

THE
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Straw**
A WEEKLY ANARCHIST SHOW

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Kazi Toure of Boston Jericcho on Prisoner Support



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hasn't changed. Hell, I never changed either.

TFSR: Of course he never changed because he said that he didn't do it.

KT: Right. They try to say that you have free speech, but it's only as long as your speech is what they want to hear.

TFSR: Kazi, thank you so much for having this conversation. Much appreciation, much respect.

KT: I hope I helped bring some people into doing the work. Somewhere, whatever they can do. Whatever is helpful. Thank you. Take care, stay On A Move, and free them all.

TFSR: Free them all.

This week on the show, you'll hear Kazi Toure. Kazi is a former political prisoner from the Ohio 7 case and founding member of the Boston chapter of The National Jericho Movement. For the hour, Kazi and I talk about the history of Jericho Movement, supporting political prisoners and support for post-release and aging prisoners. You can find recent updates from the group at [@OfficialJerichoBoston](https://www.instagram.com/OfficialJerichoBoston) on Instagram.

Jericho Movement: <https://www.thejerichomovement.com>

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KT: I was in South Africa at the World Conference on Racism. I came in a day, a little bit late, and they were already having a discussion. They had 9-10 things already written down, like the 10-point program of the Black Panther Party. They already had 10 things, but political prisoners weren't on there. I started arguing that "you have to have political prisoners!" I was gonna tell them, "Look, you have to have them first. Because in any legitimate movement, you look around the world and you see IRA, Sinn Féin, uMkhonto we Sizwe, ANC. They call for release of their political prisoners first. Palestine. You saw Hamas call for the release of their prisoners first. Before we even do anything else, you gotta release those people that were fighting for us, man. But we don't do that here. We didn't do that here. They didn't they didn't have it on the list. I brought it up to them, and they put it on the list, but they didn't put it first.

That has to be instilled and people here because if you don't, you're not gonna get another one to come up. People are going to say, "Look at those people. You let those people sit there for 48-49 years, and nobody came for them." They're not going to be willing to step up. So I would suggest that people get involved. If there's not a Jericho chapter, or there's not...

TFSR: Like an [anarchist black cross]...

KT: ...Yeah, join something that is working around political prisoners. It doesn't have to be Jericho, but join something. Start a chapter if there's not one. Join one if there is one. Because we don't have enough people to fulfill all the work that we have to do. We should have three or four people in Boston on one committee, three or four on another one, and three or four on another one, so it's not one person trying to hold down the whole thing. But a lot of times, it's the way it is. And people get burned out.

We used to do an event every month, and then after a year or so, people were like, "Kazi, can we not do that next year?" I'm like, "I want to do more."

TFSR: What do you mean, two a month? [laughs]

KT: Yeah, I expand it more, because more people have to know who's locked up, who sacrificed what for the whole.

TFSR: Yeah, for sure. I'll plug in the social media and the websites and everything at the end of this. I know that the ABC Federation has a war chest, one central place where you can throw money. Does Jericho have something like that, too, for the prisoners that they support?

KT: Jericho National does, yeah. I believe it's through IFCO. I wanted to say something too about Veronza [Bowers, Jr]. Because he's still locked up and he doesn't get a lot of recognition about what's on his case. Here's someone who finished their sentence and is still locked up. Because the so-called Justice Department says that he

somebody to say something, but they weren't going to say it. It's one of the things that I saw at this conference at MIT, people were asked between nonprofits and revolution. The people on the nonprofit side were saying, "People are not ready for revolt. So we should continue to do the nonprofit stuff and educate the people." But I think if you're not ready, there are people that are ready. Support them, set up something, ways that you can support them, and moving it forward. And then maybe as things start building, some of the people will be ready, and they'll join. If they see the people starting to set up places for people to go that's got a liberated zone here or liberated zone there, and workin it and they're able to sustain it, then more people will come and join. I know a lot of people who want to go do some things, and take care of some business, but have nothing to fall back on. And so I was thinking, those people should be willing to support that, man.

TFSR: Yeah, but the downfall of when people try to build autonomous infrastructure projects is so often it's about dropping out, as opposed to being a feedback place, being a place maybe where people can take a break if they need to, and do some work, dig their hands in the ground or whatever. But without a tie for...

