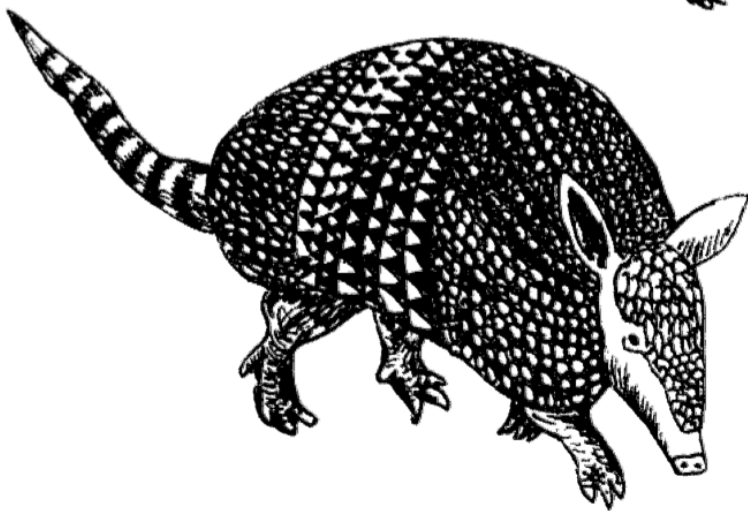


WE CAN DO THIS

Ideas for Preparing Yourself & Your
Community

- for protests and other risky times -



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INTRODUCTION

This zine is an edited version of a workshop that a few of us put together in early 2020 to share some ideas with people in our community. It's an introduction. A lot of people haven't heard of some of these concepts, and a lot of us are feeling a need to refresh our memories. We aren't experts on anything here, but we bring some lived experience, knowledge of existing resources, and mostly a desire to raise this conversation with friends and strangers alike, so that people feel more knowledgeable and less mystified about the policing of protests, what to do in case of arrests, and how we can support each other better. Feel free to copy the parts that seem useful to use elsewhere (we did), but be aware that we might have made mistakes or left important things out. Try to find people around you who have been around a while and pick their brains.

This isn't a guide to getting through a jail sentence, or even a short time in jail. It's mostly a collection of tips we think could be helpful to think about if you're involved in protests (or other activities that could bring you or your friends in contact with the police and other agents of the state). No matter how bad things get, remember all the people who have come before us and survived with their dignity and honor unbroken.

The government and power structures in the so-called US have always been based on murder, brutality, and the threat of violence. That's nothing new. It does seem like some kinds of more open authoritarianism, where the military is called out onto the streets and unmarked federal agents in fatigues throw people on the street into unmarked vans, could point toward a future where some of this material becomes obsolete. What won't become obsolete is the value of looking out for each other, taking care of each other, and taking care of ourselves. If we practice that now, we'll be more able to adapt as conditions change.

THE POLICE

Never trust them. Anything you say can and will be used against you. They can legally lie to you. Say as little as possible. Practice getting comfortable calmly asserting your rights, such as they are, when it seems like the best option for getting through the immediate danger. Try to take note of identifying details like names, uniforms, license plates, and other numbers on their vehicles, but remember they may become

more hostile if you ask for their badge numbers, because to them that might imply you're going to file a report.

Remember phrases like, "am I free to go?" "Am I being detained?" "I don't consent to searches." "Do you have a warrant?" "I'm going to remain silent." "I want to talk to a lawyer." Be conscious of your tone of voice, movements, and the visibility of your hands. Don't sign anything without a lawyer, with the exception of a "Promise to Appear" in court if you've been arrested, and even then, make sure you read it first.

Note: there's no moral or ethical component to this advice, and it's no guarantee of safety at the hands of police. This is about making it easier for a lawyer to defend you in court, and one approach to trying to minimize harm in a dangerous and disempowering situation when you're outnumbered by people who are legally authorized to hurt you.

Example Conversation:

COP: Hey you, hold it!

PERSON: How's it going. Am I being detained or am I free to go?

COP: We just want to ask you some questions. Put your hands on your head. (Starts patting down outside of clothes).

PERSON: Officer, I don't consent to searches, am I free to go or are you detaining me?

COP: You mind if I look in that backpack?

PERSON: I don't consent to searches

COP: Okay; if you're so smart, you want to tell me whose idea it was for a bunch of idiots to go block that highway onramp over there?

PERSON: Officer, I'm going to remain silent. I want to talk to a lawyer.

COP: Get out of here, and smarten up, or you're going to find yourself in some real trouble someday.

(Obviously this is sort of a best case scenario. A good take away if you get arrested would be "I'm going to remain silent. I want to talk to a lawyer." Some people recommend this as the safest answer to give if the police are trying to ask you questions after they bring you in. It's helpful to have a verbal tool that ends the conversation. If you start talking, it can be hard to stop.

