

This statement specifically contemplates an audience of radicals & anarchists coming out of environmentalist, animal rights and/or anti-globalization milieus. Though, the readership is likely to include more people, that setting just happens to be my background and that Marie's and Eric's. It felt insincere to speak of Marie and Eric as a part of a very long history of repression in this statement, in part because I think the possible strategies employed for longterm political prisoners look different than the strategy that we're proposing. In the section on repression, I tried to steer away from an if-you-can't-do-the-time-then-don't-do-the-crime approach. I wanted to stress that we need to create political conditions that jointly Don't Excuse Cooperation with the State and that Do Dispel the Myths of Its Advantages.

The first section broaches why it is important to develop a new strategy and new framework for supporting Marie, Eric and all long-term anarchist prisoners. The second section explicitly places long-term anarchist prisoner support in the context of anti-repression. The third section explicitly states that Marie and Eric are relevant and a few of myriad reasons why. The fourth section expounds some possible objectives of the specific day and date.

Bloomington — June 6, 2011



June 11th Strategy

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This is a strategy proposal for June 11th as a part of a broader push to develop livable support for longterm anarchist prisoners in the US.

Part IV. What is June 11th?

June 11th serves as a particular day to think about Marie and Eric and to look at where we have been in terms of repression.

It's not intended to be a letter-writing day, so you know you've done your bit of service for Eric and Marie. Instead it's a day during which they can't slip from our minds, and this history of repression that affects our present can't slip away either.

June 11th also serves as a yearly check-in to ask "where are we now?" in terms of repression and anti-repression.

June 11th began in 2004 as an international day of solidarity with long-term anarchist prisoner Jeff "Free" Luers. At the time, Jeff was serving 22+ years. Infuriated by the environmental devastation he saw occurring on a global scale, Free torched three SUVs at a car dealership in Eugene, Oregon. The sentence imposed on him was intended to send a clear message to others angered by capitalism's continued war on the Earth's ecosystems—and to those who were willing to take action to put a stop to it. After all, Free is not alone in his concerns about pollution, climate change, fossil fuels, and genetically modified organisms.

After years of struggle, Jeff and his legal team won a reduction in his sentence. He was released from prison in December 2009. In the years intervening Jeff's arrest and release, the FBI carried out a series of indictments and arrests in attempt to devastate radical environmental and anarchist communities. Two of the people caught up in this maelstrom of repression were Eric McDavid and Marie Mason.

Conclusion

In light of Free's release, June 11th resumes as a day of international solidarity with Marie Mason and Eric McDavid who share the unfortunate distinction of having the longest standing sentences of any environmental prisoners in the United States. Free began his sentence as a long-term anarchist prisoner, now his release represents what we want for *all* long-term anarchist prisoners—we want them out.

June 11th is an opportunity for more of us to begin consciously not to treat solidarity as a burden, but rather

To create ways to keep Marie and Eric present in our lives,
To facilitate Marie and Eric's political voice and engagement outside of prison,
To develop relationships with Eric and Marie if we haven't done so already,
To create opportunities to link together struggles,
To have something to talk about with non-anarchists,
To have a concrete starting point for building momentum against prison and prison-society.

—Free Marie Mason! Free Eric McDavid!

An Introduction to Longterm Anarchist Prisoner Support in the US

In the recent history of radical eco-movements in the US, the effects of repression are palpable and have shaped how we live. The cases of Marie Mason and Eric McDavid are two critical examples of repression's effects, but only two of many. Though these cases are not unusual cases of the state's power, Eric and Marie have the longest standing sentences of any environmental prisoners in the United States. With Eric and Marie we must shift from a support scheme based on helping individuals through short-term prison sentences to a new way of thinking and doing to support *them* throughout their long-term sentences [added emphasis on them & out].

Part I. Why do we do the things we do?

The conventions in place for short-term prisoner support do not make sense for long-term prisoners.

The basic strategy for short-term prisoner support helps the incarcerated person meet basic needs such as food, medical assistance, and hope. Short-term tactics involve support crews who organize letter-writing nights and fundraisers to pay off lawyer bills, court fees and (possibly) restitution; who solicit donations for commissary; and who manage phone trees for jail calls. Short-term support does its best to help prisoners make it through the arduous years until they're out. These endeavors do, of course, have very real effects in the lives on short-term prisoners—and at times in the lives longterm prisoners as well.