KT: Then you back in. That was one of the things we were trying to build, a program that I was working with, because we were working with youth when I first got out. I was doing a lot of work with youth. A lot of the stuff that we were doing during the day was getting undone at night because they were going right back to the same turf and getting back involve. So we were trying to train them, not to be good workers for capitalism, but how to... Because we were getting them educated, political education at the same time, but it was getting undone at night. So, a couple of the counselors and teachers that work there were saying, "okay, so we need a spot where we can take people out for 10 months, out in the country somewhere, and we can train and teach them, and they can learn the same skills that they were getting there." They were getting into the carpenters union, the electrical union, masonry. It was jobs. And then we got them into the union but also got them a GED. But it was getting undone. They needed to be taken out somewhere and then brought back, and then take the next group out and brought back, and then you build more and more cadre [laughs]

TFSR: Well, now that we've laid out the recipe for a people's army...

KT: Well..[laughs] We've got to move, man.

TFSR: Kazi, I was gonna ask now how folks can get involved in Jericho, how to get in touch, and also how to support your work and the work that Jericho does, unless you wanted to talk about another topic in between now and then.

Kazi Toure: My name is Kazi Toure. I'm a former political prisoner. I was with what they called The Ohio 7. It was really eight, but we all didn't get busted in Ohio. I was charged with seditious conspiracy in the end. I did about 10 years.

TFSR: How long have you been out?

KT: I've been out since October 1, 1991.

TFSR: I wonder if you'd give listeners a little history behind the National Jericho Movement (of which you're one of the representatives), how it formed, and the role that it plays in supporting the movement prisoners.

KT: Yeah, I got out in '91. I guess it was formed maybe the year before, in '90, I think, by Safiya Bukhari and Herman Ferguson and Jalil Muntaqim. The three of them formed it and brought it to fruition. I got out in '91 and Dhoruba bin Wahad got out in '90, so I guess it was only a few of us former political prisoners out at the time. Safiya asked me in '92 to form a chapter in Boston. So I joined them in '92 and formed a chapter in Boston. And we continued to build as we went along, you know?

TFSR: Can you talk about the support work that Jericho does?

KT: We do everything from writing to political prisoners, helping out if they don't have defense committees, we help out in trying to get them a lawyer and get visits to them. Some of people don't have money to get their people out to see them. We help them in whatever way we can to help the prisoners that are inside maintain their continued involvement, being involved with their family, friends, and community, and legal expenses and health expenses. We help with finding them doctors and pretty much whatever they need.

It's been building accordingly. When a need comes up, and we don't have a medical department, so we go out and look for doctors sympathetic to the cause, or people that are Movement doctors, and we pull them together and see if we can get them to help us. Same with lawyers. It's really staying in touch with the prisoners and finding out. Because when I was in, there wasn't any Jericho, so people just heard about you or didn't hear about, you might write you a letter, but most of the time, it was just family or who you knew before, maybe they would write and keep in touch and whatnot. But it wasn't anything formal, put together like it is now, and this is really good.

TFSR: It seems with a lot of people also coming from working-class backgrounds and with the way that repression hit the movements, and the movements had a lot less capacity for supporting prisoners, that Jericho came probably at a time when y'all were getting out, recognized this need, and just started fulfilling it yourself.

KT: Basically, that's how it's been. And continuing to build, just like the [International] Tribunal that was held a couple years ago. And now with the Spirit Of Mandela with the People's Senate. So it's a continuation. We're steadily building. Knock that shit down.

TFSR: I'm sure at the time prisons were a bit different. My friend Rob who is in Maine was doing support for a lot of the MOVE folks and was talking about sending in boxes of vegetables and stuff like that at the time to some of those facilities. You said that there wasn't really much of a support movement available when you got out. Can you talk about some of the innovations that you see today, some of the things that Jericho does that you're especially proud of?

KT: Yeah. Plus, like what Rob was talking about at different joints... When I was in a state joint, you could get boxes from your family at certain times of the year. For around Christmas or no-thanks-forgiven day (day of mourning), they would let people get in boxes. That's if you had somebody to send some boxes of canned goods or things that were already packaged. That was at different places in different state joints. I could get into New York prison joints, but I couldn't go see federal prisoners when I got out. I would visit Herman and Jalil and some of the brothers in David, but I couldn't see Jaan [Laaman], I couldn't see Ray [Luc Levasseur] or Mutulu [Shakur] who was in the federal joint.