Resources

- “10 Rules for Dealing with Police” on YouTube
- “Beat the Heat: How to Handle Encounters With Law Enforcement” (book) by Katya Komisaruk

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

How aware of your surroundings are you? How quickly do you think you can react to changes in your circumstances? Developing a keen awareness of your environment is definitely helpful for participating in protests and actions.

Some questions to ask yourself (even in boring situations, these can keep your mind active)

Are there folks that can easily be picked off by police? Are there potential escape routes? Notice if the cops are pointing out individuals. Do they have lots of plastic cuffs? Are they putting on gas masks? Is anyone getting separated from the larger group, who might not want to be?

If you needed help who could you turn to? Are there banners or umbrellas in the crowd that could block line of sight and allow targeted individuals to mix in with the crowd, and possibly change into some different clothes?

Street medics and people preparing to support arrested folks might ask certain questions that really anyone could benefit from thinking about. Examples include: How far to the nearest hospital? Where is the nearest police station? Is anyone isolated from the rest of the group? Is anyone behaving in a way that you're concerned about? Is anyone looking injured or unwell?

Consider possible actions to take if people are getting pointed out for potential arrest as part of your safety plan.

BUDDY SYSTEM AND GETTING TO & FROM ACTIONS

When attending a protest or demonstration, go with at least one other person, if not a whole affinity group. Watch each others' backs. Support each others' physical and emotional needs. Check in beforehand about strengths, risks, vulnerabilities, and worries. Discuss logistics about getting to and from the action in advance. At the very least, it's good to have someone to watch your back and make sure you're drinking water. In a worst case scenario, it's nice to have someone know your legal

name and how to get in touch with someone you'd want contacted in an emergency. Offer to buddy up with others you know may be attending alone, if you're comfortable sticking together.

One possible tool for you...

P.E.A.R.L.Y. – Acronym some street medics in the Boston area use to evaluate whether to be buddies on a given day, based on a protocol of Atlanta Copwatch (these are questions you can ask each other to see if you're a good match and to know how to support each other):

- **Physical Vulnerabilities:** Asthma, wheelchair, trans, black
- **Emotional Vulnerabilities:** PTSD, phobia, bad day, drama
- **Arrestability:** legal status, outside responsibilities
- **Roles:** given all that, how do we want to engage w/ protest today?
- **Loose ends:** Swap #s, backup plans, pick a buddy team name!
- **Yes or No?** Do you think you'll be a good pair today?

Leaving a protest or an action can be a vulnerable time. White supremacist and other far-right groups have been known to attack people in the vicinity of a protest after the crowd has dispersed. Police may choose to harass people once they seem to be isolated.

Accompany people back to their cars, homes, or public transportation, especially if they're going alone. Check in with people to make sure they get home safely. If you go alone, it's not a bad idea to let someone else know that you're going to a protest and that you'll let them know when you're safely back home.

Resources

- crimethinc.com/zines/how-to-form-an-affinity-group (read or print)

JAIL SUPPORT TEAM

If you are involved in organizing an action and have the capacity, it's really helpful if you can organize a legal support # to give people before things get going, so if someone gets arrested, there's a number they can call for help. The person preparing to answer the phone should be in a safe place off-site. You can get a burner phone that's dedicated to this purpose, but you may have to give a credit or debit card number to accept collect calls from some jails.

Consider having a fundraising platform and language ready to go in case you need it. Some online fundraising platforms may not allow

pages specifically for someone's bail, but you might be able to get around that with a more general fundraiser that you can direct people to when you share news about the action.

If you're organizing jail support for a known quantity of people or a particular group that knows they're likely to get arrested (and the team supporting them) you should consider having them all fill out a jail support form with information about emergency contacts, outside responsibilities, legal name and date of birth, medications or health concerns, and other information that will help you support them through a difficult time. This makes sense for groups of a certain size, not so much for marches or public actions involving hundreds or thousands of people. But either way, you can organize a jail support team. This team should review jail support forms with everyone who's filled one out, to make sure it's complete and legible to jail support. They should also collect personal items in a labeled ziplock bag or something, and keep track of cars/keys and other personal items if needed.

Ideally, a jail support team should consist of both onsite and offsite supporters or buddy teams. There should be someone in a very safe place to answer a phone when people call the jail support # - ideally in-state, landline if possible (at least that's what people used to say; it might not be so true any more, and some jail support hotlines use google voice numbers that can be directed to multiple people's phones).

The onsite support team can call the offsite person when they see arrests happen, and convey any information about where arrestees are being taken, or information about whether they're being arrested by local, state, or federal officers, which can help figure out where they're being taken. The offsite person can begin contacting lawyers (who are ideally already in the loop) and begin calling area jails/police stations to determine where friends have been taken.

When friends call from jail, be calm and reassuring. Remind them they're being recorded. Ask where they are, if they're hurt, if they've gotten food/water, their charges, and any bail information. How many other people are with them? Any injuries? Do they want to be bailed out? Let them know you're contacting the lawyer.

Contact and update emergency contacts from jail support forms. Be calm and prepared to give emotional support.

