

June 11 International Day of Solidarity with Eric McDavid & Marie Mason

Fifth Estate Collective

World-wide events organized to show solidarity with Marie Mason and Eric McDavid, the two longest sentenced environmental prisoners, were an overwhelming success.

Events took place in at least 30 cities across the world including two in New York City, ones in Chicago, Detroit, Baltimore, and San Francisco, but also in places such as Fresno, Calif, Worcester, Mass., Salt Lake City, and Asheville, NC. Internationally, people responded in Toronto, Guelph, Ontario, Montreal, Melbourne, Barcelona, Jerusalem, and Tel Aviv.

Several thousand dollars were raised with programs as varied as dinners, raffles, letter writing sessions, and video screenings, with the proceeds being split between Marie and Eric's support committees.

At the San Francisco venue, a standing-room only gathering featured the screening of the documentary, *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front*. There was also a bake sale, silent auction, raffle, and a talk by Jake Conroy of the SHAC 7, who spoke about his experiences in prison.

In Detroit, friends and comrades of Marie raised funds for the two imprisoned activists with a gathering that similarly featured a talk by a long-time, recently released federal prisoner, who described the daily routine that Marie and Eric are subjected to. The highlight of the evening was when Marie telephoned one of the event organizers who described the gathering to her. Prison rules forbid her talking to others, but everyone was buoyed by the call and hopefully she was as well.

In Israel, the Tel Aviv gathering featured an Asian-style meal followed by a performance of *The Mice* and Leah Goldberg Horror Picture Show, a well known drag show in Israel's radical scene dealing with animal rights, the environment, human rights, militarism, and queer politics.

In Jerusalem, at the Mahatma, a local veggie bar, attendees ate an Italian meal followed by a animal liberation video. About 30 people attended each event with \$160 being raised from the sale of zines, CDs, and t-shirts. After a discussion about the U.S. Green Scare, people wrote postcards to Marie and Eric and photos were taken with people holding signs reading, "I support Marie Mason," and "I support Eric McDavid."

Other events we received reports of featured a reading of Dario Fo's, *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, in Columbus, Ohio; in Sacramento, there was a screening of the documentary, *Better This World*, by its filmmakers, Katie Galloway, Kelly Duane de la Vega, who discussed their documentaries about the 2008 Republican National Convention and the "Texas Two." Also, "Stop Snitching" shirts designed by local artists debuted. Those readers who were unable to attend, but would like to contribute, please go to the web addresses below for where to send donations. Under no circumstances should money be sent directly to the prisoners or the U.S. Bureau of Prisons.

June 11th began in 2004 as an international day of solidarity with long-term anarchist prisoner Jeff "Free" Luers. At the time, Jeff was serving 22+ years. Infuriated by the environmental devastation occurring on a global scale, "Free" torched three SUVs at a car dealership in Eugene, Oregon in 2001.

The sentence imposed on him was the first intended to send a clear warning by the state to others angered by capitalism's continued war on the Earth's ecosystems—and to those who were willing to take action to put a stop to it.

After years of struggle, Jeff and his legal team won a reduction in his sentence and he was released from prison in 2009. Between Jeff's arrest and release, the FBI carried out a series of indictments and arrests in an attempt to devastate radical environmental and anarchist communities. Two of the people caught up in this maelstrom of repression were Eric McDavid and Marie Mason.

Luers, although now free, continues his commitment to the planet and support of those arrested in its defense. He released a statement on the eve of the events saying, "This June 11 marks the first international day of solidarity with Eric McDavid, Marie Mason, and all our long-term anarchist political prisoners. We are here to honor them, support them, remind them that they are not forgotten, and most importantly, to demand their release."

A tremendous amount of credit for the success of this day is due to the work of the Sacramento June 11 crew who put out the call for the Days of Solidarity. They created a web site providing templates for attractive leaflets and posters, as well as informational material on the cases of both prisoners. One leaflet was even translated into Russian.

Also, the Sacramento comrades produced a position paper, "June 11th Strategy," that defined the day and the international support it garnered as not simply a one-shot expression nor defining Marie and Eric solely as victims of state repression. They write that the need is to view what was coordinated across the world as the basis for continuing to organize around the issues that motivated Marie and Eric.