But as far as the work afterward... all of this stuff we do now jumps on it. People are writing to the prisoners inside, and they have people lining up with almost every political prisoner that's inside and getting information out that they need. All of that is totally good and wasn't happening before. Pulling together committees for people who are in isolation, or pulling together committees and doing work around people who need medical attention, making phone calls to the prisons, putting pressure on them to bring about some relief to the prisoners. All that work is going on now.

With Jericho, even when we don't have the money, we will raise money. Almost every prisoner that has come out since I've been out, has been given \$1,000 to start their reentry back in. Some got more, depending on how much we could raise, but Jericho would always give them at least \$1000. We'd have a fundraiser for them afterward, so they will get more because \$1,000 isn't really going to anywhere. They got to buy shoes and clothes, glasses or whatever. When I got out, I had to go to rehabilitation to get a pair of glasses. They didn't want to give them to me, because they said "you have to be handicapped to get them." I was like "Well, I am a Black man in America. You can't get more handicapped." So she gave it to me. That was good. But she wasn't going to...

TFSR: They were just being stingy about it.

KT: Yeah. About everything. It's just a capitalist system. We're getting good at this,

get community control over the police for a long time, since way back in the '60s and '70s. That was one of the Panther Party things, and Dhoruba's has been on it for a long time. We started to make some progress with it. When we had all those back-to-back killings, when it was being exposed, where people were getting shot in the back. And the white cops were saying, "Oh, we were just scared of them." They were running away from you, and you're scared of them? Come on, you are just killing people, man. And we saw the Rochester police turn in all their badges and guns and quit. Because if they weren't going to be allowed to brutalize and kill Black people, then they're just going to lay down and quit. They should have let them. They should have said "Goodbye," Because that's not what this job is. You're supposed to be a public servant. Repairing roads and building bridges. And going in and making sure the elderly people are taken care of. They should be public servants.

TFSR: I don't know if I would trust them any of that.

KT: I know, but they know how to build bridges. Some of them were in the Army or the Marines. They know how to do other things. Geronimo [Ji-Jaga Pratt] learned how to do that. He built that over in Tanzania. He put the whole sewage system in Tanzania.

TFSR: I also heard in that same interview, Dhoruba bin Wahad talking about how the early stages of the police oversight committees, just what were... I could say this anyway, having worked around police accountability stuff over the years, but that it's a joke, and that it's a counterinsurgency op, that the police are never going to give a community oversight. They're gonna bring in activists into the fold that are interested in the subject and then bring them to the table, they're going to feed them pancake breakfasts with the mayor—they did in the town where I was—make them feel they're actually sitting with power, and that their voice says anything, but they're not going to give them the leash.

KT: Decision-making powers to stop anything. No money to do anything.

TFSR: It's a distraction.

KT: They know how to do that. They've been doing it for a long time. Co-opting this and watering down that and you get nothing, no change. For the last 400 years, it's been all the same [laughs]. That's really sad that people haven't been able to...

I don't think people are stupid. I think they can see it. They understand that, but they're just afraid to lose whatever little bit of stuff they got. They see what happens to us and what happens to other people.. They been seeing that since grammar school: Whoever stood up and said something about what was happening in the school got beat down, and the other classmates just sat there. They wanted

with this? One person can't..." Because it had been separated. It was like "if you write something or say something in a park and other people go out and do it, then you're in a conspiracy with them, even if you don't know them." What did he do? He just stood up there and said, "Go down to the Capitol," and they went down to the Capitol, to get them ballots. And he doesn't get charged with it. It's just class stuff, man. They're not gonna... If it's a constitutional law that says that anybody who doesn't recognize the official vote and the new president coming in, they have to vacate their seat. That's the constitutional law. All senators and congresspeople that didn't recognize Biden coming in...

TFSR: They're not going to get tried on that.

KT: No, but they were supposed to vacate their seats. Nothing happened. Nothing happens to them. The Democrats and the Republicans are the same, and they want us to vote for them. We shouldn't.

