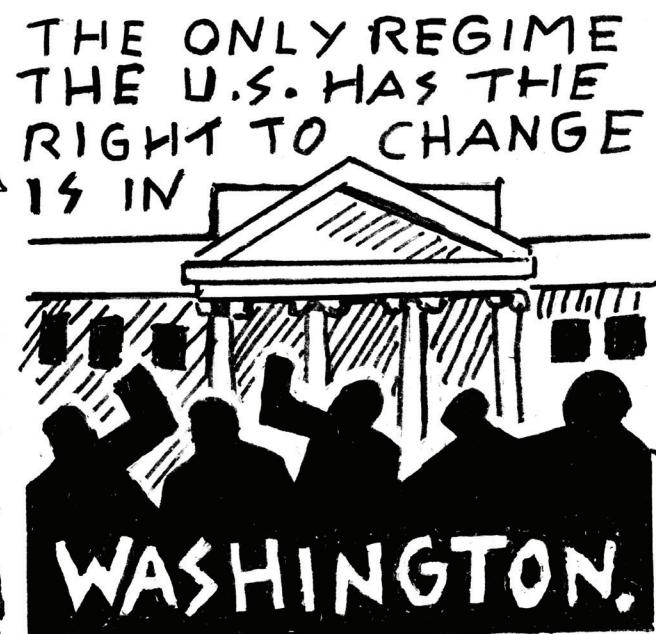
In 2024, the city contributed \$9.6 billion to the funds, while employees con-

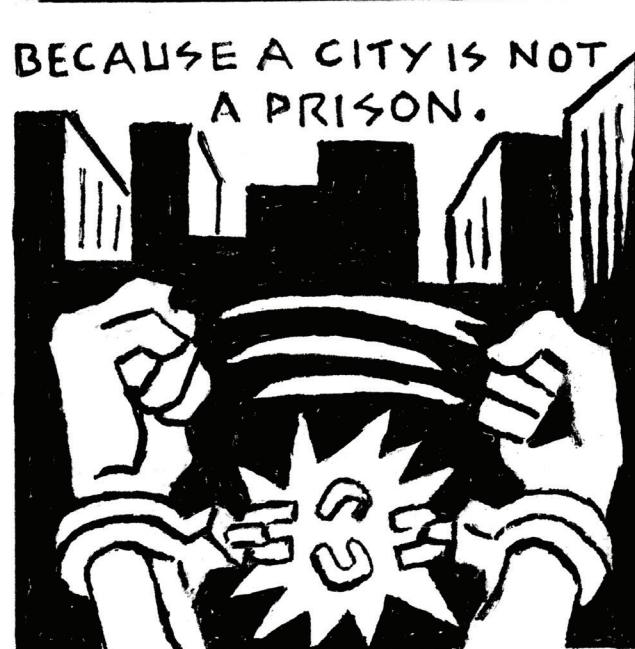
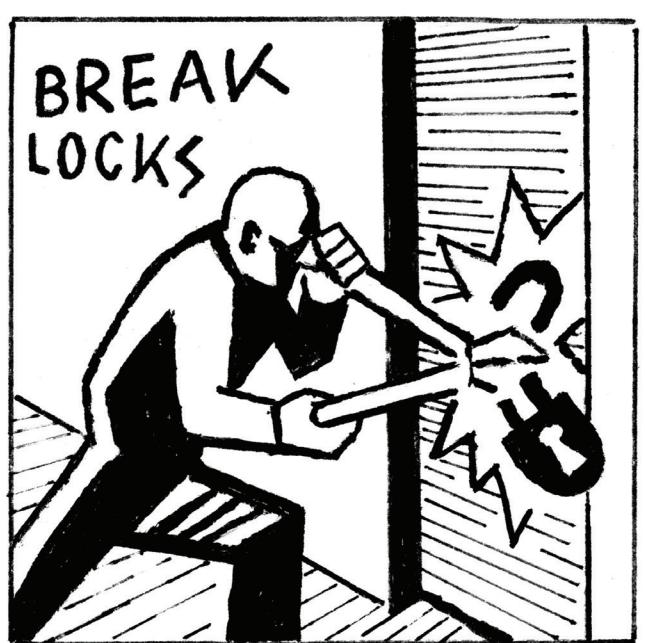
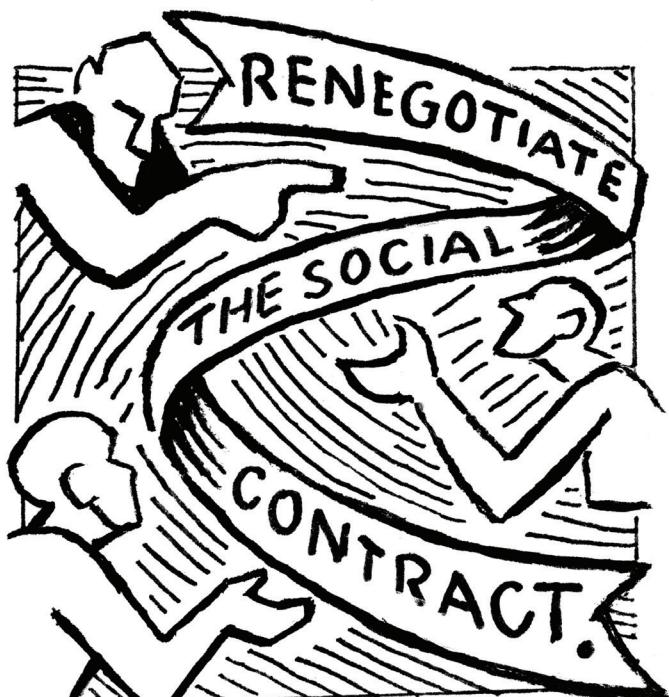


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TRUMP'S NEW FLAG BURNING LAW

By Ron Kuby, Attorney at Law

Can He Do That? What Did He Do? An occasional series.

Most of us who work an outdoor grill know that nothing adds the perfect smoky flavor like a burning American flag. Has Trump now made that illegal with his new Executive Order [**#14341 - Ed**] and claim that flag-burners face one year in jail and it will go on their permanent record? Can we still use American flags on our Labor Day grill? Emphatically—yes!

When I was a very young but adorably annoying lawyer, I worked with the great William M. Kunstler when he successfully argued *Texas v. Johnson* and *United States v. Eichmann*, the two flag-burning cases, before SCOTUS. In both cases, the Court ruled that flag-burning was protected by the First Amendment. So what did Trump actually do to change this?

The answer is nothing. You can burn a flag this week, after the Order, in the same ways you could before the Order, for the past 35ish years.

The decretal (look it up!) portion of the Order directs Pam Bondi to send a note to local officials when she thinks that incidents of flag-burning violate local "content-neutral" laws. Perhaps she can speak with Senator Schumer about composing strongly-worded letters. Thus, Order recognizes that federal authorities have zero enforcement abilities here--there is no federal law to enforce.

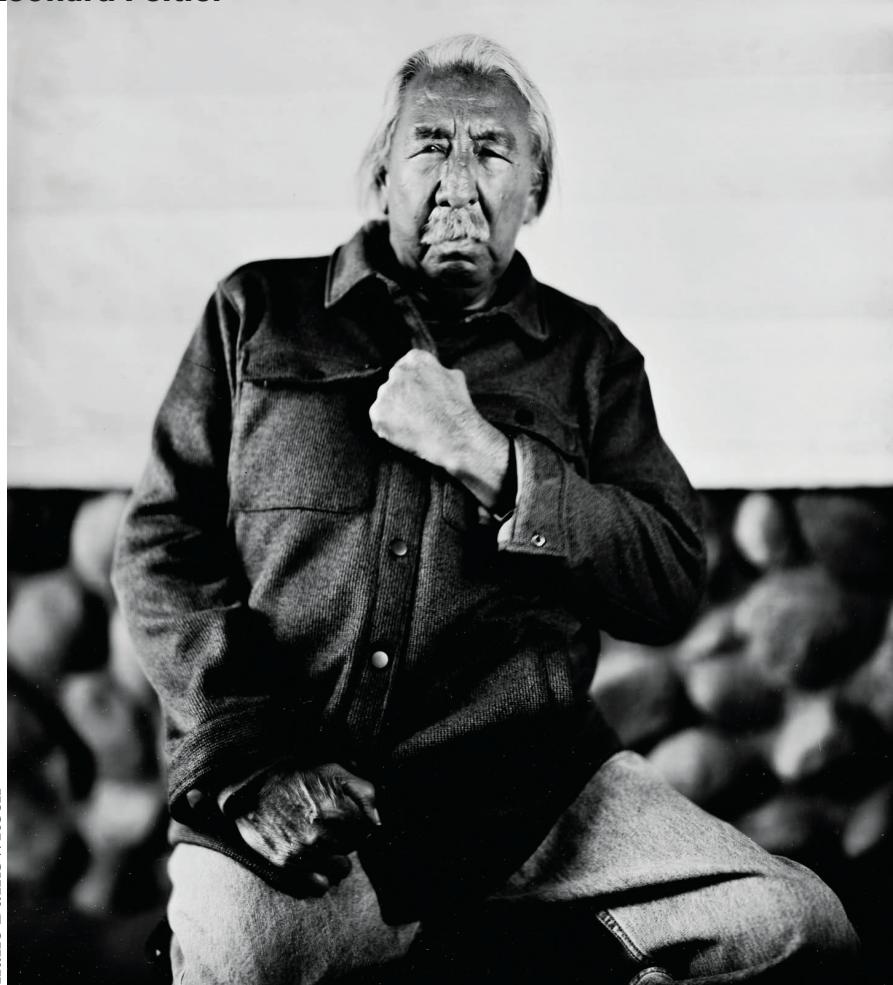
More important is the reference to "content-neutral" laws. A law is deemed to be content-neutral when it applies to all expressive conduct, without regard to message being expressed. Most locales prohibit setting fires in public streets--whether you do it with flags or gasoline does not matter. Such laws are content-neutral. Similarly, if you use an American flag to strangle someone you cannot claim First Amendment protection for the murder. Obviously, any law that targets flag-burning would be, by definition, NOT content neutral.

Left largely unreported, however, was Trump's addition of American-flag burning to the things that may result in denial or revocation of visas, or an attempt to strip Lawful Permanent Residents of their status. The Order expressly states activities protected by the First Amendment can result in such denials and revocations.

But for citizens, smoke 'em if you got' em.

"I don't know how to save the world. I don't have the answers or The Answer. I hold no secret knowledge as to how to fix the mistakes of generations past and present. I only know that without compassion and respect for all of Earth's inhabitants, none of us will survive—nor will we deserve to."

-- Leonard Peltier



Shane Balkowitsch

YOU CAN WRITE TO AMERICAN INDIAN FREEDOM FIGHTER LEONARD PELTIER and send him financial contributions (Money Orders only) at:
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Riddles of Power

On Lindsey Halligan and the Refusal of Meaning

By Sarah Kunstler, Attorney at Law

In Alice in Wonderland, there is a famous riddle. When Alice meets the Mad Hatter and the March Hare at their tea party, the Hatter asks: "Why is a raven like a writing-desk?" When Alice gives up and asks the answer, the Hatter tells her that he hasn't "the slightest idea." Neither does the Hare. "I think you might do something better with the time," Alice responds, "than wasting it in asking riddles that have no answers." Alice's response captures something essential about what it feels like to live in the United States right now.

On January 13, Lindsey Halligan, then the U.S. Attorney-in-name-only for the Eastern District of Virginia, told U.S. District Judge David J. Novak that she had the authority to continue using the title, despite the fact that another federal district judge, Judge Cameron McGowan Currie, had already dismissed the indictments of New York Attorney General Letitia James and former FBI-director James Comey on the grounds that Halligan's appointment violated both 28 U.S.C. § 546 and the Constitution's Appointments Clause.

You can read the decisions in full, but here is the essence of Judge Currie's reasoning from the Comey decision:

"In sum, the text, structure, and history of section 546 point to one conclusion: the Attorney General's authority to appoint an interim U.S. Attorney lasts for a total of 120 days from the date she first invokes section 546 after the departure of a Senate-confirmed U.S. Attorney. If the position remains vacant at the end of the 120-day period, the exclusive authority to make further interim appointments under the statute shifts to the district court, where it remains until the President's nominee is confirmed by the Senate.

"Ms. Halligan was not appointed in a manner consistent with this framework. The 120-day clock began running with Mr. Siebert's appointment on January 21, 2025. When that clock expired on May 21, 2025, so too did the Attorney General's appointment authority. Consequently, I conclude that the Attorney General's attempt to install Ms. Halligan as Interim U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia was invalid and that Ms. Halligan has been unlawfully serving in that role since September 22, 2025."

Because Halligan was appointed in violation of the statutory scheme set out in § 546, Judge Currie further found that her appointment violated the Appointments Clause of the Constitution. Judge Currie also found that "all actions flowing from [her] defective appointment, including securing and signing Mr. Comey's indictment, were unlawful exercises of executive power and are hereby set aside." The decision ends with a declaration of what must happen for an interim U.S. Attorney to be lawfully appointed:

"The power to appoint an interim U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 546 during the current vacancy lies with the district court until a U.S. Attorney is nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate under 28 U.S.C. § 541."

Judge Currie could not have been clearer: Halligan was unlawfully appointed, and her actions as U.S. Attorney were unlawful exercises of executive power. The position of U.S. Attorney is currently vacant, and the only way to fill it (other than a president nomination and a confirmation) is for the district court to appoint someone.

Yet despite this ruling, Halligan continued to identify herself as the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia in indictments returned in the district. And on January 6, 2026, Judge Novak ordered her to explain in writing why her decision to continue signing court papers as the district's top prosecutor was not "a false or misleading statement."

