



SUBPOENA

UNITY!

Go to JAIL

QUASIN

CIVIL RIGHTS



(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Letter from: Michelle Whitnack

Caught in the Grand Jury Whirl

Dear Sisters,

The fine folks of Leftist Lezzies here suggested that I write an article on our little wars here with the government. Being, however, sick unto death of writing articles, I hope you'll humor my waning sanity and accept a letter instead.

I am a woman being held in Seattle/King County Jail to "coerce" me to testify before a federal grand jury conducting a witchhunt for the George Jackson Brigade. I've been here seven weeks today; I expect to be released when the grand jury ends - fifteen months from tomorrow.

So far about a dozen of us have been subpoenaed in this investigation, for having friends or politics which displease the government. (I was subpoenaed for being a friend of Po Ford, who died trying to bomb a Safeway store here - he never was associated with the GJB - and for having been active in prison work and a one-time member of the Left Bank Books Collective.) The government seems to have backed down on seven; I'm in jail; and four are still pending.

- 2 - Bureau (RM)
- 2 - Seattle (100-33069)(RM)
- 2 - Portland (1-100-14917)(GJB) (1-80-42)

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 6/8/92 BY SP/USK/MCA

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ENCLOSURE

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

Page 2

"Women's Press"

Eugene, Oregon

Date: 10-11/76
Edition:
Author: MICHELLE WHITNACK
Editor:
Title: GEORGE JACKSON BRIGADE

Character: IS
or
Classification:
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 Being Investigated

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We, as "Witnesses," are charged with no "crime" and therefore are entitled to none of the rights accorded to a criminal defendant: we have no right to remain silent, to have counsel, to avoid self-incrimination, to a trial before imprisonment. . . the list goes on. Not that I consider myself to be getting really worse treatment than anyone else who comes before the "criminal justice" system: in my case, they just aren't propping it up with an indictment.

...Not that they aren't trying: after I was jailed, an effort got underway by the prosecutor's office to frame me for a GJB bombing (the Laurelhurst City Light substation on New Year's Eve). I was dragged by five marshals to a lineup, where a "witness" identified me as "the woman who climbed up a tree" by the substation the afternoon before. *(the effluvia)*

No one, including the press, was too convinced: the "witness" had admittedly been shown photos of me before the lineup (as was done with Mark Cook, a black prison activist likewise framed for nonexistent GJB involvement): folks who checked the site say that a) there's no reason to climb a tree to case the substation, and b) the only tree that would hold my weight has no branches for ten feet up; at 5'6" and 195 pounds, I'm not the most athletic, proficient

tree-climber you'll ever meet; Ed Head, a GJB member captured in February, has stated that there were no women - much less anyone of my description - involved in that particular action; my position of critical support for the GJB has included some pretty scathing public criticism in the past, before they cleaned up their act with regard to people's safety; the prosecutor's motives (to scare me to testify, to make me a "warning" to other witnesses, and to justify jailing me without charge or trial to the press and public) were all too obvious even to the straight media; and last (and, considering, probably least where the courts are concerned), I just plain didn't do it. I am not, nor have I ever been, a member of the GJB; nor have I helped or participated in any of their actions. And I couldn't lead the government to them if I wanted to; anyway, I'd rot in jail the rest of my life before helping put anyone in prison.

Though I'm the only one jailed here so far, I consider myself in many ways the most fortunate of the "witnesses." Four years of prison work made jail a much less shadowy threat to me, and easier to deal with; and when I start feeling sorry for myself, I'm sustained by the courage of folks I love

serving indeterminate (life) sentences in California, and can remind myself that my little seventeen months ain't nothin. I've learned that I can cope with a spectre - the grand jury - that's haunted me for years, without breaking down. I've seen better than anyone how incredibly people - especially folks from the womens' movement, in which I was never very heavily involved - have come through when the going got rough. Through the grand jury wars, I've met two people who have helped me hold together as I could never begin to express: John Ziegler, the first lawyer I've ever admitted I love, and Laurie Raymond. Just to have met those two makes the whole nightmare worthwhile - and that's not lightly said from my present perch.

In fact, Laurie is so devoted a sister that she's in here to keep me company right now - and brought two friends with her! Jo Maynes, Alice Ray-Keil and Laurie were arrested for a Pacific Life Community action against Trident Nuclear Submarine Base (cutting fences), and are serving 30-day sentences. Jo, Laurie and other PLC mem-

bers also have a trial pending another similar action.

...And Laurie also goes to trial November 8 for "assaulting a federal marshal" (as I was handcuffed to be jailed for refusing to cooperate with the grand jury). She faces up to three years and a \$5,000 fine.

Well, the Seattle left community can hardly be accused of shirking our duty to contribute to the current prison population explosion.

Of course, life goes on in jail. Since I've been here, I've offered the tiny nudge required to start a tremendous campaign for medical care here in the Women's Jail. Leftist Lez-zies picked up the ball outside and coordinated a short-notice demonstration of 150 people on Saturday (9/4). People are really getting behind our situation and the jail administration is clutching desperately for excuses - or, in some cases, saying up front that prisoners (especially us "hysterical" women) don't deserve good medical care. We will see some changes!

Meanwhile, outside, work is progressing on the big old house (Sheep Ranch) that Laurie and I had just bought before I was jailed. (Objectively, this may have been a foolish move; but we were made an offer we couldn't refuse. Besides, I think we felt a need to assert our right to have lives, in spite of the government, and create a home as some base of stability for ourselves and the two children, Lily and Dan...and at the time we didn't know Laurie would pick up an assault charge. Oh well...) We feel optimistic about our chances of not losing the house. And Lily and Dan are with good people. The community has really come through tremendously with help.

So we're holding up. We do, however, desperately need help in the money (for support of Sheep Ranch and the children as well as for our legal defenses) and publicity departments. (Contributions or whatever can be sent to: Deep Freeze, PO box 12847, Seattle, WA 98111) We've also considered the idea of autonomous defense committees in different cities. If anyone has energy and interest in such an endeavor, drop me a line and let's get stuff moving! (c/o Womens' Jail, Public Safety Bldg., Seattle, WA 98104) Mailing lists would be real helpful, as would "piggyback" offers with papers...

Thanks for bearing with me in my (as usual) lengthy blatherins!

Love and Struggle

Michelle Whitnack