TFSR: I'm not going to say that we should rely too much on the legal system to stop torturing and incarcerating people in the ways that it has. But Dhoruba bin Wahad had spoken on an episode of a Black Power Media show in October, and had mentioned de-certifying police unions as an idea of just knocking them down a notch in terms of their ability to be able to impact legal decisions, to impact legislation, to be able to push through their own personal repressive agendas. Since we both recognize that in Jalil Muntaqim's situation, as well as the Mumia's situation, it's these police unions and guard unions that are at the forefront, that are at the vanguard of [keeping] movement prisoners inside for longer and longer. Back in the '90s, there was a lot of talk, like I remember Rage Against the Machine song that starts off with Zack [de la Rocha] calling out the Fraternal Order of Police of Philly at the beginning of it. But why we're not talking about the cops when we're talking about these longtime prisoners? It's those two things that are separated. It seems a prime example of "we just got through the George Floyd Rebellion."

KT: I know, people's attention span, and they go on... They got TikTok, they got the phones, they have all this stuff going on. There's a distraction. And they just can't stick with anything too long. It's really too bad. Because I agree with Dhoruba that we should use everything we can on every level and fight them. I mean, I asked Rafael Cancel Miranda once. I was like, "Raf, they tell me, 'Kazi, you have to pick and choose which issue you're gonna fight them on.' What do you think?" He says, "You have to fight them all, man." It's no picking and choosing.

TFSR: Yep. Because they're all fighting you.

KT: Yep. Crazy. But there was something I wanted to say. We've been trying to

as good as some of the other groups. They would match people up: if they had wealthy people, they'd match them up with somebody coming out, and they could take care of them. We haven't gotten to the point where we could get somebody a car. A cell phone? Yeah. Some need a computer. We have gotten a few people a bike so they can move around. It's just meeting the needs of people.

TFSR: I wonder if you could talk a bit about who some of the prisoners are that Jericho supports and maybe some info about them, just to get their names rolling around in people's ears.

KT: I was writing people's names down that had passed since they had gotten out, just passed within a few weeks or a few months, like Marilyn and Chuck Africa and Russell "Maroon" [Shoatz] and Mutulu. We supported all them, and we support Leonard [Peltier], and Bill Dunne because he's been held a long time. We supported Eric King who just was released, support animal rights people, earth rights people, former Panthers, and BLA. A lot of people just passed. Ed Poindexter just passed inside. My co-defendants—I had two of them—passed inside, Tommy Manning and Richard Williams. There are people who are still locked up. I don't have the list in front of me, just from the top of my head. I'm just thinking about different people.

TFSR: I was hoping to talk about folks who had passed—and you named a few—within a short period after being released or we've had a situation of several people dying before they released, like Ed Poindexter, for instance.

KT: Merle Africa. Like them, inside. It's terrible.

TFSR: And some of the people that are on the list of folks that you support have been in since the 70s-80s. Some are much more recent, like you said, like Jessica Reznicek, and some folks are politicized prisoners, as well. I was hoping to talk to you because you are a former political prisoner and you're involved in Jericho. We've had these devastating losses over the last few years of movement elders that had still been held inside. I feel it's not ABC, it's not Jericho, it's not any of these groups, necessarily, that's not doing it. But a lot of these people's names aren't a part of the popular culture that we're in. It seems a sign that our movement is really at a low state right now. That means that the state can afford to release our comrades who are incarcerated late in their lives after they've been held for ridiculous amounts of time.

KT: I know, it's crazy. 48, 49 years, and 38 years—nobody was killed. And you see with these January 6 people. People died there. But they don't talk about it.

TFSR: A cop died.

KT: If it had been us [at January 6th], they would have been like "Oh, no, these

people cop killers. These people killed two or three people.” I don’t know how many people died there. But they don’t even talk about it. It was mentioned in the beginning, but then that would be all over front page news all the time if it was one of us. First of all, if people went there to protest, they would have shot everybody on the steps. They have cops with guns in their hands and backing off from them.

TFSR: Or slapping them on the back.

KT: If that had been us, there would be a lot of people dead. It’s just the hypocrisy of the system.