In her response to Judge Novak's order, Halligan accused the court of having "a fundamental misunderstanding" of Judge Currie's orders dismissing the James and Comey indictments. While Judge Currie concluded that Halligan was unlawfully appointed, Halligan argued, nothing in the court's orders explicitly prohibited her "from performing the functions of or holding herself out as the United States Attorney." In other words, the decision only affected the James and Comey indictments, and did not require Ms. Halligan "to acquiesce to that rationale in all other cases." This is not a dispute about statutory interpretation or the scope of a remedy. It is a dispute about whether judicial determinations bind anyone at all.

Let's sit with this a moment and consider the nihilism of Halligan's position. Halligan is not arguing that she was lawfully appointed. She is arguing that a judicial finding that she was not lawfully appointed does not strip her of power unless the court expressly orders her to stop. Even Judge Currie's explicit conclusion that the appointment violated the statute and the Constitution, Halligan insists, was merely an explanation for dismissing two indictments—not a determination with consequences beyond those cases.

Read the filing this way, and the riddle she is asking becomes unmistakable:

When a court rules that a government action is unlawful, who decides whether that ruling has consequences? Halligan's answer, repeated throughout the filing, is that power does.

She says this almost verbatim at the end:

"The basis for Ms. Halligan's identification of herself as the United States Attorney...is that, in the Government's view, Ms. Halligan is the United States Attorney."

Her argument never engages the actual question—whether she is lawfully the U.S. Attorney. It simply asserts the conclusion as a premise.

Riddles work by reversing the ordinary direction of explanation. A metaphor begins with something known and uses it to illuminate something unfamiliar; it offers clarity by comparison. A riddle does the opposite. It takes something that already has a stable meaning and disguises it, forcing the listener to work backward toward recognition. In doing so, a riddle transfers the burden of clarity from the speaker to the audience.

A riddle with no answer does not test intelligence; it tests endurance. It asks the listener to sit with nonsense and pretend it is meaningful, to keep searching for coherence where none exists. Over time, the listener begins to doubt not the riddle, but their own insistence that an answer should exist at all.

Stripped of its jargon, Halligan's position amounts to the claim that a court may declare an appointment unlawful, but that unlawfulness has no consequence unless the executive branch chooses to recognize it.

But this is not a riddle. When a court determines that an appointment is unlawful, that determination is not a suggestion, a thought experiment, or an invitation to debate meaning. It is a declaration of legal reality.

The danger is not that Halligan offers no answer. The danger is that she insists there is a question at all.

This is the pattern of this administration. This is how it uses power. How it demands acquiescence. How it makes itself feel inevitable. How it upends the processes by which things are supposed to work, the checks put in place to moderate it and make it answerable to us, the people living in what is supposed to be a democracy.

One week later, on January 20, Judge

Continued On Page 21

TACTICAL MEDIA

PRIVACY, TECHNOLOGY AND YOU

The internet and smart technology has transformed our everyday lives in ways we can't opt out from. In the modern age, our schools, jobs, governments, public transportation, friends, and families interact with us in ways that assume we have a smart phone and internet connection. At least it's free! Instead of paying with money, we get to pay with our full name, date of birth, geolocation data, device ID, the posts we like, what we look at, how long we look at it, what we search, what websites we visit, our phone number, our entire contacts list, our self-image, our security in our relationships, our peace of mind...

Modern technology has had extremely negative effects on our society. We are well-aware of this. Social media is flooded with jokes about the FBI agent watching us through our laptop cameras and speaking particular keywords at our friend's/family member's cell phones to influence their targeted ads. There is a whole body of research dedicated to the ways social media use impacts its users' self image and mental health. Whistleblowers like Frances Haugen and Sophie Zhang testified before Congress and British Parliament about how Facebook allows its algorithms to stoke division and spread misinformation for the sake of profit.

There are also benefits to this new way of living. Social media and digital communication software allows us to spread information to entire social networks. This has been life-saving following the many ICE raids terrorizing communities across the US. Pages like NY ICE Watch (@nyice-watch) allow community members to send in videos and photographs of ICE agents in their neighborhoods. After verifying, the team posts the time, location, descriptions of all involved, and other important details. Everyday New Yorkers can also post alerts and updates through Stories in real-time. Anyone can start a movement or a mutual aid group just by setting up an Instagram page. @freetarekbazrouk and many pages like it advocate for political prisoners by rallying for donations to commissary accounts, hosting letter-writing events, and organizing support during court appearances. @nocasinofmcp got over a thousand people out to rally against the casino that Mets owner Steve Cohen is planning to build in Queens. You don't need to file paperwork with the state or wait for major funding to make a change. As Twitter user @_afrodiiziak put it, "the revolution will not have 501(c)3 status".

Engaging with modern technology shouldn't have to mean selling ourselves to corporations, who in turn sell us to advertisers and governments, who then sell products and ideas to us. We must learn to use it in an informed and intentional manner, or we end up being the ones being used.

PRIVACY VS. ANONYMITY

Merriam-Webster defines privacy as "the quality or state of being apart from company or observation; freedom from unauthorized intrusion". In the context of this article, privacy is about who gets to access the data we generate through our internet and technology use. To be private online means the data we generate can't be seen, packaged, and sold. It doesn't mean that data can't be traced back to us.

To be anonymous is to be "of unknown authorship or origin; not named or identified; lacking individuality, distinction, or recognizability". The data you generate can't be linked back to you.

HOW CAN I STAY PRIVATE ONLINE? SHOULD I GET A VPN?

VPNs, or virtual private networks, are often recommended as a way to protect your browsing activity online. VPNs are a very



Seth Tobocman + Lasante Hoiland

common YouTube sponsorship, with NordVPN, Surfshark, and ExpressVPN being featured on channels like Sambucha, Drew Gooden, PewDiePie, Mr. Beast, and Danny Gonzalez. In the summer of 2024, we saw Mullvad ads take over the NYC subways. Popular talking points in VPN ads include protecting your information from hackers when accessing public WiFi, shielding you from government surveillance, preventing your ISP (internet service provider) from seeing the websites you access, and allowing you to access geo-locked content on streaming services.

A VPN can make your internet traffic private. It won't make you anonymous. It also won't make you private to everyone.

Most of us connect to the internet using an ISP. ISPs collect our data, and it goes far beyond web browsing data. In 2021 the Federal Trade Commission released a report on the six largest ISPs in America, finding they "combine personal, app usage, and web browsing data to target ads; place consumers into sensitive categories such as by race and sexual orientation; and share real-time location data with third-parties." Lina Khan, the FTC Chair at the time of the report, stated "users were thwarted by design decisions that made it complicated, difficult, or near-impossible to actually escape persistent surveillance."

VPNs route your traffic through a server they own. When you connect to the internet, third-parties won't see your IP address. Instead, they'll see your VPN's server's IP address. VPN companies often let you pick which server you want to use. You can even pick servers located in different countries, which is how you can access geo-locked content through VPNs. The website or app will think you are located in that other country because your IP address (as far as they know) is located there.

Using a VPN may make your data private from your ISP, but they still can have access to it since your traffic is routed through their servers. Many VPNs advertise by saying they have a "no logs" or "zero logs" policy, but this can be quite vague. Logs record many things. They record how we interact with apps, computers, and websites. They can also record app or website crashes, capturing a snapshot of the app/website that developers can use to try and figure out what caused the crash. It's reasonable for anyone running a software service to keep some kind of logs for purposes of maintaining the website. VPN users, however, have different reasons for using VPNs and have different limits to what they are comfortable with their VPN collecting. It's best if the VPN tells you exactly what they aren't logging. NordVPN, specifically states they do not log "used bandwidth, traffic logs, IP addresses or browsing data." BambooVPN implies they don't log browsing history or IP addresses through the graphics on their website. Mullvad states they do not collect traffic, DNS requests, IP addresses, connections/disconnections, bandwidth, and so on.

If your goal is to be as private as possible, consider the other kinds of information your VPN may be collecting. Many ask you to use an email address to create your

account, in which case you would want to evaluate how private your email is. If you use your card to pay for the service, your VPN will also have your name/address/card information. Privacy-focused VPNs like ProtonVPN and Mullvad accept cash and cryptocurrency for this reason.

Ultimately, unless you are auditing the VPN yourself, you don't know for sure what they are and aren't keeping track of about you. In 2017, PureVPN made the news in the cybersecurity world after working with the FBI to catch a cyberstalker. PureVPN claimed to not log user activity. During the investigation, however, PureVPN was able to link the suspect to two IP addresses leading to his arrest.

THE ONION ROUTING PROTOCOL

The Onion Routing protocol is a direct response to tracking and surveillance through the internet. Normally, your traffic is sent to your home router, then to your ISP (which logs this information), then your ISP connects you to whatever website you're browsing. Onion routing sends and encrypts your traffic through three different servers before reaching its intended destination. It does not log the websites you visit.

TOR Browser is built with the Onion Routing protocol and uses DuckDuckGo. DuckDuckGo adds an extra layer of privacy because it does not log your searches and blocks ad trackers and cookies, preventing third parties from collecting your data.

If you go on a website like whatismyipaddress.com, the website will report you are using a VPN. Both provide extra layers of privacy on the internet. A major difference, however, is that TOR is decentralized. A VPN is centralized because all your traffic is routed through one server owned by one company. TOR routes your traffic through three different servers which are owned by volunteers all over the world. A VPN is a product, TOR is a community.

You can download TOR Browser for Windows, Linux, macOS, and Android at <https://www.torproject.org/download/>

TOR Browser is available on the Play Store. It does not have an official version on the App Store but has endorsed Onion Browser, an open-source web browser.

CAN I USE A VPN WITH TOR?

This is discouraged for beginner or casual users because you can accidentally create vulnerabilities if you don't know what you are doing.

WHAT IS LINUX?

Linux is a family of operating systems. Operating systems manage the hardware and software of our computers and allow us to interact with them. Most Americans use something like Windows or macOS. Linux is different because it is open-source.

Open-source means the code is open to the public and anyone can use it. Privacy-focused individuals like open-source software because you can see exactly how the program runs and the code can be modified for personal use.

Users take Linux code and create different versions (known as distributions/distros) for different purposes. Distros have different interfaces and come with different applications and tools that align with what that distro was made for. Koda-chi is a Linux distro known for its focus on privacy. Ubuntu is a distro known for being user-friendly, so it is often recommended for beginners. Kali is a distro made with cybersecurity professionals in mind, coming with tools to assist in penetration testing and digital forensics.

Linux also isn't a for-profit company like Apple or Microsoft. Linux operating systems aren't collecting your data and reporting back to a big company or selling it to advertisers. There is the Linux Foundation, which, like the TOR Project, is a nonprofit that exists to help people learn how to use the product for themselves and foster a community. But people can use Linux without interacting with the Linux Foundation.

WHAT IS SELF-HOSTING?

Self-hosting is when you run and manage software/websites/apps on servers that you own. You control the infrastructure. Privacy-minded individuals prefer self-hosting because you have more control over where your data goes (since it will be on your servers) and you can customize your setup for your specific needs.

LET'S GET YOU STARTED ON YOUR PRIVACY JOURNEY

TEXT & CALL:

• Signal

Signal is the gold standard for privacy-focused digital communication. It's free and run by a nonprofit, so there is no need to collect and sell your data to advertisers. It's also end-to-end encrypted and open-source. End-to-end encryption means your messages will be encrypted on your device and then only decrypted once the receiver gets the message. Only you and the receiver can see what you sent. The interface has also come a long way from what it used to be, meaning you don't have to sacrifice user-friendliness for privacy. You can create groups, chat folders, and instant video chat links. You can set up disappearing chats so old messages get deleted after a certain period of time. You can customize your profile with a photo, add a username that people can use to find you, and include a bio. You can also post Stories, just like the ones on Snapchat.

Continued On Next Page



WAR IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD: The classic graphic novel created by World War Three Illustrated co-founder Seth Tobocman in 1999, republished by Ad Astra Comics and SHADOW Press in 2016, about the struggles over homelessness, gentrification, police brutality and human rights that raged on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, in the area surrounding Tompkins Square Park, through the 1980s and 1990s. This is a first hand account of New York City's squatters movement, in which abandoned buildings were seized by activists in order to create genuine low-income housing, which then had to be defended within a divided community. This updated version has 344 pages. Only \$35.00 (includes shipping + handling) - A FREE copy of The SHADOW included with your order!

Send your money order payable to: SHADOW Press, P.O. Box 20298, New York, NY 10009. All orders shipped immediately.

chat, Whatsapp, and Instagram. There is also a MobileCoin integration.

Signal has many of the same features as WhatsApp, so there isn't much of a learning curve. It's like if WhatsApp had Google Pay just for the MobileCoin cryptocurrency. It's been used by journalists, government officials, activists, and security professionals for years.

Upon downloading and opening the app, you will be prompted to create a profile using a number (VoIP numbers can work) and a name. You can use a proxy address to connect instead of a phone number, but only if you can't use mobile data or WiFi. A proxy can be found using the #SignalProxy tag on social media or you can try to set one up using your own server.

Instructions for the latter can be found at <https://github.com/signalapp/Signal-TLS-Proxy>

The only truly difficult part about switching over is convincing your social network to move to Signal with you. In order for your chats to stay encrypted, those who you are texting/calling/video chatting with must also be on the app.