It is not a paper about tactics, which always need to be evaluated in terms of their effects and consequences, but rather suggests general strategies for support of imprisoned comrades while maintaining a focus on the two most visible prisoners of the Green Scare.

Perhaps the most important goal the paper suggests, and one amply exhibited by the success of June 11th is to "create ways to keep Marie and Eric present in our lives." There is much more worth reading in their paper, and it is still available at www.junel1.org. For those without computer access, write to our Ferndale address to receive a printed copy.

The old IWW slogan comes easily to mind: "They're in there for us; we're out here for them." Free Marie and Eric! Write to Eric McDavid & Marie Mason in prison:

Eric McDavid 16209-097, FCI Victorville, Medium II, PO Box 5300, Adelanto, CA 92301

Marie Mason #04672-061, FMC Carswell, P.O. Box 27137, Fort Worth, TX 76127

Under no circumstances mention any illegal acts. Letters that mention other Green Scare prisoners may be rejected. Prisoners have a list of 100 pre-approved people they can write to; if you are not on that list, they will be able to receive your letter but not necessarily write back.

First and last name must be included when writing. Letters must be entirely in English. Include your return address on the envelope and the prisoner name and number on each piece of correspondence, as the prison tends to discard the envelope and then may "lose" track of who the letter is going to.

Who are Eric McDavid and Marie Mason?

Eric McDavid was charged in 2006 with "conspiracy to damage and destroy property" in California after being entrapped by a government informant who was paid \$65,000. He and his co-defendants never carried out any of the actions encouraged by the informant. Eric refused to cooperate with the government even though his co-defendants testified against him. Following an error-ridden trial, Eric was sentenced to almost 20 years in prison. Information on his case is at supporteric.org.

MARIE MASON was arrested in 2008 after her former husband, Frank Ambrose, turned informant for the FBI. Facing a life sentence if she went to trial, Marie accepted a plea bargain admitting only her own involvement in the burning of a GMO research office and the destruction of logging equipment in Michigan. Following her guilty plea, she was sentenced to almost 22 years in prison. More information on Marie's case is at supportmariemason.org.

Here's an example of how outrageous the sentences are that Marie and Eric received. A Detroit-area man, Giovanni Naccarato, was charged with multiple 20-year felonies for setting fire in 2007 to a suburban apartment building.

He pleaded no contest, and a Wayne County Circuit judge gave the 44-year-old man three years probation in June. The sentence was far below the state-mandated sentencing guideline of a maximum of six years.

"Between Orwell and McCarthy: The Crucifixion of Marie Mason," the story of Marie's arrest and conviction has been translated into Czech by a comrade from Prague, and is available at the support web site. The essay originally appeared in the Spring 2009 *Fifth Estate*.

We will send that edition and three others about Marie's case, including her first-person account of her arrest for \$10, half of which will go to her support. Send to our post box or click the contribute button at the FE web site.

Supportmariemason.org has posted several new items lately including photos of Marie and her rock band at Waseca prison just before she was transferred; new poetry and art; a new sticker design; and pictures of her cats.

There is also Marie's original 2009 sentencing transcript. (PDF, opens in new window)

Highlights include statements from the sentencing judge, and Federal agents who describe Earth First! as a "related organization" to the ELF. Marie's snitch ex-husband, Frank Ambrose, is described as having taped "hundreds" of conversations with activists.

Marie is absurdly portrayed as pulling the strings behind the anti-road building I-69 campaign while she was out on bail at her mother's house in northern Michigan. References to her support websites are introduced as some kind of nefarious action. And, Rod Coronado, a convicted eco-saboteur, and the *Fifth Estate* both make an appearance.

Well worth a read.



Fifth Estate Collective
June 11 International Day of Solidarity with Eric McDavid & Marie Mason

<https://www.fiftheestate.org/archive/385-fall-2011/june-11-international-day-solidarity-eric-mcdavid-marie-mason>
Fifth Estate #385, Fall, 2011

fiftheestate.anarchistlibraries.net