Supporters at the jail should have names and dates of birth, but not the whole jail support form. Ask for information at the front desk. You might need to plan shifts in case of a long wait. After arrested people get out and you can get to another location, document and treat any injuries and write down any recollections of mistreatment; don't rely on remembering later.

Note: it's great if there is an organized and prepared jail support infrastructure in place, but that doesn't always happen. You might have to step in if a friend calls you after getting arrested. Inexperienced jail support is better than nothing. In some cases, you might only need \$40 or \$50 dollars to get someone out, and if you don't have it, you might be able to ask other people to contribute. Lawyers are helpful once a court case gets under way, but in the short term, it really means a lot to see friendly faces when you get released from jail or the police station, and to be offered food, water, a ride, coffee, cigarettes, or whatever small thing that offers a bit of humanity.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Have at least one phone number memorized or written on your body, for someone who isn't there, in case you get arrested - so you can call them to bail you out or seek help for you. Consider that if you write a number in a very visible place, like your arm, it's possible it could be photographed, spread around to people who are against what you're doing and be swamped with harassing calls. It's possible. You might consider your stomach or ankle as places to write numbers too, but most people write on their inner forearm. Don't count on access to your phone or scraps of paper if you might get arrested (and there's always some chance you could, even if it's small). If you're at an action with organized legal or jail support, there may be a number available for people to call who get arrested.

LEGAL OBSERVERS

If you see people wearing bright fluorescent green hats and taking lots of notes, they're probably not cops. The notes are about what's happening at various times, especially when police agencies are present, and any of their identifying characteristics. Occasionally they're lawyers,

but often these are regular folks - the idea is that their testimony could later help arrested or brutalized people, based on their National Lawyers Guild training and neutral posture. This is also a resource you might consider requesting if you are organizing a public action.

- Typically, Legal Observers will accompany protests or marches but remain somewhat aloof in order to take notes about police activity in case this record is needed after the action
- If your comrade is arrested or someone else you observe is, seek out a legal observer nearby for support. Legal Observers will generally be in contact with both the National Lawyers' Guild and any lawyers working with the protest/action
- See later section where there is more info on the National Lawyers' Guild.

ANONYMITY vs. IDENTIFIABILITY

Consider your situation and any reasons why it may be important for you to maintain anonymity/privacy at a protest or in daily life in general.

Some risks may include being photographed and arrested later, being identified by employers, or potentially being doxxed, which means having your name or personal information publicly released on the internet, which can result in threats and harassment.

One practice you may observe sometimes is the “black bloc,” which is not a group or an organization, but one tactic that has been used, with varying levels of success, to make it harder to identify individuals by having a large group of people all dressed in the same color (black in this case) and wearing masks.

Other experiments have been tried and it's worth experimenting further.

Of course, being masked up and dressed all in black is also likely to draw attention to you, especially if you're the only one, which somewhat negates the point. Scarves, hats, sunglasses, hoods, umbrellas, and banners to stand behind are all tools for the toolbox, too. Just remember, it's not about whether we're proud or ashamed of what we're doing, it's about defending ourselves from threats in the present and in the future; these are just some concerns and possibilities to try to weigh against each other.

Consider the context – what are other people in this situation likely to look like? Will dressing in a particular way make it harder to identify

particular individuals for repression? Sometimes dressing fairly normally, but inconspicuously, while also carrying other clothes to change into can help. If the cops (or vigilantes) are looking for the person in the purple shirt, and you changed into an orange shirt, it may reduce your odds of being picked on. One of the few good things about the corona virus pandemic is that it's made it fairly normal to wear a mask, but keep in mind that a particular mask can also be an identifiable characteristic, and take note of how easily you can identify familiar people sometimes, even when they're wearing masks.

CELL PHONE PROTEST PRECAUTIONS

If you're participating in a direct action, note that your phone may have its signal intercepted or even be physically confiscated. Cell phones are also valuable sources of protester location data. It is important to take precautions to limit your capacity to be implicated by your cell phone. Make sure you have a password for your phone (not your fingerprint or other biometrics!), especially before taking your phone somewhere you might lose it. Before a protest, consider turning off your cell phone or at least putting it on airplane mode. You can even invest in a faraday bag to limit all signals from reaching your phone. If not, just try to limit your phone use during sensitive political event. If you have been arrested (or arrest seems imminent and unavoidable), remove the sim card from your phone so your contents cannot be accessed by the police.

We're in a culture now where we get directions, document police violence, and make last-minute plans for where to meet up with cell phones. However, it really wasn't that long ago that we didn't have cell phones to bring with us. It's not impossible to leave it somewhere else. Remember that location data can be used later to build a case saying that you were in the area when a particular event happened.

There's so much information stored in those little things. You might want to consider getting a cheap one at a drug store that's not connected to your name or other parts of your life.