Signal is available on mobile through the App Store and Google Play. You can also download it on Windows Desktop, Mac, or Debian-based Linux distros at <https://signal.org/download/>

• Session

Creating an account on Session is very simple. All you need to do is add a display name, which can be changed, and you are good to go. You will have an account ID automatically generated for you. If you want to keep your account, it's best to remember it and have your recovery password saved somewhere. You can also save your ID and password as QR codes.

In order to chat with another person, you give them your account ID/QR code or you input their ID/scan their QR code when you start a new message to them. You can set up disappearing chats, just like in Signal, so messages are deleted after a certain period of time.

On Session, you can create groups and join communities. Your profile isn't very customizable, other than changing your display name and uploading a photo. This is likely intentional, as this app mostly attracts people who want to stay anonymous and a no-frills communication service.

Session is end-to-end encrypted, decentralized, and open-source. It uses onion routing, just like TOR Browser, which you can see by clicking "Path" under your profile settings. This tells you the countries your entry and service nodes are located.

Session is available on the App Store, the Play Store, F-Droid, and as an APK. It is available on desktop for Windows, macOS, and Linux.

Download it at <https://getsession.org/download>.

VIDEO CHAT:

• Jitsi

Jitsi is free, open-source, and designed to be self-hosted. Edward Snowden famously used Jitsi to deliver a talk. The Tor Project has also endorsed Jitsi because it is encrypted and you don't need an account to use it. Jitsi can host around 75 to 100 participants, but performance begins to decline around 35 people.

The Jitsi app is available on the App Store, Google Play, and F-Droid.

You can also start an instant meeting at meet.jit.si.

Find self-hosting instructions at <https://jitsi.org/downloads/>.

• Signal

Signal is best-known for messaging, but it does have a video chat function that is very similar to Google Meet. You can create instant call links with up to 50 participants. Everyone, however, must be a part of the same Signal group chat and have the latest app update.

EMAIL:

• ProtonMail

ProtonMail uses end-to-end encryption and zero-access encryption. Since the release of ProtonMail in 2014, Proton has also released a VPN, a cloud storage service, an authenticator, spreadsheets, a calendar, a password manager, a notes app, and a business suite. Proton's apps are likely the easiest to use and best-developed privacy-focused alternative to the Google Suite out there right now.

ProtonMail has features built to block spam, phishing, and ad trackers sent in emails. It is also open-source. You can set passwords for emails, or expiration dates which destroy the email after the date passes. You can also create email aliases for a layer of anonymity. Many privacy-focused apps sacrifice visual aesthetic for function, but ProtonMail has a pretty clean and user-friendly interface. The experience isn't too far from what you already get with Gmail.

Proton also has the Easy Switch function, which helps you import existing data like contacts into Proton.

Sign up for ProtonMail and check out the full suite at <https://proton.me/>

• Mailfence

Mailfence is primarily an email service, however it also has a calendar, a documents folder, and a contacts list. It uses end-to-end encryption and has a pretty straightforward interface. It is not open source. Mailfence also deletes your whole email after seven months of inactivity, which is great if you don't like the idea of having old accounts just floating around out there after you forgot about them. There are some paid tiers, but if you're looking for a privacy-minded, no-frills email service, then the free version of Mailfence does the job well.

Download the app at the App Store or Google Play.



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ICE SURVEILLANCE SELF-DEFENSE

With a budget for 2025 that is 10 times the size of the agency's total surveillance spending over the last 13 years, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement [ICE] has entered new contracts with several private companies for location surveillance, social media surveillance, face surveillance, spyware, and phone surveillance. Let's dig into each.

PHONE SURVEILLANCE TOOLS

One common surveillance tactic is to get physical access to your phone, either while you are detained at a border crossing or while you are under arrest. ICE has renewed a contract with Cellebrite, which helps ICE to unlock phones and then take a complete image of all data inside, including apps, location history, photos, notes, call records, text messages, and even Signal and WhatsApp messages. ICE also signed a contract with Cellebrite's main competitor Magnet Forensics, makers of the Graykey device for unlocking phones.

If ICE can't get physical access to your phone, they can still try to gain access to your data. They have resumed a contract with Paragon, which makes Graphite spyware, which can harvest messages from multiple different encrypted chat apps, such as Signal and WhatsApp, without you ever knowing. Malware such as Graphite can be used to read encrypted messages as they are sent - other forms of spyware can also download files, photos, location history, record phone calls, and even discreetly turn on your microphone to record you.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

The most effective way to protect yourself from smartphone surveillance is to not have a phone. If you have one, installing security updates makes it harder to use malware against you and makes it less likely for Cellebrite to break into your phone. Likewise, both iPhone (Lockdown Mode) and Android (Advanced Protection) offer special modes that lock your phone down and can help protect against some malware. Keeping your phone's software up to date and locked with a strong alphanumeric password will offer some protection against Cellebrite, depending on your model of phone. However, the strongest protection is simply to keep your phone turned off, which puts it in "before first unlock" mode, which has been typically harder for law enforcement to bypass. This is good to do if you are at a protest and expect to be arrested, if you are crossing a border, or if you are expecting to encounter ICE.

Keeping your phone on airplane mode should be enough, but turning your phone off will offer extra protection against cell-site simulators and Cellebrite devices. It's a good idea to at least turn off or better yet, not even have face/fingerprint unlock so that police cannot force you to unlock your phone.

INTERNET SURVEILLANCE

ICE has also acquired at least two location and social media surveillance tools, Webloc and Tangles, from a company called Pen Link. In 2023, Penlink acquired the Israeli firm Cobwebs, which originally developed both Webloc and Tangles.

Webloc gathers locations of millions of phones by gathering data from mobile data brokers and linking it together with other information about users. Tangles, Penlink's Open Source Intelligence [OSINT] social media surveillance tool, which uses Artificial Intelligence [AI] to monitor and extract web data, is able to link together a person's posting history, posts, and comments containing keywords, location history, tags, social graph, and photos with those of their friends and family. Penlink then sells this information to law enforcement - this means that ICE can look up historic and current locations of many people all across the US without ever having to get a warrant.

ICE also has established contracts with other social media scanning and AI analysis companies, such as with Fivecast,

for the social media surveillance and AI analysis tool ONYX. According to Fivecast, ONYX can conduct "automated, continuous and targeted collection of multimedia data" from all major "news streams, search engines, social media, marketplaces, the dark web, etc." ONYX can build what it calls "digital footprints" from biographical data and curated datasets spanning numerous platforms, and "track shifts in sentiment and emotion" and identify the level of risk associated with an individual.

Another contract is with ShadowDragon for their product Social Net, which can monitor publicly available data from more than 200 websites. ICE has confirmed that ShadowDragon has allowed the agency to search "100+ social networking sites," noting that "[p]ersistent access to Facebook and Twitter provided by ShadowDragon SocialNet is of the utmost importance, as they are the most prominent social media platforms."

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Make your account private on social media. Have accounts under a pseudonym. Or, delete your social media accounts altogether.

STREET-LEVEL SURVEILLANCE

ICE has contracts with multiple automated license plate reader [ALPR] companies to follow your driving habits. ICE uses this data to track down specific people anywhere in the country. ICE has a contract through a Thomson Reuters subsidiary to access ALPR data from Motorola Solutions. ICE also has local law enforcement officers to run searches on their behalf through Flock Safety's massive network of ALPR data. ICE has also invested in biometric surveillance tools, such as facial recognition software called Mobile Fortify, to scan faces of people they stop to determine if they are here legally. Mobile Fortify checks the pictures it takes against a database of 200 million photos for a match (the source of the photos is unknown).

Additionally, ICE has a contract with Clearview AI for facial recognition. ICE has also contracted with iris scanning company BI2 technologies for even more invasive biometric surveillance. ICE agents have also been seen wearing Meta's Ray-Ban video recording sunglasses.

ICE has acquired trucks equipped with cell-site simulators, aka Stingrays, from TechOps Specialty Vehicles, which can be used to track down a specific person in real time, with more granularity than a phone company or tools like Webloc can provide, though Webloc has the distinct advantage of being used without a warrant and not requiring agents to be in the vicinity of the person being tracked.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Public transit or biking keeps you off ALPR databases. Putting your phone on airplane mode could help protect you from cell-site simulators and from apps on your phone disclosing your location, but might leave you vulnerable to advanced targeted attacks. For more advanced protection, turning your phone completely off protects against all radio-based attacks, and makes it harder for tools like Cellebrite to break into your phone.

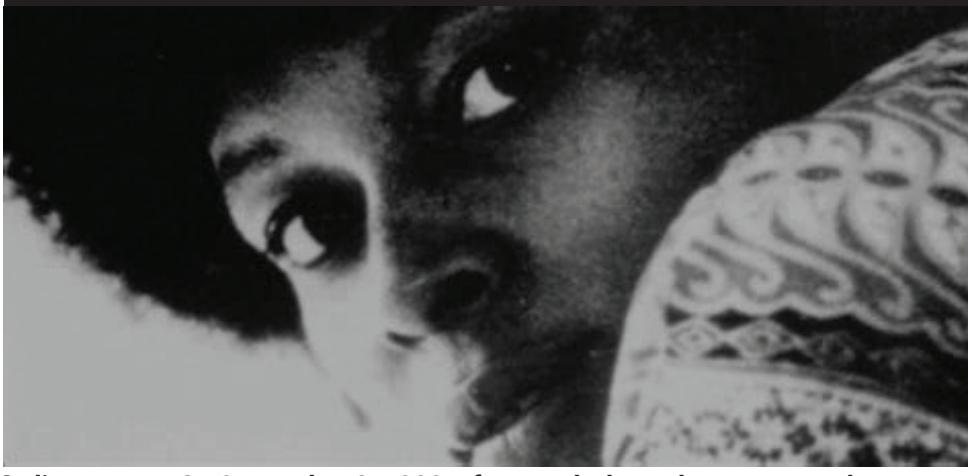
TYING ALL THE DATA TOGETHER

To search the data on Americans they have acquired from private companies, the IRS, TSA, and other government databases, ICE uses ImmigrationOS, a system that came from a contract with Palantir, which links data from different databases, like IRS data, immigration records, and private databases, and enables ICE to view all of this data about a specific person in one place.

THREAT MODELING WHEN ICE IS YOUR ADVERSARY

Understanding the capabilities and limits of ICE and how to threat model helps you and your community fight back, remain powerful, and protect yourself. [See "Survival Self-Defense: Tips, Tools and How-Tos for Safer Online Communications" at: ssd.eff.org]

ASSATA SHAKUR: 1947-2025



[Editor's Note: On September 25, 2025, former Black Panther Party member Assata Olugbala Shakur (Assata: she who struggles - Olugbala: she who brings salvation - Shakur: thankful one), formerly known as JoAnne Chesiard, died in Cuba. Assata was convicted for the shooting death of a New Jersey state trooper in 1973 - she escaped from jail in 1979 and fled to Cuba, where she was granted political asylum in 1984 by Cuban President Fidel Castro. Despite repeated attempts and overtures by the US over the following decades, including an offer to end the economic embargo of Cuba, in place since 1960, Castro refused to turn Assata over to the US. After Castro's death in 2016, Cuba continued to provide her with asylum, despite renewed US pressure. In 2005, on the 32nd anniversary of her initial capture, the FBI classified Assata as a "domestic terrorist" and increased the reward for aiding in her capture to \$1,000,000. In 2013, the reward was doubled to \$2,000,000. The following article, written by Assata's comrade Dhoruba Bin-Wahad, originally appeared in SHADOW #55 in 2013.]

The "Terrorist" Label And The Criminalization of Revolutionary Black Movements in The USA

By Dhoruba Bin-Wahad

At a press conference on May 2, 2013, the Federal Bureau of Investigation announced that it had designated former Black Panther Party [BPP] member Assata Shakur as one of its top ten wanted "terrorists." This designation, and the media hoopla surrounding it, has significant historical and political implications.

While numerous progressive individuals and organizations correctly denounced that designation, recognizing that it was, in part, an attack on Cuba, far too many progressive and Civil Rights advocates have missed the greater and more pernicious historical revisionism and racist political implications behind Assata Shakur's rebranding as a "terrorist."

People fighting for human rights, who oppose President Barack Obama's policies of "rendition," torture, (which is euphemistically termed "Enhanced Interrogation Technique"), indefinite detention, and state-sponsored murder by RCVs (drones), have called upon Obama to remove Shakur's "terrorist" designation, arguing that Assata is innocent of the murder charge that resulted from her 1973 arrest.

President Obama, during his August 28 speech commemorating the 50th anniversary of the March On Washington, recounted his version of the 1960s, claiming that Black people lost their way when "legitimate grievances against police brutality tipped into excuse-making for criminal behavior." What was Obama talking about? Who was he referring to? What Blacks used police brutality to somehow mask criminal activity? He never said, but clearly Obama was referring to the Black Panther Party. His comments, when juxtaposed with the actions of his Justice Department, speak volumes.

In an effort to appease domestic law enforcement, Obama sanctioned his Justice Department's targeting of a former Black Panther in exile, Assata Shakur, designating her and her movement as terrorists, rather than open up a discussion on the excesses of the sixties and seventies to discern who were the real criminals and assassins--the architects of COINTELPRO [The FBI's counter-intelligence program - Ed.] or the movements they illegally infiltrated and destroyed?

Supporters and detractors of Assata distort, exclude, and ignore the movement from which she emerged. This essay is an attempt to place the "terrorist" designation and Assata's case in a historical and political context that also significantly impacts the status of Black Political prisoners in the United States.

THE BLACK LIBERATION MOVEMENT: CIRCA 1960-1975

To begin, it is necessary to step into a time capsule and head back to the 1960s. The following history is not intended to be definitive or complete, but this is a history that is relatively unknown, or if known, deliberately twisted by some who may have benefited from the distortion of Black sixties activism.

