

# Tales from the Planet

Fifth Estate Collective  
john johnson

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Compiled by john johnson

## **KKK Does the Job for Us**

In November 2003, a bullet fired in the air during a Ku Klux Klan initiation ceremony near Johnson City, Tennessee came down and struck a participant in the head, critically injuring him. Gregory Allen Freeman, 45, was charged with aggravated assault and reckless endangerment in the incident that wounded Jeffery S. Murr, 24. About 10 people, including two children, had gathered for the ceremony. The man who was being initiated was blindfolded, tied with a noose to a tree, and shot with paintball guns as Freeman fired a pistol in the air to provide the sound of real gunfire.

## **South Carolina Cops Hold Teens at Gunpoint**

In early November, police in Goose Creek, South Carolina sent a team of officers—some with guns drawn—into a high school for a drug raid that turned up no drugs and resulted in no arrests. The Berkeley School District north of Charleston, South Carolina defended its role in the incident, which triggered outrage among some in the community. Stratford High School students described Wednesday's incident as frightening. "They would go put a gun up to them, push them against the wall, take their book bags and search them," Aaron Sims, 14, told mainstream media. Sims said his mother was "a little angry," but his father understood and "thought it was necessary." 12 to 14 students were placed in handcuffs or plastic flexcuffs "due to their failure to respond to repeated police instructions to get on their knees with their hands on their heads."

## **Racism Makes You Stupid**

To the listing of arguments against prejudice, scientists are now adding a new one: Racism can make you stupid. That is the message of an unusual and striking new series of experiments conducted at Dartmouth College, with the help of brain-imaging equipment and a crew of undergraduate volunteers.

According to the findings, the more biased people are, the more their brain power is taxed by contact with someone of another race, as they struggle not to say or do anything offensive. The work also paints a dispiriting portrait of the state of the nation's race relations, the lead researcher said, even among the well-educated, well-meaning Dartmouth undergraduates whom the scientists studied.

## **Mumia in Growing Danger**

African American journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal has been unjustly incarcerated since 1981, after being accused of killing a white police officer. He was sentenced to death after a completely biased trial and has only been saved from execution by an international movement demanding justice in his case. Back in 2001, Federal Judge William H. Yohn overturned Abu-Jamal's death sentence, but refused to hear evidence challenging his conviction. Despite Yohn's ruling, Abu-Jamal has remained on Pennsylvania's death row and is in danger of having his death sentence reinstated.

This past October, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court denied his legal appeal that would have allowed new evidence to be introduced, including a videotaped confession in which one Arnold Beverly said that he, not Abu-Jamal, had murdered officer Daniel Faulkner. In rejecting even viewing the Beverly confession, the court cited the "untimeliness" of the evidence proving Abu-Jamal's innocence, and cited Yohn's infamous 2001 decision that "innocence is no defense."

The Pennsylvania court also dismissed the testimony of Philadelphia court stenographer Terri Maurer Carter, who said she had overheard Mumia's original trial judge, Albert Sabo, state in relation to Mumia's case, "Yeah, and I'm going to help 'em fry the nigger." While the court could not reject this evidence on the basis of "timeliness," it was disregarded because the issue of Sabo's racist bias against Mumia, according to the court, had been previously raised and rejected—by the same court—and therefore this new evidence proving Sabo's bias was deemed to be a "reopening" of previous litigation.

Once again, one of the state's Supreme Court justices, Ronald Castile, who had been one of the original Philadelphia prosecutors in Mumia's case, refused to remove himself from the proceeding, despite a request from the defense that he do so.

Join the campaign to free Mumia. Abolish the death penalty. Contact New York Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition (212) 330-8029 or <http://www.freemumia.com>

## **School of the Assassins**

Ten thousand people gathered in late November in Columbus, Georgia, just outside the gates of Ft. Benning, Georgia in a massive demonstration of their opposition to the US Army's School of the Americas (SOA), more technically known as the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHISC), a notorious training school for Latin American soldiers. Hundreds of thousands of Latin Americans have been tortured, raped, assassinated, "disappeared", massacred, and forced into refuge by SOA graduates. The demonstration included the annual procession where thousands carried crosses emblazoned with the names of the victims of SOA grads in front of the gates of the base. Over the course of the action, 51 people were arrested after entering the base in an act of nonviolent civil disobedience. Some of the arrested protesters complained of being aggressively and abusively treated by soldiers on the base.

For the second year, demonstrators were subject to searches by cops upon entering the area in front of the gates of Fort Benning. Additionally, the military used "psy-ops" techniques on Saturday, blaring bad versions of patriotic songs in an apparent effort to drown out speakers from the SOA Watch stage.

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