COMMUNICATIONS SECURITY

Remember that all of your digital interactions can be recorded and monitored. This includes your emails, calls, text, private messages, your location, the length of time you spend looking at something, and more. Your computer and cell phone's cameras and microphones can be turned on remotely even when you're not using them. We all need to

balance the need to communicate quickly with whatever the possible risks are. There are many things you can do depending on your goal.

You may want to start integrating better privacy/security practices in your life just for the sake of taking back control of information about yourself. Your digital interactions on one platform produce digital profiles with tons of data about you that are constantly being re-sold to advertisers and other third-parties. Large corporations are simultaneously profiting from your internet use and creating massive infrastructures for social control. It is hard to prevent this from happening while you are using social media, but there are alternatives for some of your other activities.

To start, it is best to limit your use of facial recognition technology. This includes using applications that use your camera. It is also better to avoid using your fingerprint to unlock your phone. The less of your physical description that you put on the internet, the better. Recently, information has been leaked on how police departments have compiled massive databases just from social media profiles. This effort may seem futile given how many pictures of us are probably on the internet already, but digital algorithms need to be constantly updated with new information to work as they should. By not providing clear, new pictures of yourself, you are limiting the ability of facial recognition technology (and those employing it) to detect you.

For messaging, try to use encrypted, and ideally open-sourced, applications such as Signal (which was recommended by Edward Snowden!). Switch over to an encrypted email, such as ProtonMail or Tutanota. For a web browser, you can use Firefox – it keeps significantly less information about you than Google Chrome does and it's made using open-sourced software. Even better would be to use the TOR browser, as it is also open-sourced and built with even more settings to make your internet navigation secure. For a search engine, instead of Google, use Duck Duck Go as it doesn't keep logs of your searches. If you want to take an extra precaution and have all of your internet traffic encrypted, invest in a VPN. NordVPN is one of the best VPNs, and it allows for up to 6 devices to connect to the same account. You may be able to split the cost with a friend or two.

Groups that are planning public demonstrations or civil disobedience actions where they expect to be arrested anyway might think it's more

trouble than it's worth to worry about digital security, but ask yourself, how much more effective will you be with an element of surprise? Or keep in mind that police and prosecutors might like to slap outrageous charges on even a tame public protest, in which case maybe you don't want lots of evidence that you helped organize it. There are many instances of police intercepting phone signals even without a warrant, and many more of phones being confiscated.

Ultimately, there is only so much we can do to protect ourselves, so we can't get so caught up in high tech solutions that we forget the basics of "what am I saying to who and why?" We have remarkable technologies for communicating quickly and over long distances, but we don't need to forget the social and security benefits of talking face to face and leaving devices at home when we can.

Resources

- Check if the data associated with your email has been breached
 - <https://haveibeenpwned.com/>
- Check your social media data profiles
 - For twitter, <https://foller.me/>
 - Examine your Facebook and Twitter ad settings to see what information is being used to curate your ads
- Electronic Frontier Foundation's Surveillance Self-Defense
 - <https://ssd.eff.org/en>

AGREEMENTS WITH COMRADES AND POTENTIAL CODEFENDANTS

Ideally, have discussions with your folks about mutual expectations and needs before actions. Establishing verbally that if arrested, you won't talk in custody, makes it harder for cops to manipulate you by saying "Your friend already said it was all your idea; do you want to tell us your side of the story?"

If you are expecting to be arrested with a group of other people, or feel there's a high likelihood, you can discuss if you want to withhold your names and information to prolong the process if part of the goal is slowing down the system, or agree to give your information to (try) to speed it up, but it's better to decide what your strategy is together ahead of time. In a situation where a hundred people are getting arrested, a strategy where no one gives their name or has an ID may be effective in getting everyone released without charges because it's too much

trouble to hold them all, but if it's just you and your friend, the odds are not in your favor.

Of course, you might find yourself arrested with people you don't know. In any case, the less you talk the better. Insist on speaking with a lawyer. Police may promise you things but they have no obligation to follow through.

Besides dishonoring themselves and hurting codefendants, snitches don't necessarily get less time in jail. In the first decade of the 2000s, a number of radical environmentalists accused of sabotage were rounded up. Many agreed to testify against others for the sake of hopefully more lenient sentences. In the end, although maximum possible sentences were presented as hundreds to 1000+ years in prison, the average sentence of "Operation Backfire" defendants was a little over 7 years, and noncooperating defendants actually served slightly less time on average.

Of course, you might find yourself arrested with people you don't know, or it might have been such a mild action that no one ever considered the possibility of arrests. For these reasons it is helpful to encourage conversations with your comrades about your worries, hopes, needs, and expectations and to cultivate a culture of looking out for each other.