Inspired by the example of the martyred El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz (Malcolm X), Robert Williams and the original Black Panthers of Lowndes County Alabama, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense was founded in October 1966 in Oakland, California by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale. In just a few months after its inception, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense emerged as a significant influence on "New Left" and radical politics in America and as one of the most popular organizations and (romanticized) groups in the Black community.

The BPP developed a ten-point political program based on the conditions of African-American and poor people in the Bay Area of San Francisco, California and across the nation. However, the BPP's emphasis on community control of institutions within the Black community, including education, health care and housing, resonated with urban Blacks everywhere because institutional racism lay at the very basis of racial and political inequality nationally, not only in the Bay Area. One point of the BPP program called for the end to the military draft of all Black men. Another point called for a plebiscite in the Black community to determine whether Black people wished to remain part of the United States.

The most controversial, vilified and misrepresented point of the BPP's ten-point program was its recognition of Black People's inherent right to self-defense, including armed self-defense against racist attack, by civilians or the police. In Oakland, California, armed BPP members engaged in the original "cop-watch," establishing regular armed patrols that followed the police, intervening, at a legal distance, when the police violated someone's rights.

Fully appreciating how short-lived their right to bear arms in public would last, and instinctively sensing how the power structure of white supremacy would attempt to disconnect the rights of Black self-defense from non-violent movements for broader civil rights and assimilation--the bread and butter of "responsible Negro leaders"--the BPP embarked on a publicity campaign to emphasize the racist political character and purpose of law en-

forcement and the legislative process.

The BPP's instincts were verified when in 1967, in direct response to the BPP, the State of California sought to amend its gun laws to eliminate the right to carry a firearm in open view. (Ironically, the bill was supported by gun rights advocates, the NRA and then-Governor Ronald Reagan. After all, it was about taking firearms from Black people!) Indeed, the bill was called the "Black Panther" Bill.

On May 2, 1967, the BPP responded by sending an armed delegation to a Legislative Office Building in Sacramento to debate the new gun law. The image of armed young Black women and men marching in formation on the State Capitol circulated like wild-fire around the world. Black community activists across America were galvanized by the BPP's response to the perceived denial of Black Peoples' right to openly carry arms.

When BPP Chapters sprang up throughout the country, the FBI, State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies realized that unless the ideas of Black self-defense were completely discredited, demonized, and rejected by the African-American populace, it could lead to a sustained uprising of America's most marginalized and maligned national minority--Africans in America.

Barely ten months old in August 1967, the BPP became the FBI's main target in its expanding counter-intelligence program [COINTELPRO] against the Black Liberation movement. The stated purpose of the program, according to an August 25, 1967 document, was to "expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit or otherwise neutralize" Black organizations and their leadership.

In March 1968, the program was further expanded to 43 FBI field offices, which were ordered to develop counter-intelligence operations designed to prevent a "coalition" of black groups, as well as the rise of a "messiah" that would unify the movement. The FBI was also very concerned about the spread of revolutionary ideology among youth. As candidly put in April 1968 by the FBI's San Francisco field office, COINTELPRO had to convince youth to buy into the system:

"The Negro youth and moderate must be made to understand that if they succumb to revolutionary teaching, they will be dead revolutionaries. Is it not better to be a sports hero, a well-paid professional athlete or entertainer or a regularly paid white or blue collar worker, a peaceful human being with a family, or a person who is at least being accepted than a Negro who may have gotten even with the Establishment by burning it down, but who along with this, burned down his own home and gained for him and all his people the hatred and distrust of the whites for years to come?"

What started out as a general repressive and surveillance program in 1967 had become by mid-1968 a campaign to destroy the Black Panther Party and its ideology of armed resistance to racist violence. The BPP was the chief target of COINTELPRO. According to a 1976 Senate Report from the Church Committee, the BPP was targeted in 90% of all COINTELPRO efforts directed at the Black Liberation movement. Some of these included forcing churches and schools to evict the breakfast program, sending spurious notes to contributors threatening violence, placing false stories in newspapers, manipulating fund raising, using informants to spread false rumors, and other disinformation machinations. BPP members were arrested on the street for selling the BPP newspaper. Police conducted interrogations with no legal basis. In all of this, local police played an integral role. As noted in an FBI Airtel of December 2, 1968: "Every effort is being made to misdirect the activities of the BPP on a daily basis."

Apartments and offices were regularly subjected to search. There were spurious arrests. BPP offices and homes were subjected to warrantless (and illegal) wiretaps. The organization was flooded with informants and police agents who worked as provocateurs.

False criminal charges were also lodged against BPP local and regional

leaders. In April 1969, 21 leading cadre members of the New York City chapter of the BPP (this author included) were arrested and indicted on conspiracy charges. The so-called "Panther 21" case was based solely on the allegations of three undercover NYPD officers who posed as Panther members. One of these, undercover Black "BOSSI" [Bureau of Special Services and Investigations - the NYPD's decades-old secret intelligence "spy" unit that co-ordinated operations with the FBI, CIA and other members of the intelligence community - Ed.] operative Detective Gene Roberts, had years earlier infiltrated Malcolm X's organization (the OAAU) and was on Malcolm's security detail at the Audubon Ballroom when Malcolm was gunned down and killed on February 21, 1965. The entire Harlem chapter leadership and its Regional Field Secretary, Dhoruba Bin-Wahad, were incarcerated. It was at this juncture in the covert and overt repression of the BPP that Assata Shakur, then a student at City College of New York, became active in BPP programs as a medical cadre in Washington Heights.

There was also police murder and violence. For example, on December 4, 1969, Chicago police, aided by information provided by an FBI informant, fired hundreds of rounds into the home of BPP Chairman Fred Hampton and BPP member Mark Clark. Fred Hampton was killed as he lay in his bed, drugged from the Seconal secretly given to him.

History supported the Panther's perception that when the lower classes, exploited and disenfranchised, rise up against their rulers, inevitably the police/military apparatus of the State violently repress any popular uprising, movement, and civil disobedience that threatens the existing order.

THE BLACK LIBERATION ARMY: STRIKING BACK

Exacerbating regional, personal and political differences, the FBI embarked upon a plan, an eventually successful one, to split the Black Panther Party into two factions, one on the west coast, commonly called the "Newton" faction, named after Huey Newton, and one on the east coast, commonly called the "Cleaver" faction, named after Eldridge Cleaver. While many debate whether the split would have occurred even without FBI instigation, it is beyond dispute that the FBI and local law enforcement played a central role in making the split a violent one.

The Black Liberation Army [BLA] was the conscious response of those targeted by COINTELPRO for police style assassination, or imprisonment. Some BPP members fled underground to avoid the COINTELPRO-inspired violence while others chose to go underground to further revolutionary activity.

In the spring of 1971, there was a series of shootings of police in New York City. Other armed attacks occurred in California and elsewhere. In communiqués received by the media, the "Black Liberation Army" claimed responsibility for those attacks. In response, President Richard Nixon ordered a "full-out" law enforcement effort to capture former BPP members who might have been involved in the attacks. The initial investigation, called "Newkill," was a joint FBI-NYPD effort that became a model for later incarnations, such as the "Joint Terrorism Task Force."

FBI agents who were involved in COINTELPRO became part of Newkill. BPP members who were then underground - and many who were not - were considered logical suspects and targeted for arrest. The Director ordered the New York FBI Office to:

"Review appropriate files of black extremist organizations, including those of so-called Third World groups, to develop logical suspects. Include those organizations and their leaders in target assignments given to sources. Consider the possibility that both attacks may be result of revenge taken against New York City Police by the Black Panther Party as a result of its arrest of BPP members in April, 1969...."

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MICHAEL PARENTI: 1933-2026



Michael Parenti, the intellectual and political scientist, has passed away at the age of 92, surrounded by his family. "Now he is in what he used to refer to as 'the great lecture hall in the sky,'" his son, Christian, reflected. Journalist and editor of the Grayzone, Max Blumenthal, broke the news of Parenti's passing on social media.

When you are blessed with brilliance, as Parenti was, there are temptations to sell yourself in service to the oligarchs. Parenti never did. Instead, he spent his years using his body and mind to challenge the neoliberal and imperialist forces that com-

modify everyone and everything. As he wrote, "The live green earth is transformed into dead gold bricks, with luxury items for the few and toxic slag heaps for the many. The glittering mansion overlooks a vast sprawl of shanty towns, wherein a desperate, demoralized humanity is kept in line with drugs, television, and armed force."

His books, "Blackshirts and Reds," "Inventing Reality," "The Assassination of Julius Caesar," and many others offered an antidote to the indoctrination Americans are subjected to from the oligarch's corporate media networks. Despite being frozen off the media networks, Parenti attracted a large audience/following whenever he wrote or spoke. He used his analytical mind to dissect the nature and psychology of the American empire.

Parenti warned us that all empires, including the United States, throughout history attempt to be seen as virtuous and noble. He frequently quoted Edward Gibbon and his classic, "History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." Gibbon wrote, "The obedience of the Roman world was uniform, voluntary and permanent. The vanquished nations blended into one great people. They resigned the

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ASSATA

Assata Shakur aligned herself with East Coast "Cleaver" faction and though never a formally a COINTELPRO target, she became a primary target of the FBI's post-COINTELPRO anti-urban-terrorism investigations, collectively labeled as "Chesrob," using her former name (Joanne Chesimard.) Chesrob became a national anti-urban guerilla investigation aimed directly at destroying BLA soldiers and their clandestine infrastructure.

By early 1972, the media labeled Assata the "soul" of the Black Liberation Army. She was considered a suspect in virtually every New York City bank robbery where a woman was thought to have participated. Although "Chesrob" was designated as an FBI bank robbery investigation, it was really another coordinated NYPD-FBI effort to capture or kill underground BPP members and BLA members.

It is in this context that Assata Shakur's May 2, 1973 arrest on the New Jersey Turnpike must be viewed. Along with Zayd Malik Shakur (former BPP Deputy Minister of Information) and Sundiata Acoli (an acquitted Panther 21 defendant, former NASA employee and computer genius), Assata was stopped on the New Jersey Turnpike for "driving while Black."

It is likely that the troopers learned the identities of those in the car shortly after it was stopped. In any event, a shootout erupted. Zayd Malik Shakur and one trooper were killed. Assata was shot while her hands were in the air attempting to surrender. She was arrested. Sundiata Acoli, though injured, managed to escape, but was caught a few days later.

Assata was then tried for numerous acts in which she was a suspect. All resulted in acquittals or dismissals. It was the New Jersey Turnpike incident that gave rise to her only conviction and life sentence. **[Acoli was convicted in a separate trial and sentenced to life. He was released on parole in 2022, after being jailed for 49 years - Ed.]**

However, on November 2, 1979, Assata was liberated from her New Jersey prison and eventually surfaced in Cuba, where she was granted political asylum.

Assata and her legal advisers can and should use any available means and arguments to keep her safe and free. But everyone else, including supporters and those interested in justice and an end to racist and political repression should, as a matter of principle, place her case, and the "terrorist" designation placed on her by the FBI, in its proper context: as the continuation of criminalization and demonization of the Black Liberation Movement.

Assata's guilt or innocence of the actual charges is totally and absolutely irrelevant. Assata was part of a movement that sustained and suffered massive police

and state repression under COINTELPRO, Newkill and Chesrob. This movement for Black self-determination, the right to control institutions within the Black community and the right to self-defense, has been declared "terrorist" by the U.S. government's law enforcement agencies charged with executing its racist and political destruction.

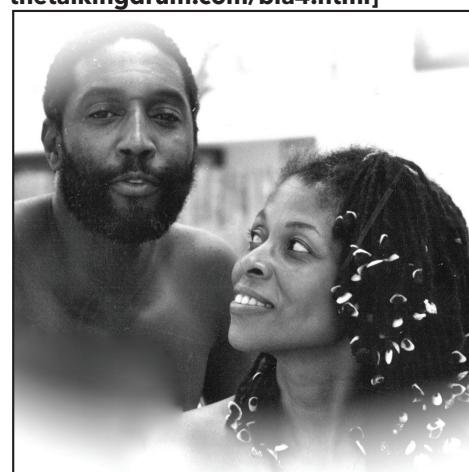
Although there are differences, the political characterization of Assata as a "terrorist" and the cases of the Black political prisoners (her comrades) still in jail must be the same: they were/are part of a legitimate political movement for human rights and self-determination.

BPP/BLA members had trials characterized by gross violations of due process that took place at a time when COINTELPRO disclosures had not yet been made. But only two, Dhoruba Bin-Wahad and Geronimo Pratt, were able to secure reversals of their convictions and secure their freedom from imprisonment.

The issue after more than 40 years is not guilt or innocence or whether the trials were fair. These prisoners were and are part of a movement and, after all of this time, should be freed, irrespective of their legal guilt or innocence. To achieve this, the "terrorist" label must be challenged, not on an individual basis, but politically and in correct historical context.

[The author wishes to acknowledge Robert J. Boyle, Esq. who contributed research and documents for this article]

[Editor's Note: Dhoruba Bin-Wahad is a revolutionary and a writer. He was a founding member of the Black Panther Party and co-founder of the Black Liberation Army. Until he was freed in 1990, Dhoruba spent 19 years in US prisons as a consequence of being targeted by the FBI's COINTELPRO operation. He then established the Campaign to Free Black Political Prisoners and Prisoners-of-War and is active in Black and African Liberation struggles. See SHADOW #36 for a May 1995 interview with Dhoruba. You can read an in-depth 2001 interview with Assata Shakur at: <http://www.thetalkingdrum.com/bla4.html>]



Dhoruba and Assata in Cuba circa 1990

H. RAP BROWN: 1943-2025

"This country was born of violence. Violence is as American as cherry pie. Black people have always been violent, but our violence has always been directed toward each other."