However, long-term prisoners aren't getting out any time soon. Consequently, they have a different set of needs, and their support should have a different set of corresponding goals.

Examples include:

- Food
- Proper Medical Care
- Hope
- Engagement with politics and activity outside of prison
- Outside resources for prison struggle
- Growing friendships and various kinds of relationships, both inside and outside of prison
- Political and public voice inside and outside of prison
- Constant—consistent and unrelenting—legal support
- Communication in which they have agency
- Get them the fuck out, however, impossible it seems
- Wouldn't it be great and realistic, if when prison warden puts them in solitary, then outside support expressed some sort of outrage, or any reaction at all.
- Many more

The short-term strategy (letter-writing and fundraisers) is unsustainable for a long-term prisoner sentence. Reasons include:

- Burnout of support crew individuals
- The tasks and needs are bigger and take a great commitment of time and energy and cannot be sustained with high turnover.
- More individual reasons

Burnout and high turnover are serious concerns with the pressure of +20-year sentences. To avoid such shortcomings, long-term support requires more dynamic interaction between a great variety of groups of people who are responsible for the *material* needs of prisoners. This means creating more diffuse support from different and wider circles.

For the same reasons that material needs require a broader support lattice, wider circles are needed to support prisoner's political needs, including access to public voice, solidarity, public support and defense. The publicity of their imprisonment seems crucial for the following reasons:

- 1) as a way of saying that they are still present
- 2) as a way of reminding ourselves
- 3) as a way of constructing a network of media at Marie and Eric's disposal

Often prisoners' voices must pass through multiple channels just to have access to the conventional publication; we should streamline that path for them to facilitate their political (and any) engagement outside of prison and to create a greater audience for them speak on prison struggle/anything.

Part II. Support & Anti-Repression

The objective is to stop putting prisoner support in an ancillary position to other political engagements—that is, to stop thinking about and doing prisoner support as if it's damage control or a patronage program.

This strategy conceives of long-term prisoner support as a means of facilitating prisoners' agency in every way—answering the questions of how do we live with them and not let the state take them from us. Eric and Marie are people who have been taken but are still very present.

How do we increase their presence and their ability to choose how they want to be present? This is as much a question for us as it is for Eric and Marie. They feel the constraints set in place by prison inextricably; we need them out. In the process, we (you, me, Eric and Marie) need to uncover and cull out ways of living together in the face of prison.

How repression affects prisoners' lives and all of our lives seems central to this objective and these questions.

Four Point Framework to Mitigate Repression

1. Understanding that repression is central
 - a. Repression is often divorced from other political campaigns. For instance, a campaign will have its political work and then will host the occasional know-your-rights workshop presented by another group that focuses specifically on anti-repression.
 - b. Repression should be central to political strategy.
2. Having a knowledge of how the legal system works to protect yourself (a bit) and gives you some agency in the matter
 - a. It's impossible to make decisions that contemplate the State's repressive tactics when we don't even know how the mechanics of that system work.
 - b. When you know how things work, you can make choices possibly to affect the situation.
3. Transparency in the face of repression
 - a. Now: when a cop knocks, tell your friends.
 - b. Future: when a cop knocks, alert the neighborhood!
4. Making Links with others to facilitate the first three points
 - a. To build a more diffuse plexus of relationships for support and publicity of state repression

Part III. Why are Marie & Eric relevant?

This is a loaded question. How could they—who are friends, family and fellow dissidents—not be relevant?

But, also their cases demonstrate how repression has been effective and how it has not.

Examples of effective repression:

They have long-term sentences that seem insurmountable. Their communication with everyone is heavily mediated by the State. Snitches, grand juries and state persecution based on political ideology, which were present in both, are still used against us.

Examples of ineffective repression:

They are amazing people with viewpoints, voices and power. They continue to form and sustain meaningful relationships and political engagements. Non-cooperation. Non-cooperation at every phase of their cases.

They are people to learn from and with.