

An open letter by
friendz/comrades in NYC to
show the possibility of being
both in solidarity and in
antagonism with people and
movements.

redblankets

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Anarchist Archive

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An open letter by friendz/comrades in NYC to show the possibility of being both in solidarity and in antagonism with people and movements.

an open letter to push back against the martyr narrative of incarcerated people who perpetuate rape culture, misogyny, and white supremacy.

an open letter to show the possibility of being both in solidarity and in antagonism with people and movements.

fuck prisons.

fuck white supremacy.

fuck rape culture.

fuck misogyny.

fuck patriarchy.

“i worked on this flyer, and i stand by everything in it. i’m not sending this to you for your approval, or to prompt your requests that i not distribute it (i can’t be dissuaded from doing that), but because i know you and have considered you a comrade. i hope that you will read this and reflect on it, and encourage your friends and comrades to do the same. i also hope that if/ when people in your circles dismiss this as the work of some ‘crazy bitch(es)’, or as an unsubstantiated smear against someone who did/ does ‘good work’, you will tell them that you personally know someone who worked on it and that that person also does ‘good work,’ thinks critically about words and actions, demonstrates principles, etc. you can give them my name too. looking forward to discussing this with all of you.”

“THERE’S SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT JERRY or, ON NUANCE

Jerry Koch, currently incarcerated for grand jury resistance and supported by many across the country, has contributed repeatedly to the perpetuation of rape culture, misogyny, and white supremacy within the anarchist / left radical community in New York. We are writing in solidarity with those who have been harmed directly by Jerry, those whose abusers and rapists Jerry has defended, those whose rape revenge tactics have been exposed and condemned by Jerry, those whom Jerry has publicly targeted for their feminism in ways that directly expose them to state repression and social ostracization, and those who have been harmed by comrades of Jerry’s at his direct instigation.

Our aim here is to publicly name Jerry’s violent and statist behaviors and to challenge the narrative of pristine martyrdom that has been built around his grand

jury resistance. But we also wish to show that it is possible to be both in solidarity and in antagonism with people and movements. If we cannot hold this complexity, all fractions of resistance and revolt will be easily obliterated from the inside.

The state is not our only enemy: Misogyny, white supremacy, capitalism, and other forms of violence and domination replicate state structures on both broad and intimate scales, even within radical communities. Today, we see that grand juries are being used with increasing and alarming frequency to target radicals. This tactic of intimidation is not new, and neither is resistance to it. We unequivocally support all forms of non-cooperation with the state, and we recognize Jerry's refusal to snitch as an act of solidarity. However, the solidarity he has demonstrated in resisting the grand jury does not wipe away his history of misogynist, racist, and counterrevolutionary actions.

We stand in opposition to grand juries while also denouncing rape apologists. We are in solidarity with Jerry's grand jury resistance and we are against his disgusting, vicious, and destructive actions of the near past. We are comfortable in this contradictory position of solidarity and antagonism: It is the position in which we live every day. There are many of us here. We encourage all comrades to realize that you do not need to ignore someone's destructive behavior just because they are under attack from an enemy. To argue that Jerry's repression at the hands of the state trumps or mitigates his misogynist and racist actions is a grave political mistake.

In recent decades, grand juries have frequently targeted participants and leaders of Black liberation struggles. Jerry's comrades and supporters have portrayed him as an heir to this legacy of Black resistance. This is preposterous and disturbing. Jerry has ignored race and gender entirely in his political positions and actions. He has actively oppressed people of color in radical communities and has never publicly acknowledged or taken responsibility for this, nor have his peers openly confronted him about his racist behavior. Jerry and his supporters have referenced the history

of Black and Brown liberation in relation to Jerry's incarceration without self-reflection or accountability, and in so doing they participate in a long legacy of appropriating, silencing, and watering down that history. Through their sloppy, de-politicized invocation of Black struggles, they contribute actively to the perpetuation of white supremacy – against which those struggles were and continue to be waged. They also reveal their true interest: the consolidation of a white revolution.

Supporting our comrades doesn't just mean supporting them when they're in a difficult situation. It also means confronting them when they are reproducing the very structures they purport to fight against. We must challenge ourselves and one another to do the work necessary to prevent ourselves from becoming unwitting allies of the state, capitalism, white supremacy, and patriarchy. We all make mistakes, but when any of us is allowed to consistently destroy and suppress

true revolt, that person and their silent peers are all guilty.

Community support means standing by grand jury resisters *and* acting in solidarity with comrades who have experienced violence within the spaces we share. Get used to this uncomfortable position. It is the position of struggle.

For additional perspectives, check out the following resources, all available online: "Why Misogynists Make Great Informants: How Gender Violence on the Left Enables State Violence in Radical Movements;" "Betrayal: A Critical Analysis of Rape Culture in Anarchist Subcultures;" "The Revolution Starts at Home: Confronting Partner Abuse in Activist Communities;" and "Vikki Law: Resisting Gender Violence Without Cops or Prisons" (YouTube). "