-- H. Rap Brown, Die Nigger Die (1969)



In his autobiography, Black American civil rights activist and revolutionary H. Rap Brown said: "My first contact with white America was marked by her violence. For when a white doctor pulled me from between my mother's legs, and slapped my wet ass, I, as every other negro in America, reacted to this man-inflicted pain with a cry," a cry that fueled his dedicated and courageous commitment to Black liberation.

Born Hubert Gerold Brown on October 4, 1943, in Baton Rouge, LA, at the age of 17, Brown moved to Washington, DC, where he joined the Non-Violent Action Group [NAG], the local affiliate of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee [SNCC]. In 1964, Brown joined Mississippi Freedom Summer, a campaign launched by civil rights activists to register as many African-American voters as possible in the state of Mississippi. In 1965, Brown was back in DC, enrolling in Howard University and representing Howard's SNCC chapter, where he became chairman of NAG.

On Sunday, March 7, 1965, in Selma, Alabama, approximately 600 marchers attempted to march to the state capitol in Montgomery to protest the murder of civil rights activist Jimmie Lee Jackson by Alabama state troopers on February 18, 1965, and to protest denial of their voting rights. On the Edmund Pettus Bridge, state troopers fired tear gas and charged at the marchers, swinging billy clubs and letting loose with rebel yells. The beatings, televised across the nation, became known as "Bloody Sunday." Responding to international outrage, President Lyndon Johnson agreed to meet with civil rights leadership that included SNCC, on August 6, 1965.

As head of NAG, Brown attended the meeting with Johnson. According to Brown, it fell upon him to raise the question of presidential responsibility for federal inaction in protecting the rights of black citizens that the group was there to represent. He described the delegation's shuffling during the meeting and their not-very-subtle distancing of themselves from his intemperance, even going so far as to apologize for Brown's outspokenness.

When, in 1967 at the age of twenty-three, Brown succeeded Stokely Carmichael as SNCC chairman. It was at a tense and desperate moment in the country. SNCC's call for Black Power, coupled with its stand against the Vietnam War, had isolated the organization and left it exposed. Brown also served as the Black Panther Party's minister of justice during the short-lived alliance between SNCC and the Black Panther Party.

The "Summer of Love" of 1967 in the United States took place at the same time as rising racial tension in many cities, where nearly 160 riots occurred across

the country. For many activists, 1967 came to be known as the "Long Hot Summer." Injustice stemming from the frustrations of poverty and unemployment, the systematic denial of employment opportunities by white-owned businesses and city services by white-led municipal governments, and mistreatment by white or mostly white police forces led to explosive confrontations between black residents and the forces that oppressed them.

Deep fissures had appeared in the Civil Rights "coalition." Long-simmering anger at racism and economic injustice of alienated black youth in ghettos was erupting into violent and destructive urban insurrections. In every case, "riots" were triggered by police brutality or misconduct, most usually the killing or brutalizing of an unarmed black man.

During that time, Brown toured the nation, calling for violent resistance to the government, which he called "The Fourth Reich." "Negroes should organize themselves", he told a rally in Washington, DC, and "carry on guerilla warfare in all the cities." "I say to America, Fuck it! Freedom or death!"

On July 24, 1967, having been invited by civil rights activist Gloria Richardson to speak at her event in Cambridge, MD, Brown spoke to a group of 500 black residents. He quipped, "If Cambridge doesn't come around, Cambridge got to be burned down." Shortly after the end of the speech, during what police say was a march along the street that divided black and white neighborhoods, police and black residents traded gunfire. Later that evening, a fire that started in an elementary school in central Cambridge spread, destroying 15 nearby buildings. Although no one died, Brown was hit in the face with buckshot. He left town soon after being treated.

In Brown's words in 1992: "After I spoke, people were just milling around. A young lady who lived up towards Race Street where a bunch of white policemen were gathered asked for an escort home because she was afraid to walk by herself. Myself and two other people were walking her home and some dudes opened fire on us with shot-guns from some bushes. We found out later they [the shooters] were black policemen. They were shooting at us a long time. I was hit, I dove to the ground, rolled into a ditch and made my way into someone's yard. After the shooting, there was a lot of commotion. People went into the street and just started tearing everything up. A few hours later, they burned the school again. Two weeks earlier people had burned the black elementary school because it had been a rat-infested, roach infested place. People were paying taxes and their children were forced to go to school in those conditions. It is these conditions which cause riots. Not anybody's rhetoric."

A day later, Brown was in Washington, DC, when he learned that a federal warrant for his arrest had been issued. Targeted by the forces of "law and order," Brown was charged with inciting a "riot" and was subsequently arrested and jailed in Alexandria, VA, additionally charged with carrying a gun across state lines. The federal charges against him were never proven. Brown was defended by civil rights advocates Murphy Bell of Baton Rouge and William Kunstler, among others. Feminist attorney Flo Kennedy also assisted his defense committee, winning support for him from some chapters of the National Organization for Women. Years later, it was discovered that a secret 1967 FBI memo had called for "neutralizing" Brown. He'd become a prime target of the agency's Counter-Intelligence program known as COINTELPRO.

Shortly after this incident, Brown was charged by the State of Maryland with incitement to riot, beginning a succession of charges and protracted legal maneuvering drawn out over a two-year period. In March 1970, after two years of tortuous

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PALANTIR

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name of a magical stone in Lord of the Rings enabling vision at a great distance—these little jokes rooted in popular culture are perhaps intended by Peter Thiel and Alex Karp to dissipate the great paranoia that regular people feel when we are exposed to facts such as those in this article.

However, Palantir Gotham and the damage it has already done to the world is no joke. For example, Palantir Gotham is at the core of the deadly MAVEN Smart System, produced by Palantir for the US Department of Defense, but gifted to the Israeli Defense Forces [IDF] by the Biden and Trump administrations. It is specifically designed to aggregate data obtained via drones with other surveillance data, such as information obtained by human spies and telecom snooping. The word maven is a Yiddishism in English meaning something like "expert" (for example, "he is a maven on baseball"), so this is once again an attempt to lighten up a very heavy evil with a distasteful attempt at a Jewish joke. The real joke is on the American taxpayer, however; MAVEN has been granted a budget by the Pentagon with a ceiling of \$1.3 billion through 2029.

All of these applications are offspring of the flagship program Palantir Gotham. These include Artificial Intelligence Platform, which enable Israeli combatants "to deploy operations and receive responses by means of an AI chatbot, as well as TITAN, which exploits AI for the guidance of missiles. Another Palantir program supplied to the IDF is "Lavender," which sorts through social media and telecom data to assign Palestinians a terrorism threat score from 1 to 100. Every Palestinian starts out with a threat score of 1 just for being a Palestinian. Too many people in close proximity with high-level terrorism risk scores can result, e.g., in a Gaza apartment building becoming the target of a missile. Early in the Gaza offensive by IDF, the Lavender system flagged 37,000 Palestinians as "militants." IDF's "acceptable civilian casualty threshold" is usually 15 to 20 people per deployment, but spikes to 100 to 300 civilians when a "high-value" target is involved. Palantir itself admits a 10% error rate in targeting, thereby giving Israeli commanders plausible deniability when confronted with war crimes charges, enabling them to pass the civilian casualties off as "machine error."

It was in regard to MAVEN's performance in Gaza that a spokesman for Palantir stated: "tasks that in 2003 demanded 2000 analysts now require a skeleton crew of just 20."

Palantir and the World's Future

The data structure used by Palantir Gotham (itself based on the algorithm developed by PayPal to detect fraudulent transactions) can be re-purposed for a wide range of tasks. One offshoot that we have mentioned already is Palantir Metropolis, touted by its manufacturers as a business solution with infinite possibilities, but so far finding only limited market shares, chiefly among hedge fund managers who seek the ability to detect trends in banking and stock data. Executives have complained that the software requires "RFOP" (rooms full of people) to complete the analysis of the data, and that the retooling of the program for specific applications must go through Palantir: two factors that make Metropolis an unfavorable choice of

program in the for-profit business world. These issues are less problematic for the military and law enforcement, who have almost unlimited technology budgets. Furthermore, Palantir's software is simply better adapted for surveillance than it is for anything else—banks and hedge funds that have employed it have used it internally to scan e-mails and online behavior of its own employees with a view toward uncovering disloyalty or discontent. These limitations of Palantir and perhaps of AI generally have fueled speculation about an impending AI crash. Palantir Metropolis is presently deemed an economic fiasco by many AI pundits.

In mid-2020, the US Department of Health and Human Services contracted with Palantir to develop the software program Tiberius, designed to track production, distribution, and administration of the COVID-19 vaccine. Although HHS bureaucrats and Palantir execs maintained that Tiberius was simply intended to detect anomalies indicating, for example, bottlenecks in the distribution of the vaccine, the capacity was already present for using the software to track individuals and enforce compulsory vaccination, as later mandated by the Biden administration. Indeed, if we look at Palantir's core mission of integrating big data into one big database and eliminating the "silos" of data peculiar to each government agency, we could see the government having the power to cross-reference people's vaccination status with their geographical, job status, government benefits, etc., with a click of a mouse. This would have given the government the power to cut off someone's driver's license or Social Security, or suspend their employment as a means of pressuring them into taking a vaccine or doing anything else the government wants. This is what Palantir's ultimate vision means for us as individuals.

In 2014, under the Obama administration, Palantir was contracted to produce software for the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement [ICE] for a program called "Investigative Case Management" which would allow ICE to access intelligence programs maintained by other federal as well as state law enforcement agencies. In March of 2025, Palantir secured a \$30 million contract with ICE to monitor the movement of undocumented immigrants. Palantir claims that the programs so far developed are intended to facilitate self-deportation by immigrants and that it has not been used to initiate violent raids such as the ones that ICE has been carrying out under the second Trump administration. It was one of the goals of Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency [DOGE] to have Palantir compile a massive master database of all immigrants, linked to all government enforcement agencies, in order to facilitate mass deportations.

The rise of Palantir illustrates the ultimate evolution of the Military-Industrial Complex: it is a private corporation which got its capital initially from the government and which provides its services primarily to the government. Palantir mastermind Peter Thiel has stated that he does not believe in a "free market" or in competition, because these lead to lower profits. What Palantir seems to be pushing is a form of state capitalism or even of elitist state socialism with absolute power over the individual. Will that actually take shape, or is Thiel's anti-competition vision yet another obstacle to the dominance of AI as private industry? All we know is that so far, Palantir and AI have only distinguished themselves in the art and science of killing.

BLOOD-FOR-OIL

Continued From Page 4

edly running drugs from Caracas to Miami. While Trinidad's President is a Trump ally, that government stated that the two dead who could be identified, Chad Joseph and Rishi Samaroo, were simply commuting from work, like many workers, across the 7-mile strait between the countries. Even our Secretary of State, "Little Marco," said the boat was merely heading to Trinidad when he changed his statement to "Miami" after Trump announced their supposed destination.

And did you notice? Every time a US prosecutor interdicts a drug shipment, they proudly display the drugs and cash, and the names of the dealers obtained in the haul. Yet after these little commuter boats were attacked, not sunk, we were never shown the drugs, the evidence.

There was indeed a drug boat, a submersible, attacked by the US. But American media generally failed to mention that, unlike the fishermen and commuters killed coming from Venezuela, the one real drug haul came from Colombia and was captured in the Pacific Ocean, not the Caribbean.

So where are the drugs coming from, if not Venezuela or Canada? According to a New Yorker investigation, one of the world's largest and most violent cocaine cartels, the Kinahan Organized Crime Group, is run out of – you guessed it – Abu Dhabi.

An Act of War

There's no doubt why most Venezuelans want to see Maduro go. The economy is on its deathbed. Why? Because a US blockade, basically a siege of Venezuela, has caused the near total collapse of Venezuela's source of wealth, its oil industry. By blocking oil equipment from going in, and an embargo of oil going out, the nation is being strangled. An embargo is a globally recognized act of war which Americans (let alone Venezuelans) never authorized.

The idea that Maduro wrecked the economy is bullshit through and through. Imagine if America laid siege to Texas, allowing no goods in, blocking oil from going out. Nevertheless, the public, hoping the embargo would lift, voted out Maduro. He must go.

And let me tell you as an energy economist, that the embargo of Venezuelan oil, cutting the nation's exports 74% from 2.4 million barrels a day to 735,000, has easily added nearly a dollar to the price paid by Americans at the gas pump.

Chavez told me that he knew the limit of how far he could push the US and its oil companies. "I'm a good chess player," he told me. Not Maduro. For example, Maduro turned down British Petroleum's request to take over the oil fields once operated by the French national oil company. Britain later seized \$10 billion in Venezuela's gold reserves held in the British Exchequer.

As you'll see at the opening of my film, "The Assassination of Hugo Chavez," the whack-o idea of murdering Venezuela's president was first floated on television by none other than televangelist Pat Robertson, whom inside sources told me was furious that he was turned down in his request to Chavez' government for a diamond mining concession. To his TV audience, Robertson said, "You know, I don't know about this doctrine of assassination, but if [Chavez] thinks we're trying to assassinate him, I think that we really ought to go ahead and do it. It's a whole lot cheaper than starting a war."

That's true, I suppose. But why start a war at all? Oil and diamonds. How much blood are they worth?

May I suggest that we return democracy to Venezuela with ballots, not bullets.