And you’re right. In ‘98, when Jericho had the first big demonstration, from Boston we had 13 buses go to DC. It was a lot of people. We worked for a year pulling it together. But now, I don’t think you could get one bus. It’s really at a low. And they do get away with a lot, man. If there were more people in the streets... There are a lot of people in the streets now, but that’s because of Israel’s massacring the Palestinian people, and everybody can see it on TV and social media.

TFSR: Yeah. Whereas the strong movement, we’d be in the streets about the 75 years before this.

KT: Yeah. A lot of times, people won’t respond until they see people being brutalized. It’s like in the civil rights movement. It took the shock of them seeing people peacefully marching down the street with dogs [attacking] and people spitting on them and beating them with billy clubs. People weren’t doing anything but walking down the street. So that was a shock to the consciousness of the world.

TFSR: Also, frequently when there’s a large series of maybe nationwide protests around Freddie Gray or around Oscar Grant or around George Floyd or around a lot of these individuals being brutalized and killed by the police, it’s because there’s video and finally breaks through the humdrum of day-to-day white supremacy that we live through for enough people.

KT: It’s a shame that people have to wait until it gets to that point. But it’s the same here. When it gets to that point where people can’t take any more, they just go out and unleash the fervor on cops, on citizens. Like Hamas did: You can kick a dog but so long, and it’s gonna bite back. But it’s a shame that we have to wait until that happens, because then people say, “Yeah, but look at what they did.” I mean, look at what you made them do. You didn’t care about what was happening to them. You didn’t care what was happening to people until they said, “Enough is enough.” Now you want to care because they are acting out. Why keep waiting, why keep taking it and keep taking it till you got George Floyd or other people dead.

TFSR: Bringing it back to Jericho. Not everyone, but a lot of folks that y’all support are people who were a part of movements or who individually took

KT: I don’t know that much about that project. I think Soffiyah Elijah runs it it... And she was able to help some other former political prisoners, like Laura or Susan Rosenberg and some of them.

I don’t know how well... if they could duplicate it in Boston, or in other cities, Philadelphia, for instance, because a lot of people are limited to the area where they come out, where they live. And some of the MOVE people, they wouldn’t even let them go back to Philly when they got out. They had to go somewhere else. When I first got out, I couldn’t come back to Boston. They wouldn’t let me come back to Boston. So I was down in near Philly. That was cool. I got to meet other people that I didn’t know before. That’s the same with being locked up. They move you around, and you get to meet other people that you didn’t know before, other political prisoners and stuff. But as far as the programs, I think that’s a good one. Any programs that can help people re-acclimate back in may actually help them, but it just gets harder with the political people. They don’t want to let up. They keep people in isolation longer. They give people longer sentences, and they mash down harder.

TFSR: Do you think that there are any commonalities between long-term political prisoners in the US that have gotten release dates that have gotten out, or ones that haven’t, that have either died inside or been killed by incarceration or died shortly after? Or do you think that it’s more of a case-by-case and depends on who’s on the defense committee and who the lawyers are and stuff like that?

KT: No, I think it’s mostly a class thing, too. I think those people who come from working-class backgrounds, they have to rise up, they have to stand up and say “no”, and are gonna be subjected to the longest sentences. And it’s just like that. It doesn’t matter too much who their lawyers are or their defense committee. But if things are done in a way where you can get a lot of publicity. Like you were saying before, when the spotlight’s not there, and it’s small, they do nothing. But whenever it gets bigger, and a lot of people get knowledge of it, and you get started getting phone calls, emails, and faxes that’s tying up your business, disrupting the flow, then you get more attention.

TFSR: Yeah, but then there’s an example of Mumia Abu-Jamal, whose case has gotten international attention and a higher level than any other political prisoners that I can think of.

KT: Oh, yeah, but then they got the Fraternal Order of Pigs. They’re organizing just as strongly to keep him in. It was ridiculous. They got the judge, the original judge Sabo. The clerk heard him say, “I’m gonna help you fry that [N-word].” How can you sit and be a judge on the case, and how can the courts not overturn it? It is class stuff. It is like with Trump now. He was supposed to be indicted for... Mueller to my face when he charged me with sedition, I was like “How can you charge me

shouldn't be making women take out their tampons and squat over a mirror and disrespecting the people like that." Prisoners went off, man, when that shit started happening. It was dark in people's visits.