Resources

- clip of former J20 and Tucson 12 defendant from <https://itsgoing-down.org/this-is-america-101-theres-no-time-to-waste/> from 18:00 – 21:30 + advice for people in similar situations: 31:20 – 33:50]

UNARRESTING

Is risky but worth mentioning. Interfering with an arrest could itself have severe consequences, but it might be worth considering people's relative vulnerabilities in jail or the legal system. Not saying you should do this, but it is something that people attempt and sometimes succeed in - and often don't. Consider when it is most strategic to take this risk. Do you have particularly vulnerable comrades that may need to be unarrested in a situation? Although these instances are very situation-specific, it may be useful to have some sort of plan if you think you may need to unarrest someone. Check in VERBALLY (as opposed to over text or email, which leaves a record) to determine whether comrades prefer

to be unarrested in situations that may arise. Think about what happens if you DO succeed.

“In practical notes - when pulling someone out of harms way it is advised that one wrap your arms around the person’s torso or abdomen as to not risk dislocating their limbs or losing them due to an unsecure backpack. Using this strategy combined with a good grip... can make it very difficult to separate you from your comrades.”

(From: “Seattle, WA: Police Attack Antifascists at Far-Right Rally”

<https://itsgoingdown.org/seattle-wa-police-attack-antifascists-at-far-right-rally/>)

GETTING ARRESTED

- Use the bathroom before situations of likely arrest if you can, there can be a long wait time between arrest and access to a bathroom
- Prepare to be bored/cold/hungry/lonely/with people you don’t know
- Can be nice to sing songs if you’re locked up together, jokes are nice, it’s a potentially scary experience so re-grounding in why you’re there can be helpful. Meditation or slow breathing might also help you stay calm.

If you’re on the outside:

- Get the names (and birthdays if possible) of people who have been arrested
- Consider setting up shifts of people to wait and be ready in case someone is released (it feels really nice to have friendly faces waiting on the outside)
- Necessary materials to pay the bail (what you’ll need if you’re the one paying) – government ID, cash, and an address to get the money back

BAIL MONEY

Some cities and regions have groups of volunteers who maintain community bail funds. Anarchist Black Cross (ABC) groups sometimes maintain a “war chest,” or funds for unexpected emergencies (rather than planned civil disobedience), but these groups are few and far between, and many of us might do well as communities and groups of friends to put away some funds for a rainy day.

After Trump’s inauguration, a regional anti-fascist group started raising funds preemptively for the anonymous masked person who punched white nationalist Richard Spencer in front of TV cameras, in case they

were ever caught and charged.

Sometimes you just need to come up with \$40 or \$50, which you might have in your pocket, but sometimes it's a lot more. We should remember that occasionally our friends might be held on thousands of dollars bail, which is super stressful, but a good reason to know how to raise funds.

In our area, there's a bail fund (not just for protest arrests) to provide bail up to \$500. They are a good resource to reach out to. If someone's bail is over that amount they may be able to help strategize raising the funds. In your area, try searching "(city or state) Bail Fund." If there isn't one, consider starting one! Even if your goal is being able to bail out one person a month at first, that will mean so much to that person. The money gets returned when the person shows up for their court date, and can be recycled back into the fund.

The bail process differs by county, but once someone is arrested and "arraigned" by a judge, they will either be released or have a bail amount set which can be paid at the jail or at the courthouse, depending on where the person is and the hours of the court clerk's office or bail clerk. The person's private or court-appointed lawyer should have a sense of when they can be bailed out and from where. You'll need the bail amount in cash + a \$40 bail clerk fee if you are paying at a jail (as opposed to the courthouse). Contact the attorney or bail fund for guidance if needed. Details may be different in your area.

COURT APPOINTED ATTORNEYS and OTHER LEGAL RESOURCES

You don't really need a lawyer for your first court date, which is the "arraignment," where they read your charges and ask you how you plead. You just say "not guilty," although they might not even give you the chance, entering a not guilty plea on your behalf and setting the date for your next appearance.

If the court determines you to be a low enough income person (you'll want to have some idea of what your income and your rent are), they'll appoint a lawyer to your case. A lot of public defenders are great, but they're usually overworked, and some unfortunately won't take much interest in you. If it seems like they're not going to help, you might want to look elsewhere, and see if you can raise legal funds.

Resources

- **National Lawyers Guild (NLG):** A useful resource to know about. Easier to find affiliated lawyers in some places than others.
 - “The National Lawyers Guild (NLG) is a progressive public interest association of lawyers, law students, paralegals, jailhouse lawyers, law collective members, and other activist legal workers, in the United States. The group was founded in 1937 as an alternative to the American Bar Association (ABA) in protest of that organization's exclusionary membership practices and conservative political orientation. They were the first US bar association to allow the admission of minorities to their ranks. The group sought to bring more lawyers closer to the labor movement and progressive political activities (e.g., the Farmer-Labor Party movement), to support and encourage lawyers otherwise "isolated and discouraged," and to help create a "united front" against Fascism. The group declares itself to be "dedicated to the need for basic and progressive change in the structure of our political and economic system . . . to the end that human rights shall be regarded as more sacred than property interests." During the McCarthy era, the organization was accused of operating as a communist front group.” (Wikipedia)
- **National Immigration Project**
 - NIPNLG is a national non-profit that provides legal assistance and technical support to immigrant communities, legal practitioners, and advocates working to advance the rights of non-citizens.