MY FIRST 12 HOURS

Continued From Page 7

for demanding justice. Don't let anyone tell you we can't have accountability. If someone in power tells you that, tell them to resign so someone who will stand up for the people can take their place. Republicans do more to protect guns than Democrats are doing to stop murders and abductions. If this was the Governor's family, if this was the Attorney General's family, if this was one of their oligarch donors, they would call in the National Guard immediately. They would assert their authority and dare anyone to stop them. They wouldn't wait until the next election cycle or issue statements about "looking into things."

Here are the demands we all need to make: Use the National Guard to protect our citizens. Arrest agents who commit crimes. Charge police, National Guard, and ICE with crimes when they commit or refuse to stop them. Start issuing arrest warrants for Jonathan Ross and whoever killed Renee Good and any others who have committed violence against our communities. Do it now. Not after an investigation. Not after the next election. Now. Resign or do the right thing. Those are the only acceptable options.

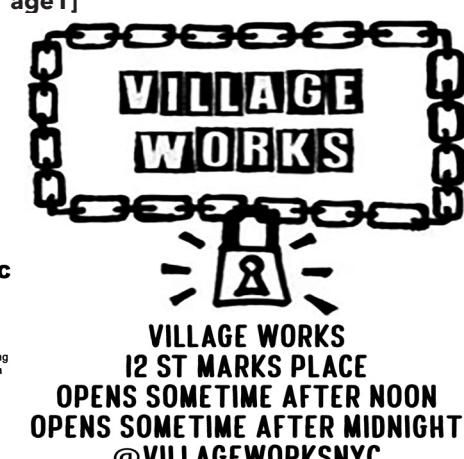
I'm glad people are out in the streets. Keep building capacity. We also need to directly send the message to the people with the power to actually stop this. Daily, in large numbers, with zero patience. Patience is an inappropriate response to this moment. The activists doing this work in Minneapolis and nationwide are extraordinary. Ordinary people carving out time from ordinary lives to do extraordinary things for the benefit of their fellow humans. Nurses hiding children from federal agents. A pastor's wife coordinating mutual aid while her community lives in terror. Legal observers who show up within minutes of a report. Half a mile from where we marched, you couldn't find parking because so many people had come out to stand together.

So here's what's next. I've connected with a crew doing what political organizers call "lit drops," which means distributing printed materials directly to community members. We're dropping 1,000 sheets to front doors with specific demands and instructions for actions that take less than five minutes per day. Contact information for the right politicians. Scripts for what to say. Simple steps anyone can take. These are already being handed out at local churches.

The infrastructure of effective opposition already exists. The people are ready. What we need now is volume, persistence, and the refusal to let anyone tell us that justice is too much to ask for. If you're in Minneapolis or anywhere else and want to know what to do: find out who your Attorney General is. Find out who your Governor is. Contact them every single day with specific demands. Invite others to do the same. Show up. Document. The fight matters. Thank you for being here.

Want their info? It's usually as easy as googling it and clicking the first link. If you are having trouble then post in the comments or on the discord and our community will get you the contact info you are looking for.

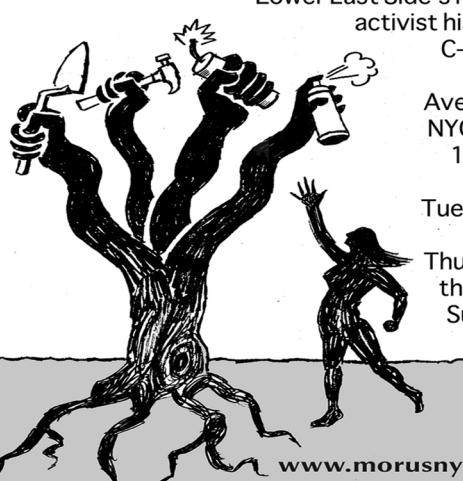
[See more of Chris Armitage's writings at: <https://substack.com/@chrisarmitage1>]



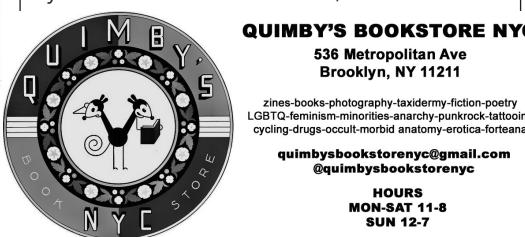
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PUBLIC BANK

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tributed about \$2.5 billion. Offset by \$2.5 billion in management fees, the total contribution for investment was \$9.6 billion, the sum coming from the city. Assuming a 10% capital requirement, this \$9.6 billion could capitalize \$96 billion in loans. \$9.6 billion is only one-third of one percent of the total assets of the NYC pension funds, a very modest investment that could generate an average 19% ROI if used to capitalize a public bank on the BND model. In fact, \$1 billion would be enough to capitalize a bank the size of the BND.

Banks, Not the Government, Create the Money Supply

How can a public bank lend billions more than the capital it actually has? The answer is in a little-known secret of banking: banks don't lend existing money. They create it. When a bank issues a loan, it doesn't hand out cash from a vault. It creates a deposit in the account of the borrower, backed by the borrower's promise to repay the loan with interest; and these deposits are counted in the money supply. Roughly 95% of the US money supply is created in this way – by private banks, for private profit.

A public bank does the same thing, but in the public interest. It monetizes future productivity – housing that will generate rent, roads and rail that will transport workers, solar panels that will lower energy costs. To "monetize" means to turn future productivity into something that can be spent now – e.g. spent on the labor and materials necessary to create the products that will repay the loan. The money is created into existence, circulates through the economy and is extinguished upon repayment.

Isn't That the Sort of "Money Printing" That Drives Up Prices?

No. Price inflation is a function of supply and demand: prices go up when too much money is chasing too few goods. Injecting new money (demand) does not drive up prices as long as the money creates new supply to absorb it, keeping prices stable.

China's development model illustrates this principle. Over the past 29 years, its money supply has increased by a whopping 5,500%. Yet price inflation has remained modest, because the increase in money was matched by an increase in goods and services. The China Development Bank – one of the largest banks in the world – along with other Chinese public banks, fund infrastructure, housing and manufacturing, creating real assets that absorb the new currency in the marketplace.

Taking on Wall Street

The New York Public Banking Act [S1754/A3352], which Mamdani co-sponsored in the NY Assembly in 2023, would allow cities in the state to obtain charters for their own public banks. Modeled on California's AB857, it has broad legislative support. However, it remains stalled in the legislature – likely due to pressure from entrenched financial interests. New York State is home to some of the largest and most powerful banks in the world, and they are in the heart of New York City.

New York City is also the home of the most powerful branch of the Federal Reserve, the New York Fed, and like all Fed branches, it is 100% owned by the banks in its district. Because of its proximity to

Wall Street and its operational responsibilities, the New York Fed is often considered the heart of the Federal Reserve System. Its Wall Street owners are not likely to relinquish control of that megacity's finances without a fight.

To operate in the banking system, the new city-owned bank will need a Federal Reserve master account. Without it, the bank cannot clear payments or interact with the broader financial system. The bank will also need "reserves," either as "vault cash" (Federal Reserve notes and coins distributed by the Fed) or as digital reserves originated by the Fed. The bank can get the needed reserves from the city's deposits held by the bank, but to get a master account is a trickier issue. The Fed is now requiring that new banks be FDIC insured. The BND, which was founded in 1919 and was grandfathered in, does not have or need FDIC insurance. The state is virtually its only depositor, and FDIC insurance would cover only \$250,000 of its \$7.6 billion in deposits from that single entity. But the current FDIC requirement could be a choke point for New York City.

Mamdani also has powerful supporters, however, and he would have the ability to challenge the Fed and the FDIC in court if necessary, following the precedent set by Custodia Bank and others seeking equal access to the payments system. The Custodia bid for a master account failed – likely because it threatened to siphon deposits out of the US dollar system into cryptocurrencies, destabilizing Wall Street's grip on liquidity. But public banking is not crypto. It is not speculative, extractive, bubble-producing, inflationary or offshore. It is sovereign infrastructure designed to channel capital into the real economy – into goods, services, and livelihoods that nourish communities. Public banking keeps money local and accountable. It's not a drain on liquidity but a new source of available funds.

Recapturing the Money Power

A recent proposal by the Money on the Left Editorial Collective titled "Democratic Public Finance: A Radical Vision for Mamdani's New York City" urges the incoming Mamdani administration to consider legal action to challenge federal monetary constraints. While not officially affiliated with the campaign, the authors build on Mamdani's platform and offer strategic guidance for deepening public finance reform, including by expanding municipal credit capacity through public banking. They propose a long-term campaign to contest what they call "deep legal structures," including balanced budget amendments and constitutional interpretations that enforce austerity. These challenges, they argue, are essential to unlocking the full crediting capacity of municipal governments. The authors conclude:

"Without a doubt, Zohran Mamdani's vision for New York City represents the most politically savvy and fiscally robust undertaking in decades. This document argues that Mamdani's transformative vision can be further enhanced if it directly confronts the myth of money scarcity and frames our collective capacities as the source of shared prosperity."

Freed of regulatory blockages, a New York City public bank could hold NYC's public deposits; finance housing, transit, and energy; reinvest profits locally; and reduce reliance on Wall Street middlemen. In short, it could fund Mamdani's vision without triggering capital flight.

While businesses are fleeing NYC, North Dakota was rated by Forbes Magazine the best state in the country in which to start a business in 2024. It escaped the 2025 shutdown by reclaiming the power to create money as credit through its own state-owned bank. NYC can fund its future by doing the same.

[Ellen Brown is an attorney, founder of the Public Banking Institute, and author of thirteen books, including *Web of Debt*, *The Public Bank Solution*, and *Banking on the People: Democratizing Money in the Digital Age*. Her 400+ blog articles are posted at EllenBrown.com]

Riddles

Continued From Page 15

Novak did what the system still can: he issued an order invalidating Ms. Halligan's use of the title U.S. Attorney in past filings, barring its future use, and making explicit that she never lawfully held the office at all. "In short," Judge Novak wrote, "this charade of Ms. Halligan masquerading as the United States Attorney for this District in direct defiance of binding court orders must come to an end."

But despite this minor victory, the charade goes on. Power continues to masquerade as a government of the people, by the people, for the people. The way this administration operates is designed to make us feel hopeless, resigned. As a lawyer, when I try to use my words to put a spotlight on what is happening to our systems and processes, to contrast that with how those systems and processes were designed to work, I find myself getting discouraged.

Is there a point to trying to do this when it's hard to tell if those processes will hold, or if we will be able to wrest our government from those who would destroy it completely for their own ends? When it is impossible to know what will come next?

We aren't just living through a paradigm shift. We are living through what philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre called an epistemological crisis: a moment when inherited frameworks for making sense of events stop working, when the concepts we rely on to distinguish truth from falsehood no longer hold.

MacIntyre first used the term to describe moments in science, when accumulated anomalies expose deep contradictions in a field's foundational assumptions. But the same phenomenon occurs in politics and public life. When legal determinations are treated not as binding statements of reality but as optional interpretations; when power insists that meaning exists only if it consents to it; when the conditions that allow a public to distinguish fact from fiction collapse.

We do not agree on what is true. We do not agree on who can be trusted to say so. And we have an administration that exploits that uncertainty, not by refuting facts, but by treating them as optional. And it's easy to give into the despair that this dislocation brings.

To watch the videos of the murders of Renée Good and Alex Petti, and wonder why we can't agree on what happened.

To hear reports of the administration's stepped-up terrorization of Minneapolis and wonder when that terror is going to come closer to home. To watch this administration deny not just responsibility, but reality itself—and feel language begin to fail. But we can't let it.

MacIntyre first wrote about this in a 1977 essay, *Epistemological Crises, Narrative, and Philosophy of Science*. He describes the moment when the stories we rely on to make sense of the world collapse under their own contradictions. To explain what that feels like, he turns not to science but to literature. To Hamlet, returning home to Elsinore after his father's death, unable to understand who he is or what loyalty, truth, and duty now mean:

"Hamlet's problems arise because the dramatic narrative of his family and of the kingdom of Denmark through which he identified his own place in society and his relationships to others has been disrupted by radical interpretative doubts." What is Hamlet to do? And what, for that matter, are any of us?

MacIntyre's answer comes a few years later, in *After Virtue*. When a moral and epistemic order collapses, he argues, the task is not to restore it by force or nostalgia. What survives are practices: truth-telling practices, legal practices, traditions of reasoning and accountability that persist even when the institutions meant to uphold them decay. That is what this administration would have us forget. The insistence that nothing binds, nothing means, nothing compels is not realism. It is a bid for unaccountable power. But practices do not disappear simply because those in power deny them. They persist because people continue to inhabit them.

As MacIntyre famously put it: "I can only answer the question 'What am I to do?' if I can answer the prior question 'Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?'"

We are not spectators to this moment. We are actors living through it. The law, the courts, and the language of truth and accountability are not abstractions. They are practices sustained only if people continue to act as though they matter.

The "logic" this administration offers is meant to exhaust us, to make us doubt whether reality itself can still be named. The answer is not to solve the riddle. The answer is to refuse it, and to keep telling the truth, insisting on law, and inhabiting the practices that make meaning and accountability possible. Sometimes I have to remind myself that this is the story I am choosing to be part of.