TFSR: Yeah, I bet. I talked to Eric King after he got out, and he's in a half-way house now. He was talking about giving people the support that they need, not just the support that we want to give, not just the stuff that makes us feel good, but actually checking in with folks and seeing what they need. Coming out of isolation he was talking about being in the Supermax ADX Florence and his experience there.

KT: That's fucked up. That joint, too, the guards are all drinking bottled water. It is built on a toxic waste dump. They built their prison on a toxic waste dump. They knew it before they built it. We used to talk about it in everything we were writing: They're building this prison. Just like this stuff's going on in Cop City. People are out in front of it before it happens. But the so-called citizens just allowed that shit to happen.

TFSR: Like that prison in [Letcher County] eastern Kentucky that is a former open pit coal mine or mountaintop removal site that the state government's been trying to build a prison on for the last...

KT: Where's that?

TFSR: Fight Toxic Prisons group out of Florida has been pushing against this for a while now and trying to talk about the interrelation between ecological justice and incarceration and how those two are so intertwined. They and other groups, lots of local activists around Whitesburg in Kentucky, had been trying to stop the building of this prison. It stopped for a little bit, but it seemed they'd ramped it back up. The attempt to push it through and get it funded.

KT: We have to sustain these struggles and build them. We really do.

TFSR: A lot of the people that are on the Jericho list of supported prisoners are folks who are getting up in the years and have been in for a very long time, as you said, 48-49 years. Over the years, I've come across some projects like Release Aging People in Prison (RAPP) out of New York that seem to be doing a really effective job of getting not only aging political prisoners but aging prisoners out of the system before they get to such dire times as Dr. [Mutulu] Shakur, for instance. I wonder if you have experience with that project in New York, or if there are other approaches that you think listeners would do well to learn about and try to replicate?

action to try to stop the brutalization, stop the murder, and stop the cruelty within the borders of the so-called USA. I think one of the reasons that we saw from Jalil Muntaqim's defense and folks working for Mr. Muntaqim that through the Freedom of Information Act they were able to get a hold of some of the denials for parole, which are some of the most racist, just gross stuff that was being promoted by people that claimed at least to be law enforcement or to be guards or former guards or what have you just espousing gross white supremacist stuff. Not only is it about the movement in the streets, but it's also about just how deeply interwoven into the systems of power that keep our elders in.

I wonder if we could talk a little bit about some of your ideas about providing for folks that are getting out, about post-release. What things were missing? What things movements are doing? Like you were talking about with Puerto Rican Independence movement activists.

KT: What the Puerto Ricans were doing, when I first got out, they had someone matched up, they would have a wealthy person or a lawyer or someone who was doing well matched up with each prisoner that came out. And they were trying to get them jobs because all those things are really important. And people getting out are up in age, and then later you get pushed on to Social Security. You're not getting nothing if you didn't pay into it. And if you didn't have a job, you're not gonna get anything. So if you were locked up from the time you're 18-19 years old, you get out when you're in your 70s after 48-50 years, you're not gonna have anything paid into it. That's a big problem. It falls back on the family, if people have any family. A lot of times people like us are estranged from a lot of family because people enter the system—"Why didn't you just go along?" It's too bad.

But as far as what we could be doing, we can make a lot of programs: we have a program for that, we have a program for helping people get speaking engagements so they can get paid. That would be good. Whatever jobs could fit the person that person can do. That will be good. If people get into a position to hire and the person is capable of doing the work, they should hire them. For instance, I went back to school in '92. I went to Umass, and I graduated in '96. But that same year, they passed a law in Massachusetts that anyone who has a felony conviction can't work in any place that received state or federal funding. And you can't live in that place. A lot of people, even kids, that are just regular criminals, they come out, and if their parents are living in the projects, they can't go back or their whole family gets kicked out. They create laws to hurt people even more. They want to say, "Well, these people don't want to work. They're lazy." But they pass a law to say "You can't work."

TFSR: Yeah. You had brought up the idea when we were chatting earlier about one thing movement could be doing when folks are coming out is matching up people with jobs that fit the work that they can do. Maybe prisoner support organizations, if they know that someone's coming out,

or even if they don't know that someone's coming out, just build relationships with people that run legal offices or that run mechanic shops or that run woodworking or whatever thing that would allow someone to have that when they step out of the prison doors and be able to actually support themselves. Because not only public housing, but I know in different places, it's affected food stamps, it's affected student loans, it's affected all other things.