WHEN SHIT HITS THE FAN

Sometimes things don't go according to plan. Often there is no plan for jail support, bail etc. because something happens spontaneously, people just hope for the best, or no one thinks of it...

In those situations, we can still support arrestees as helpful bystanders. Try to observe if the arresting officer is local or state police (or another agency) to get an idea of where they're being taken. If it feels safe, you might be able to ask a relatively calm looking cop where arrested people are being taken. Take note of information on the vehicle which the person is taken away in.

You can also shout to the person being arrested to get their name and date of birth, which you'd need to bail them out, and "is there anyone you want me to call; what's their number?" Even if they don't answer your questions out loud, someone else who knows them might observe that you're someone who's willing to help, and approach you afterwards.

You can inquire at the police station where they're being held about their bail, and pay it if you can or contact a local bail fund if there is one, to see if they can help.

INFORMANTS & INFILTRATORS

This is where we can get really paranoid if we want to. Lots of militant struggles arise spontaneously, or out of horrific conditions that can't be ignored any more, and people might find themselves in the streets with others without an opportunity to have lots of discussions and come to political agreements or anything. But wherever we can, we should take whatever opportunities to really get to know each other as people, not just as a means to an end in some political chess game.

So how do we know who to trust and who to steer clear of? To a certain extent, we have to trust our guts. Check in regularly with your intuition. It's not foolproof, but we all give each other cues all the time that are too quick or subtle for the conscious mind to articulate. Talk to someone you trust if a person is giving you a bad feeling. And this doesn't just apply to people engaged in illegal activities. Governments and law enforcement can be quite paranoid; they want to stop communities from getting organized to take care of themselves long before they can present any threat to power structures.

Even totally legal actions that build relationships of solidarity between people are a threat to the "divide and conquer" mode of our rulers. People providing grassroots disaster relief aid after hurricanes have been harassed and questioned by law enforcement. Also remember that there is a wide audience for wacky conspiracy theories, and people in power are just as likely as anyone else to believe dumb shit that conforms to their worldview, and go on the offensive because they believe antifascists are about to start a civil war or some such nonsense.

Don't buy into the myths that cops have to tell you the truth if you ask if they're a cop, or that only cops operate as informants. Infiltrators are

real and despicable, but just as real a threat are the people who start out legitimately working for change but eventually become informants based on some vulnerability that cops or prosecutors are able to use against them, whether it's an addiction, criminal charges, threats to a career, the well-being or opinions of loved ones, or any number of other possibilities. Also remember that people change.

It's sad, but someone you work closely with now may have completely different priorities in a few years. It happens all the time. And one of the problems with being ruled by a government at all is that the goalpost for what constitutes "criminal" behavior can change at any time. To a very real extent "crime" exists because of small groups of people who make "laws." I mean, the police will bring out SWAT teams in armored personnel carriers to raid houseless moms and children who move into a vacant building in the winter. Who's to say what reasonable activity you're involved in today won't be criminalized tomorrow? The lesson here might just be that we should try to build enduring bonds with each other that can outlast shared projects. No one talks, no one cooperates with the state, on principle.

Remember, it's unethical to share information about someone else with the state, no matter how trivial, without their express consent.

Most importantly, we need communities that people are so deeply rooted in that it's impossible to imagine betraying each other. We need to be able to expect support when we're threatened by the state. It could be that skills like conflict resolution and developing a culture of caring for each other are some of our most important tools in countering repression.

Build real community and trust with people. Know each others' histories, families or close friends. Be cautious of people who appear out of nowhere urging you to engage in illegal action, especially when it feels like they're appealing to your ego or trying to get you to prove to them that you're really committed. Informing isn't just about reporting illegal activities, any more than policing is about preventing crime. Policing is an operation to keep us all afraid of the threat of state violence. Handing over information about people's names, affiliations and connections helps the state achieve the kind of social mapping that helps them to sow discord and disrupt efforts to organize for a better world.

Resources

- "Confidence, Courage, Connection, Trust" zine on security practices
(short version):
<https://north-shore.info/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/confidence-courage-short-intro.pdf>
(long version):
<https://north-shore.info/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/confidence-courage-short-intro.pdf>
- ("Green Scared" article on investigation, repression, and fallout for radical environmentalists in the time around 2006 and beyond)
- <https://crimethinc.com/2008/02/22/green-scared>

GRAND JURIES

This is a tool used by the government where people may be subpoenaed to testify and give information about the networks of people they work with or know about. Refusing to comply can result in jail time, but complying can also result in more serious time for yourself and for others, and damage the fabric of trust that powerful movements rely on.

From "If an Agent Knocks," by the Center for Constitutional Rights:

"A grand jury is a panel of citizens brought together to investigate crimes and issue indictments... all cases are brought to a grand jury by a prosecutor. The prosecutor picks the witnesses and asks the questions. Witnesses are not allowed to have a lawyer present. There is no judge present. The prosecutor drafts the charges and reads them to the grand jury. There is no requirement that the grand jury members be instructed on the law at issue. And, unlike in other juries, grand jury members are not screened for bias."