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JOHN "The Communist"**Continued From Page 3**

soup kitchens, made t-shirts with "die yuppie scum" prints, arranged wakes and vigils for people who'd frozen to death in the winter, fought skinheads, went to other protests with our own banners, in the Bronx, in Brooklyn, in Harlem, in Washington Square Park, in DC, Philadelphia -- the list is most likely longer than I can remember today. Regularly, we'd get arrested and had to spend the night in the Tombs, but incredibly enough, lawyer Ron Kuby would always, pro bono, get us out, with charges dropped." Maria and John lived together in one of the 13th Street squats, between Ave A and B. "John and I parted in May 1990, as friends but with different life plans. John would continue to work politically in his grass root ways in NYC, I would go back to where I come from -- and in my womb there was a little seed growing, a mixture of me and John, my love."



John in black mask dips American flag into his fire across the street from the United Nations at a demo against the first Persian Gulf War in 1991

SHADOW co-editor Kronstadt says that "much of what happened in the Lower East Side in the 1980s was catalyzed by the activities of John: Street organizer, graffiti artist, fearless wheat paster of posters, squatter and opener of squats, antique collector and connoisseur of garbage, John was the Lower East Side character extraordinaire. He knew how to turn a tepid gathering of protesters into an act of resistance. Word would travel that a squat or homeless encampment was being attacked by the cops, and some people would gather and curse out the cops over the barricades. But then John and Maria would arrive on the scene and things would move on to a new phase. Maria, originally from Sweden, with her naturally spiked blonde hair and ever present sweatshirt emblazoned with the words "Steal Food" was a natural accompaniment to John with his long blonde hair and army fatigues--the Viking god and goddess of transgressiveness."

My first exposure to John was at the memorial for Yippie co-founder Abbie Hoffman being held at the Palladium on 14th Street (now a fucking NYU dorm) in

April 1989. He and Maria were being hassled by "security" douche bags because they had set up a table with political stuff to give out in the lobby without official permission, though just a few feet away from them in the same lobby was Black Panther Party founder Bobby Seale with his table, selling his barbecue cookbooks -- those security goons didn't fuck with HIM! I immediately liked John for his audacity and refusal to be pushed around by those rent-a-cops. Around this time, we asked John to share some of the countless posters he was grinding out and pasting up all over the neighborhood to publish in **The SHADOW** and he agreed.

On May 1, 1990, at the end of a three-day series of events called Resist 2 Exist, held in and around Tompkins Square Park, cops from the ninth precinct rushed the stage when Spy vs Spy, playing in the bandshell, went five minutes past the sound permit, resulting in what came to be known as the MayDay Tompkins Square Police Riot. Twenty-eight people were

a court battle, fighting the city in order to prevent mass evictions of five contiguous buildings they occupied at 535-537-539-541-545 East 13th Street, between Avenues A + B, that had been rescued by homesteaders over the course of more than ten years. The buildings housed activists and families, providing food for the community, a performance space + underground café and even a FREE bike shop that taught kids how to build and fix bikes. Then-mayor Giuliani wanted to turn the buildings over to his bunk buddy, real estate shill Antonio Pagàn and Pagàn's phony "housing group" called "Lower East Side Coalition Housing Development." Though he lived in one of those buildings, John actively opposed and even sabotaged the legal effort to save the row of squats. This and other bad behavior caused a lot of animosity toward him.

After all legal efforts were exhausted, on May 30, 1995, the city sent an army of kops, accompanied by SWAT teams and a mini tank with "Anytime Baby" painted on its side, to raid three of the 13th Street squats at 539-541+545. They were finally evicted after a day long street battle between kops and squatters, backed up by community activists. **[The full story is in SHADOW #34-#35-#36]** After that, John would crash at various locations until he finally left New York City and returned to Allentown.

In August of 2008, John brought a group of young people from Pennsylvania to Tompkins Square Park for our 20th Annual Tompkins Square Riot Reunion, commemorating that police riot of August 6, 1988. Led by John, they marched with a banner in a circle in the park. I supposed that he wanted them to be a part of the history he shared with us, fighting for "Our Fucking Park." It was great that John had influenced a new generation of people in Allentown to become politically aware and active.

John passed on December 16, a sad ending for a once handsome, creative and vital political activist who could have done more great things in our community. To this day, there is a slight irregularity in the asphalt on Avenue A between 9th and 10th Streets from repeated bonfires ignited there by John the Communist. It is symbolic of the mark that John left on the neighborhood.

As Maria says: "I've never met a more dedicated and devoted man, and he definitely was, as many others have said, a true revolutionary."

Kenny cites revolutionary Che Guevara, who once said that, in a revolution, one wins or dies. "John lived by that sentiment. He was absolutely uncompromising about his principles, and never budged even an iota. He deserves to be remembered for his love of working class people everywhere, his fearlessness, and his revolutionary spirit."

-- Chris Flash

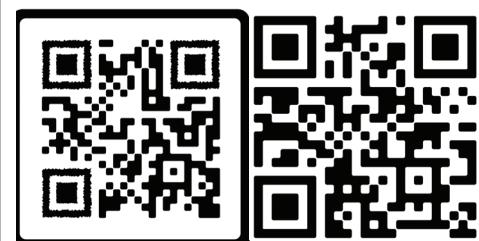
MAC McGILL**Continued From Page 3**

St. Squat a Lot. I was already friends with Seth Tobocman, co-founder of the radical political comics magazine called *World War 3 Illustrated*. Seth told me about a space that was available at Umbrella Haus. I had already stayed with Seth for a while in a little room with a big pile of rubble. I would spend my time sitting in there and drawing, as well as working on the building. So people already knew me when I applied to get a space. I had worked my ass off doing a lot of work days so I got voted in as a member. Seth had asked me to contribute some illustrations to *World War 3*, but I didn't really submit anything until around 1989. I had been too busy doing production work and drawings for the *Guardian* and doing other freelance jobs. My first piece for *WW3* was called "Cracked" about a woman I knew who had killed herself. At the same time, I was doing cartoons and illustrations every week for the *Amsterdam News* on black issues for \$35 a week. I wasn't just doing it for the money! I have always been a painter too but I don't usually show those pieces. Eight months after [Hurricane] Katrina [in 2005] I went to the lower 9th ward in New Orleans to help gut buildings. That's when I was inspired to work on a New Orleans Storm Story. The Debris was terrible. I met the woman whose house we were cleaning out and she was crying a lot. Then I knew I had to tell the Story."

Mac's beautiful and haunting piece "Song for Katrina" was slated to be published in 2020 by France's Éditions CMDE, but it seems that did not happen. The story focuses on the disaster and its aftermath through McGill's personal connections and involvement. Drawn in his distinctive pointillist style, it features themes of resilience and community amidst devastation. Mac was one of the sweetest and most steadfast of friends I have ever known. His art is beautiful and soulful. His dedication was Epic... I can feel him now traveling through the swirling ink-scapes that radiated from his limitless imagination... I am blessed to have had such a good friend, comrade and inspiration...

-- Fly Orr

These are two videos of Mac in action. The first is a video profile by Yolanda Jones and the second is Mac's performance at the WW3 Illustrated 30th anniversary event on May 8, 2010:

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Vietnam**Continued From Page 5**

The next day, May 1st, was a national holiday in Vietnam and a perfect day for a trip to the War Remnants Museum. I passed through exhibit after exhibit, searching for the room with remnants of the United States anti-war movement. I wanted to know if the Vietnam leaders ever took our protests seriously.

The museum was packed with visitors from all over the world among proud Vietnamese families shuttling children. I found what I was looking for among the crowds: the Pulitzer Prize winning photo taken by John Paul Filo from May 4, 1970, at Kent State University in Ohio, where Mary Ann Vecchio stands in shock, arms spread over the body of Jeffrey Miller, one of four students killed and nine others shot by National Guard troops as they protested President Nixon's bombing of Cambodia.

I took a hand sewn flower with me to the museum and placed it next to the photo and snapped a picture. Behind me, I heard, in English, "somebody must have died." A moment

later, a young Vietnamese man walked over with a smile and we lifted our hands together, me in a fist of resistance as I had learned from protesting the war and the young man, whose gesture suggested something different, a peace symbol. Someone took my phone, taking a picture of us both, hands raised in peace in front of a picture of death and sadness. It was the moment I fell in love with Vietnam. I went on to see much more of this beguiling and mysterious land and Cambodia, its beautiful neighbor. A trip of which there is much more to tell.

When I consider the murder of a young mother protesting the imposition of fascism in Minneapolis and the deaths at Kent State and mass murder of Vietnamese people, I remembered why I came all this way to see this country. I needed to deal with my own PTSD, gained from daring to question the madness of US imperialism during the formative years of my life. I found that closure in Saigon at a museum of US atrocities against these wonderful people in a simple gesture of peace.

H. RAP BROWN

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legal jousting, he failed to appear in court for trial on the incitement charge. For 18 months, despite the best efforts of the FBI and an international dragnet, Brown could not be found.

Brown re-surfaced in 1972 in New York City. He had been arrested after being shot and seriously wounded following a gun battle with police during "an attempted hold-up" of an uptown Manhattan bar. The word on the street was that some of Brown's time underground was spent in a blighted Brooklyn community, an area ravaged by drugs. Along with some like-minded brothers, under arms, he ran the dealers out. Emboldened at having cleaned up one local community, they looked north. The Red Carpet Lounge on West 85th Street was not just any bar. In close proximity to a police precinct, it was a favorite watering hole of some of New York's finest. It was also reputed to be the location where, once weekly, Harlem dealers gathered to settle accounts with their partners and protectors on the police force.

Brown was sentenced to 15 years to be served in Attica State Prison in upstate New York, where he arrived a month after the infamous September 1971 prisoner uprising. While imprisoned, Brown contributed his writings to the radical magazine Black Mask, which was edited and published by the Lower East Side NYC-based radical group The Up Against the Wall Motherfuckers. The Motherfuckers were a Dadaist and Situationist anarchist affinity group, a "street gang with analysis," who were famous for their direct actions.

While in Attica, Brown adopted Islam and changed his name to Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin. Paroled in 1976, Al-Amin, after making his Hajj to Mecca, settled in Atlanta, GA, where his brother Ed was director of the Voter Education Project. Al-Amin opened a health food store and pursued the clerical duties of an Imam.

In August 1995, a month after a local shooting, agents of the FBI's Domestic Terrorism Task Force and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms arrested Imam Al-Amin as the shooter. At a press conference, they informed the press that the victim had identified the Imam as his assailant. The charges were dropped when the victim, who subsequently joined the Imam's mosque, told the press that he had not seen his assailant, but had been threatened by the authorities with jail if he did not implicate Imam Al-Amin.

On the night of March 16, 2000, an exchange of gunfire between two Fulton County Sheriff deputies and persons unknown resulted in the death of deputy Richard Kinchen and the serious injury of deputy Aldranon English. The shooting took place near the community mosque founded by Imam Al-Amin. According to authorities, the deputies were attempting to serve an arrest warrant on Al-Amin, who had missed an earlier court appearance. Al-Amin maintained that he never received notification of the court date, though his residence and business address were well-known to authorities.

After the shootings, Atlanta police released in rapid succession, and the media reported, four significantly different accounts of the incident. The precise location, the sequence of events, the description, and even the number of assailants, were all revised in these early accounts, the only constant being a "trail of blood." Deputy English was certain he'd seen,



spoken to, shot, and seriously wounded his attacker. English identified the shooter as Al-Amin, although there were discrepancies in his description of the shooter. A few days after the shooting, when Al-Amin was arrested in Alabama, he was found to be completely free of any physical injury.

Investigators reported following a "heavy trail" of blood up the steps and across the porch of an empty house, where they recovered a semi-automatic rifle near the house, not far from where Kinchen was killed. Al-Amin's fingerprints were not found on the rifle, the blood evidence did not match Al-Amin, and no physical evidence tied Al-Amin to the weapon. Al-Amin maintained that the weapon and other evidence were planted by disgraced FBI agent Ron Campbell who kicked and spat upon him during his arrest.

After the shootings, a parolee named Otis Jackson confessed that he was the killer of Kinchen. Jackson stated that he had gone to Al-Amin's store hoping to meet with him when the deputies pulled up, sprung from their vehicle with weapons pointed at him and demanded that he comply with their orders. Possessing an automatic pistol concealed in his waistband and a semi-automatic rifle in the trunk of his car and fearful of being returned to prison, Jackson said he shot the deputies to prevent this from happening. Jackson's bullets fatally struck Kinchen and hit English four times while Jackson himself was wounded twice in the upper left arm by English.

Jackson's parole was revoked on March 29, 2000. He was sent to prison in Nevada, where, on June 29, 2000, FBI agent Devon Mahony documented and filed Jackson's confession in his own handwriting, but the confession was disregarded.

Despite the anomalies, discrepancies and Jackson's confession, on March 9, 2002, nearly two years after the shootings, Al-Amin was convicted of 13 criminal charges, including murder and aggravated assault, sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. Al-Amin's appeal to the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals was subsequently rejected.

With Al-Amin experiencing severe health issues, his family and supporters continued to petition for a new trial, but to no avail. On July 18, 2014, after 12 years of punishing imprisonment, Al-Amin was diagnosed with multiple myeloma. Transferred to Federal Medical Center, Butner, in North Carolina, after family members requested he receive medical care, Al-Amin died on November 23, 2025, at the age of 82, having suffered slow and deliberate execution by medical neglect.

As a Syrian poet once said: "The blood of a martyr is not an ordinary blood. It transfuses itself into the life of a people and energizes them." May we all be so energized!!

Imam Jamil Abdullah al Amin, Presente!



MICHAEL PARENTI

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hope, nay, the wish of resuming their independence. The vast Roman Empire was governed by absolute power under the guidance of virtue and wisdom."