KT: I've been trying the last 10 years or so to link up with people that got land and try to establish places where people... I really want to build a healing center where people can come out and go there and re-acclimate slowly, not be thrust right back into this madness. Where they can go and sink their hands in the dirt. Plant some food. Just that relationship with the Earth is therapeutic in good ways. I've been trying to work on things like that. We have a few spots that we're trying, one in Western Mass. Ralph [Poynter] has a place upstate New York, about a mile from the Canadian border, but it's really cold. We have a couple of spots in Vermont and another one upstate New York where we work with a Native American brother named Jason, who used to be with the Green Guerillas. We used to go up there every summer, do work there, and help them out. Camp out there. It is good for people coming out to not be right back in the city. Right back with all them sirens going off every day. They can think a little bit.

TFSR: That's a really good idea. Especially if that allows folks with common experiences of incarceration to be able to just communicate with each other about what they're feeling, what they're thinking, what their experiences are, and what things they found to help.

KT: Right. Having groups like that is good. I was working at the American Friends Service Committee for a while and we brought Native Canadians down to show us how to run restorative justice circles, healing circles, and they stayed down for about a week with us and we got to learn how to do those things. And it was really good. But if we had circles like that... Because it's traumatizing, everybody has been really traumatized, and you don't get any healing like that.

I was in California visiting my son back in '94, and there was an earthquake out there. There was one before, and then there was one when I was there. And they were on TV on the news talking about people who have pets, they've been dislodged, and some of them have been in shelters for the last two weeks. There were recommendations like "When you go to pick up your cat or your dog and you bring them back into your house, let them re-acclimate because they've been traumatized." They were explaining this thing in detail on the news. I was sitting there thinking, "Damn, man, I know people that's been locked up 5-10-15-20 years and they come back out, you just throw them back." You don't talk to people on the news, "Well, this person's just coming back in, give him some space, don't run up on him real quick, and don't yell at them. Because they might have PTSD from the

guards beating on them. They might react in a way that they just used to reacting." They didn't do none of that. I was like, I'd rather have animal rights. [laughs]

TFSR: Imagine if a part of that was "Cool, okay, we're gonna give you a place to stay, we're gonna give you some food, we're not going to expect you to immediately go out, hit the pavement, try to find a job or something like that. But we're just gonna let you chill for a while, occasionally check in, ask if you're okay, if you need anything."

KT: Yeah, you have some counseling or some other people that just got out, and you could kick it with them, or some people who have been out a little while and you could talk about the experiences you went through since you came out. Nothing, nothing like that, man. But it's time somebody does something. Because they just came out, they didn't have any money, they just get nothing. If you work in the industry while you are inside, you get about \$75. "Here's a check for 75 bucks. Good luck." Somebody does something, go out and rob something or whatever, and something happens. They want to say, "Oh, look at them, man."

TFSR: "They're never gonna change."

KT: Yeah. When we talk about this support people might need, because after people do a lot of time and get beat down a lot and get tear gassed. Because when I was in Walpole, every Friday night the cops would come in and fuck us up. They would come in sometimes in Ku Klux Klan uniforms and shit, reading people's mail and saying shit, and getting people riled up. And we'd rip out and flush sheets down the toilet. Because the guards couldn't leave until they cleaned up their shift. So we'd fuck up their Friday night. And say, "Okay, you want to fuck with us? Then we'll fuck with you." And we fled out. But they'd shoot tear gas and pepper gas and stuff and come in and beat people one cell at a time. After you go through that so many times, and you are kept in isolation for two or three years—I did three years in iso—you come back into the community, and they need to have some things set up to help people re-acclimate.

TFSR: Yeah. Was this during the prison strike in 1973?

KT: I wasn't in then. My brother was in there then. I was outside working, outside the wall organizing people then. But that's '73 when they took over the prison, ran it for two or three months.

TFSR: That's incredible. And the administration and the media, everyone's saying, "They're gonna tear each other apart. They can't do it."

KT: Right. That's because the guards left. The guards walked out. Because the prison administrator was giving in to the prisoners' demands. It was like "Yeah, we