"...Many rights we take for granted do not exist for grand jury witnesses. Grand jury witnesses do retain the right against self-incrimination but can nonetheless be forced to snitch on themselves and others in exchange for immunity from prosecution and punishment. Immunity only protects witnesses – others can still be prosecuted."

"...If an agent shows up and tries to serve you with a subpoena, take it and do not do anything else. Do not answer any questions; do not consent to a search; and do not invite them into your home for any reason. "

"...if you are a target of the investigation, complying with the subpoena may provide the government with information it might need to

charge and convict you. You might also place another activist in jeopardy by complying with a subpoena.”

“...If the subpoena is politically motivated, it is best to speak with an attorney in your activist circle who does criminal defense or grand jury work. Some non-activist criminal defense attorneys may suggest you become a snitch. It is important to note, however, that many snitches end up serving as many years in prison as the individuals on whom they snitched.”

You may be granted immunity from prosecution, in which case you can no longer remain silent to protect yourself from self-incrimination. If you refuse to answer questions at this point, you could be jailed for up to eighteen months (the duration of the grand jury). This is really intimidating, which is why it's important to know that people have survived this process before. Learn some of their stories. And know that some communities have succeeded in getting their people released after flooding the judge with letters attesting to the character of the witness and the knowledge that they will never cooperate.

“Judges will sometimes free witnesses before the expiration of the jury if it is clear that there is no chance the witness will testify.” (“If An Agent Knocks”)

Resources

- <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/why-one-anarchist-is-choosing-jail-over-grand-jury-testimony/>
- <https://crimethinc.com/zines/surviving-a-grand-jury> (zine and podcast)

Be like Chelsea Manning! But also support Chelsea Manning, and commit to supporting people like Chelsea Manning who resist grand juries so that you know if you need to resist that other people will support you too!

IF YOU'RE NOT A CITIZEN

If you are non-citizen and get arrested, you may face a variety of consequences depending on the severity of the charge(s). You should seriously consider the tradeoffs of participating in the direct action. It may be safer to take on a supporting role such as helping with logistics before or after, providing jail or court support, and/or getting trained and volunteering to be a legal observer. We all have vulnerabilities and con-

straints and realizing where yours are is critical before engaging in risky political actions. Your comrades will understand if you cannot join them at these events. Regardless, you may get arrested at some point without anticipating it, so it is good to have a sense of the process.

That said, plenty of people who aren't citizens participate in movements, and fight like hell, knowing full well how serious the struggle is, and how dangerous the consequences are. People with privileges associated with citizenship can learn from the determination of people who don't.

If you get arrested, contact an immigrant attorney immediately, even if you already have access to a defense attorney. Immigration attorneys are expensive, and money should be raised to support comrades navigating the immigration system. Although typically only drug- and abuse-related charges are deportable offenses, protest-related charges may vary significantly from just misdemeanors such as civil disturbances to felonies such as conspiracy. There may be other charges pinned on you that may make things even more difficult. Depending on the charge, the offense may remain on your immigration record, even if the case has been dismissed. It is important to develop a plan for mitigating the damage to your immigration status as soon as possible.

If you're a permanent resident and get arrested, it is important that you do NOT disclose your immigration status. This is the best way to assure that the police do not decide to contact and cooperate with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS; depending on the severity of the charges and on municipal policies around this). This way, you may proceed with the rest of the post-arrest process like a US citizen and let your immigration attorney deal with the damage later. Some charges won't affect your naturalization process but others might make it more difficult. Note, however, you may be subject to deportation if you have been incarcerated as a result of a conviction for an aggregate period of 180 days or more.

If you're undocumented and get arrested, the police will likely discover your immigration status as you are booked. Depending on municipal policies, the police may cooperate with DHS and you may be put in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody. You may be required to appear before a Department of Justice immigration judge for a bond hearing. If you are granted a bond, you will be released and is-

sued a “Notice to Appear” at a removal proceedings to determine whether you will be deported. If you are not granted a bond, you will remain incarcerated until the deportation hearing.

This is meant to be a brief overview of what to expect, but specific processes will likely vary significantly depending on the individual’s charge(s), race, ethnicity, emigrating country, socio-economic status, and other criteria. Folks in these situations and their comrades should be prompt in seeking out legal consultation to navigate the process as smoothly as possible.

Resources

- Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild
 - <https://nationalimmigrationproject.org/>
- List of legal services across Massachusetts
 - <https://miracoalition.org/resources/legal-services/>

COURT SUPPORT

Court Support can mean showing up to someone’s court dates. It might feel useless, because the courts are set up to make us feel powerless, but that’s why it’s important! It may or may not affect the judge or prosecutor to see that someone has supporters, but it feels better to know you’re not alone, to have people you can borrow court clothes from, to have help getting to court, dealing with parking meters, and so many other things.

