

Remembering Jen Angel, 1975–2023

The senseless death of a friend & comrade

Ryan Fletcher

2023

Beloved long-time social justice activist, anarchist, and owner of the Oakland, Calif. Angel Cakes bakery, Jen Angel, died on Feb. 9. Jen passed on after three days on life support following critical injuries suffered in a robbery outside of an Oakland bank.

For over 30 years, Jen Angel was a visionary influence and pioneering participant within multiple movements and sub-cultures that significantly informed and shaped our lives.

Jen provided a model of a life well-lived off the beaten track, in pursuit of a new, better, and more just world.

Her involvement in punk rock and independent publishing in the 1990s helped to codify the DIY ethic that defines the radical sub-culture. This work contributed to energizing the global justice and anti-war movements beginning in Seattle in 1999 and the early 2000s.

It infused the anarchist politics characterizing this era of activism, culminating in Occupy Wall Street in 2011. Jen's projects, passion, and drive have been a through-line in these social movements over the decades. These movements were a catalyzing force behind contemporary fights for racial justice, police abolition, climate justice, economic justice, and queer and gender liberation.

Jen founded the social justice event production organization, Aid & Abet, in 2006, and before that was the co-founder and publisher of Clamor Magazine, a bi-monthly radical magazine published from 1999 to 2006.

Following media relations work we did together during the Occupy movement, in 2013, she and I co-founded Agency, an anarchist PR project, that promotes anarchist ideas through commentary, media relations, and educational campaigns. The mission and infrastructure she made possible continue to endure.

Promoting the ideas of anarchism was especially important to Jen, as was anarchist publishing. She authored *Becoming the Media: A Critical History of Clamor Magazine* for PM Press in 2008, and was part of the organizing collective for the Bay Area Anarchist Bookfair for many years. She was involved in planning the 2023 event at the time of her passing.

As an anarchist, Jen did not believe in state violence or carceral punishment as an effective or just solution to social violence and inequity. This message has been a core part of our work at Agency. Because her case has been classified as a homicide, Jen's family and friends have had to respond to the media attention to her life and the circumstances leading to her death.

The parties responsible for Jen's death have not been found. If the Oakland Police Department make an arrest in her case, the family is committed to pursuing all available alternatives to traditional prosecution, such as restorative justice.

"She was adamantly against using the state or police force to solve problems. I know she would have wanted to find a way to heal our communities from this tragedy that didn't perpetuate more injustice," said her partner, Ocean Mottley, an attorney who supports formerly incarcerated people.



This is what Jen believed in. It's critical that stories referencing Jen's life should not further inflame narratives of fear, hatred, and vengeance. She opposed the use of public resources for policing, incarceration, and other forms of state violence that only perpetuate the cycles of violence which resulted in her death.

Jen believed in a world where everyone lives a dignified and joyful life and she worked toward an ecologically sustainable and deeply participatory society in which all people have access to the things they need, decisions are made by those most directly affected by them, and everyone is free and equal.

The outpouring of mutual aid, solidarity, and care for Jen, her family, and friends is a resounding demonstration of the values Jen believed in. Jen Angel's legacy is one that contains multitudes, among them was a deep commitment to safety and dignity for everyone.

Rest in power, dear friend.

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