Like the Romans before them, the American empire also paints its actions as well-intentioned under the guise of American exceptionalism. Unlike the empires of the past, America has successfully deployed its propaganda systems in media and education to convince the public their own government isn't the empress of the world. Imperialists in the media create the illusion for its citizens to live in. As one Bush insider told journalist Ron Suskind, "We're an empire now. When we react, we create our own reality." Again, this is why Parenti was never allowed to appear on any media networks: He would destroy the illusion the American public was living under.

Despite their attempt to appear virtuous, Parenti still said the American empire operated to drain the wealth of other nations in order to grow the net worth of the oligarchs. He wrote, "Official Washington cannot tell the American people that the real purpose of its gargantuan military expenditures and belligerent interventions is to make the world safe for General Motors, General Electric, General Dynamics, and all the other generals."

The result of the imperialism conducted by America and its European allies is a poorer world and a wealthier oligar-

AMERICAN

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ly, as a violation of US firearms statutes: "possession of machine guns and destructive devices; and conspiracy to possess machine guns and destructive devices."

These charges are as absurd as attempting to legitimize the genocide in Gaza as Israel's "right to defend itself."

If this was about drugs, former Honduran president Juan Orlando Hernández would not have been pardoned by Trump last month, after he was sentenced to 45 years in prison for conspiring to distribute over 400 tons of cocaine in the US, a conviction that was justified with far greater evidence than that which supports the charges levied against Maduro. But drugs are the pretext.

Flush with success, there is already talk by Trump and his officials about Iran, Cuba, Greenland and perhaps Colombia, Mexico and Canada. Absolute power at home and absolute power abroad expands. It feeds off of each lawless act. It snowballs into totalitarianism and disastrous military adventurism. By the time people realize what has happened, it is too late.

Who will rule Venezuela? Who will rule Gaza? Does it matter? If nations and people do not bow before the great Moloch in Washington, they are bombed. This is not about establishing legitimate rule. It is not about fair elections. It is about using the threat of death and destruction to procure total subservience. Trump made this clear when he warned interim Venezuelan President Delcy Rodríguez that "if she doesn't do what's right, she is going to pay a very big price, probably bigger than Maduro."

Maduro's kidnapping was not carried out because of drug trafficking or possession of machine guns. This is about oil. It is, as Trump said, so the US can "run" Venezuela. "We're going to have our very large United States oil companies, the biggest anywhere in the world, go in, spend billions of dollars, fix the badly broken infrastructure, the oil infrastructure, and start making money for the country," Trump said during a press conference Saturday.

Iraqis, a million of whom were killed during the US war and occupation, know what comes next. The infrastructure, modern and efficient under Saddam Hussein – I reported from Iraq under Hussein so can attest to this truth – was destroyed. The Iraqi puppets installed by the US had no interest in governance and reportedly stole some \$150 billion in oil revenues.

The US, in the end, was booted out of Iraq, although it controls Iraqi oil revenues which are funnelled to the Federal Re-

chy. Parenti explained, "We are asked to believe that it always existed, that poor countries are poor because their lands have always been infertile or their people unproductive. In fact, the lands of Asia, Africa, and Latin America have long produced great treasures of foods, minerals, and other natural resources. That is why Europeans went through so much trouble to steal and plunder them. One does not go to poor places for self-enrichment. The Third World is rich. Only its people are poor—and it is because of the pillage they have endured."

Parenti, like a modern-day Cassandra, tried to warn us of the dangerous trajectory of neoliberalism, imperialism, and empire. The neoliberals and sycophants for oligarchy mocked his analysis. That is why he tried to educate the public with the hope they would organize and form class coalitions to throw off the shackles the oligarchy had placed upon them. As he told the propagandized populace, "You will have no sensation of a leash around your neck if you sit by the peg. It is only when you stray that you feel the restraining tug." Many now feel that tug, and recognize the leash, thanks to the brilliance of Michael Parenti.

-- Dorothy Lennon

[You can read Michael Parenti's article on the assassination of US president John F. Kennedy "The JFK Assassination: Defending The Gangster State," published in SHADOW #55 at: shadowpress.net/shadowscans/shadow55.pdf. You can read more of Parenti's writings at: michaelparenti.org]

serve Bank of New York. The government in Baghdad is allied with Iran. Its military includes Iran-backed militias in Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces. Iraq's largest trading partners are China, the UAE, India and Turkey. The debacles in Afghanistan and Iraq, which cost the American public anywhere from \$4 to \$6 trillion, were the most expensive in US history. None of the architects of these fiascos have been held to account.

Countries singled out for "regime change" implode, as in Haiti, where the US, Canada and France overthrew Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1991 and 2004. The overthrow ushered in societal and government collapse, gang warfare and exacerbated poverty. The same happened in Honduras when a 2009 US-backed coup removed Manuel Zelaya. The recently pardoned Hernández became president in 2014 and transformed Honduras into a narco-state, as did US puppet Hamid Karzai in Afghanistan, who oversaw the production of 90 percent of the world's heroin. And then there is Libya, another country with vast oil reserves. When Muammar Gaddafi was overthrown by NATO during the Obama administration in 2011, Libya splintered into enclaves led by rival warlords and militias.

The list of disastrous attempts by the US at "regime change" is exhaustive, including in Kosovo, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen. All are examples of the folly of imperial overreach. All predict where we are headed. The US has targeted Venezuela since the 1998 election of Hugo Chávez. It was behind a failed coup in 2002. It imposed punishing sanctions over two decades. It tried to anoint opposition politician Juan Guaidó, as "interim president" although he was never elected to the presidency. When this did not work, Guaidó was dumped as callously as Trump abandoned opposition figure and Nobel Peace Prize laureate María Corina Machado. In 2020, we staged a Keystone Cops attempt by ill-trained mercenaries to trigger a popular uprising. None of it worked.

The kidnapping of Maduro begins another debacle. Trump and his minions are no more competent, and probably less so than officials from previous administrations, who tried to bend the world to their will. Our decaying empire stumbles forward like a wounded beast, unable to learn from its disasters, crippled by arrogance and incompetence, torching the rule of law and fantasizing that indiscriminate industrial violence will regain a lost hegemony. Able to project devastating military force, its initial success lead inevitably to self-defeating and costly quagmires. The tragedy is not that the American empire is dying, it is that it is taking down so many innocents with it.

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the SHADOW

INFORMATION IS STRENGTH • KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

STOP THE ICE GESTAPO!

By Frank Morales

The mercenaries of ICE [United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement] who have invaded cities across the US are a lawless gang of trigger-happy thugs relying on deception and brute force. An ill-trained so-called "federal law enforcement agency" under the supervision of the Department of Homeland Security [DHS], ICE was created as part of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, absorbing prior functions of the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the United States Customs Service. They have been given a free hand to utilize all means of violence, including murder, to force their way.

Numbering in the tens of thousands, ICE "police" and their associated partners in crime, including ERO [Enforcement and Removal Operations], DHS [Department of Homeland Security], SRT [Special Response Team], HSI [Homeland Security Investigations], BORTAC [Border Patrol Tactical Unit], CBP [United States Customs and Border Protection], USBP [United States Border Patrol], as well as the FBI, DEA and ATF, are a danger to the citizenry, a stark violation of Constitutional norms, a violent social pathology masked as "law enforcement."

On January 7, Iraq "War" veteran and now ICE agent Jonathan Ross of ICE's "Special Response Team," shot single mom Renee Good in Minneapolis, MN, as she attempted to drive away from ICE agents trying to pry open her minivan door. Ross, who later claimed that Good had run him over with her vehicle, shot her three times from the front left of her vehicle, where he was in the clear, killing her almost instantly. As Good's vehicle careened toward a pole and parked cars, where it crashed, Ross was heard on a video he was making with a cell phone held in his hand before, during and after he shot Good, muttering "Fuckin' Bitch" as she crashed. NO ICE agents came to Good's aid and they prevented a local doctor from helping her. By the time medical assistance arrived, it was too late.

Though Ross was seen on multiple videos walking to and from the site of Good's crash with no difficulty before getting into his vehicle and leaving the scene of the shooting, president trump declared that Ross was hospitalized for "leg injuries." DHS later said it was for "internal bleeding." DHS secretary Kristi Noem quickly announced to the media that Renee Good had "weaponized" her vehicle against Ross, committing "an act of domestic terrorism." Video evidence provided by several witnesses, including Ross' video, prove that trump and Noem are both LYING.

On January 24, male nurse Alex Petti was killed in Minneapolis by ICE agents who shot him at least ten times as was on his knees. In videos shot by witnesses from several angles, Petti was seen filming ICE agents from a distance before he was sprayed in the face when he attempted to get between them and a woman they were shoving to the ground. In seconds, several ICE agents were seen piling on top of Petti, beating him. One agent grabbed

Petti's licensed pistol from his holster and left the scene. At that moment, an agent shot Petti in his back. That shot was followed by four and then by five more rapid shots unloaded into Petti's prone body by the ICE agents. One ICE agent, looking at Petti's dead body, was heard on a video, mockingly saying "BOO HOO."

Before Petti's body was cold, DHS secretary Kristi Noem held a press conference shortly after the shooting. Reading from a prepared script, Noem declared that Petti "approached US Border Patrol officers with a 9mm semi-automatic handgun," that Petti "reacted violently" when they "attempted to disarm him" and that the agent, "fearing for his life, fired defensive shots." She further asserted that Petti "arrived on the scene in order to inflict maximum damage on individuals and to kill law enforcement." She also claimed that "about hundreds of protesters showed up" and "began to obstruct and to assault law enforcement officers." Diminutive "Border Patrol Commander" Gregory Bovino held a press conference of his own the same day, reading from the same script, repeating Noem's claims with a straight face, practically word for word. Again, video evidence provided by several witnesses prove that Noem and Bovino are both LYING.

A November 17, 2025 NPR [National Public Radio] report states that "97% of hundreds of undocumented immigrants swept up in Chicago's recent immigration raids had no criminal record at the time of their arrest." Once detained, ICE throws immigrants into inhumane, abusive ICE prisons and disappears people so that families and lawyers have no idea where they are. And people are dying. In 2025 alone, more than 30 people died while in ICE custody.

Members of Congress have called "Alligator Alcatraz," an immigration detention facility located at Dade-Collier Training and Transition Airport inside Big Cypress National Preserve in Ochopee, Florida, that opened in July 2025, an "internment camp," have reported on deaths linked to medical neglect, and have documented ICE denying children medical attention and forcing pregnant women to sleep on floors in overcrowded intake cells. ICE currently holds a record 66,000+ detainees in its prisons, the majority being held in Texas. And the agency wants to expand into warehouse-like "mega detention centers."

Federal immigration raids executed by masked and anonymous ICE agents wearing various insignias have spread fear throughout workplaces across the country. ICE has torn through construction sites, restaurants, schools, daycares, farms, factories, and the parking lots of big box stores. In the process, they are damaging local economies. Against this harsh reality unions and workers are responding.

United Farm Workers has been pushing employers to protect workers after the violent ICE raid of a California farm in July 2025, which led to the arrest of 361 workers and one death. Child care workers are building a resistance network against ICE after reported incidents of agents drag-



ging teachers and daycare workers away in front of groups of kids. The largely Latino workforce at a packaging plant in Chicago recently organized a strike centered on the demand that their employer refuse to allow ICE into their workplace without a warrant, demanding that the owner refuse to allow the deportation of fellow workers, shipped to who knows where to be disappeared.

On September 25, 2025, Democracy Now reported that as of late August 2025, about two-thirds of the 1,800 immigrants being held at "Alligator Alcatraz" since July have gone missing from the ICE online database, their families and attorneys unable to locate them. Despite efforts to close the concentration camp, it continues to operate as an extrajudicial black site, along with hundreds of makeshift black sites in local jails, abandoned buildings, re-purposed warehouses, and off-the-books detention wings, where immigrants, asylum seekers, and even US residents are held by ICE without transparency.

These detentions are reaping large financial returns for a handful of contractors. Politically-connected Goths LLC won a \$33 million contract to run "Alligator Alcatraz." Companies such as CoreCivic and GEO Group, federal contractors for immigrant detention, are raking in record profits. CoreCivic is generating over \$2 billion in annual revenue. According to a November 6, 2025 report from Tennessee Lookout, the private prison operator saw a 55% increase in immigration detainee contracts and that the "Brentwood-based company has signed over half a billion dollars worth of new contracts with the federal government since President Donald Trump took office."

Of course, like the "military industrial complex" that requires wars, their business model only works if beds stay full. That

means more raids, more detentions and more people locked away for as long as possible. These corporations make billions each year while families are torn apart, asylum seekers are traumatized, and people are caged for trying to build a better and safer life.

According to a December 12, 2025 Intercept report, ICE has hired 10 contractors to carry out its immigrant bounty hunting program. The firms include companies that have had previous deals with spy agencies and the military, private investigators that boast of their physical surveillance skills, and a private prison giant. ICE is recruiting and hiring private sector "skip tracing" services, where corporate investigators use digital snooping tools and on-the-ground surveillance to track immigrants.

Under the plan, bounty hunters receive "monetary bonuses," depending on how successfully they track down their targets and how many immigrants they then report to ICE. The way it works is that companies hired by ICE are given bundles of information on 10,000 immigrants at a time to locate, with further assignments provided in increments of 10,000, up to 1,000,000. ICE procurement records indicate the agency will be targeting as many as 1.5 million immigrants in the US.

Taken together, records show that the 10 companies have been paid over \$1 million to date and stand to make over \$1 billion by the contract's end in 2027. The 10 companies include: Bluehawk, EnProVera, Gravitas, Capgemini Government Solutions, Constellation Inc., SOS International, and Fraud Inc. Among the more novel firms in on the bounty hunting boom is AI Solutions 87, which says it can

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