Remember people’s court dates. Even if you can’t make it, you can call or send them messages of support. And remember that money helps for travel costs, court fees & fines, and even sympathetic lawyers working for cheap need money. People might also need child, elder or pet care when they have to go to court.

It might be helpful to ask yourself, “what kinds of support would I want if I had to go to court?”

SUPPORT AFTER RELEASE FROM JAIL

People getting out might be fine, but they might be exhausted or traumatized, too. People may or may not want to talk. In the rush to get away from the jail or police station, make sure that no one is left alone to fend for themselves unless that’s really what they want.

People may need/want food, water, medications, cigarettes, phones, rides, hugs, space, or any number of other things. A crowd of supporters can be nice to see after a scary and isolating experience. If a group of people got arrested, it might be good for someone to collect contact information for them all in order to provide continuing support and/or connect them with each other later.

SUPPORT AFTER CHARGES ARE DROPPED

Remember that people may still be emotionally or financially drained. Even if the state decides to drop charges, people may still have lots of lawyers fees accumulated from the months the case has dragged out before that point. If there's a group signal chat or email list to support people facing charges, don't immediately drop off of it, just because charges get dropped. Consider ways to provide ongoing financial and emotional support.

LONGER TERM JAIL AND PRISON SUPPORT

Sometimes our friends or people we sympathize with go to jail or prison. This could be as a result of being found guilty at trial or a plea agreement where they essentially plead guilty in exchange for a lighter than worst case scenario sentence, when a trial seems like too much of a gamble.

Different people will have different capacities for support, but almost all of us can do something. Just don't promise to do anything you can't follow through on. It's helpful when a core group of supporters, ideally close to the incarcerated person, can coordinate a support website with background, updates, addresses for sending mail, and some kind of platform for raising money.

If you have someone's full name and need to find their address in prison, or if you have their address and prisoner ID# and want to confirm they haven't been moved to a different facility, you can do an internet search for "(state name) inmate locator" or "federal inmate locator" if they're in federal custody. This will get you to a platform where you can search for people within the prison system. The ID# is helpful because there might be more than one person with the same name. When you find their number in the system, write it after their name when you address mail to them.

People might need or want money for commissary, ongoing legal support if they intend to appeal their case, support for any dependents, letters, books or magazine subscriptions, phone zaps to the prison if they're being particularly mistreated, phone calls, visits (or rides for loved ones to visit), and help with the transition back to life after incarceration.

Most of us can write a letter or send a card. It will help keep someone's spirits up, and a lot of attention in the form of mail and visits can demonstrate to the prison staff that someone has people who care about them, which may deter them from messing with the prisoner as much.

It can be hard to know what to say in a letter. It can be good to stay away from the details of someone's case, and don't put them on a heroic pedestal; they're not so different from any of us. A big part of the struggle at this point is coping with monotony and isolation. Words of encouragement and interesting anecdotes from your life can be a good place to start. See the NYC ABC guide to writing to prisoners for more tips: <https://nycabc.wordpress.com/write-a-letter/> .

If you're helping to organize support for someone who is incarcerated, or you're anticipating going to jail or prison, the support site for political prisoner David Campbell has a really great example of a list of "interests" to help people who might want to write to him. It shows a multifaceted human who you could talk to about a wide range of subjects. That's a great idea for anyone organizing a support website, since it's often tricky to figure out what to write to a stranger, especially if you're trying to avoid discussing the specifics of their case.

In this time of widespread uprisings and protests against anti-black and white supremacist systems (2020), it's as important as ever to remember, support, and learn from the elders of black and indigenous liberation struggles who have been locked up since the 70s, as well as people like Joshua Williams, who's been locked up since people rose up against police brutality in Ferguson, MO. Many more people could be headed to jail and prison soon, after the wave of revolt that followed the killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police. Ultimately, we need to make it impossible to repress and imprison anyone, of course. While we build that abolitionist movement, let's make sure our captured friends and family know we still love them.

Resources

- For more strategic thoughts on countering repression through collective solidarity, check out "10 Lessons From the Criminalization of Dissent:"
<https://uriohau.blogspot.com/2007/05/ten-lessons-from-criminalization-of.html> or just search "ten lessons from the criminalization of dissent."

Learn stories of people who came before us.

Drink water. Eat. Rest.

Earn each others' trust.

Take good care of each other so we can be dangerous together.

If you'll need medications if you're arrested, bring them in the original prescription bottle.

Don't spread rumors. Don't panic. Don't speculate on who did illegal things. Don't assume that only paid provocateurs resist and fight back.

Memorize a phone number you can call.

Pay attention to your surroundings.

Talk about how you feel afterwards (What was good? What could be better?)

It's okay to feel scared, upset, and angry. Working together and being strong together is easier if you can find times to be vulnerable and honest about what's hard.

Share what you learn. Don't assume you know it all.

Experience isn't something to hoard or use as leverage over people with new perspectives and fresh energy.

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