

# Dispatches from behind bars

Political prisoners speak out

Fifth Estate Collective

2023

A new book of oral histories edited by political prisoner Eric King and abolitionist Josh Davidson is now available for preorder through AK Press and Burning Books. *Rattling the Cages: Oral Histories of North American Political Prisoners* with a foreword by Angela Davis and an introduction by Sara Falconer is a fundraiser for, and a way to raise awareness of those imprisoned for politically motivated actions.

It will be released in December 2023.

The official story is that the United States has no political prisoners. The reality is that there are hundreds of people rounded up, placed behind bars, and kept there for inordinately long sentences because of their political beliefs and activities. This book is filled with the experience and wisdom of over thirty current and former North American political prisoners.

It provides first-hand details of prison life and the political commitments that continue to lead prisoners into direct confrontation with state authorities and institutions. Davidson, who helps produce the annual Certain Days: Freedom for Political Prisoners calendar, interviewed former radicals and Black liberation militants from the 'sixties and 'seventies, current antifascists, nonviolent Catholic peace activists, Animal and Earth Liberation Front saboteurs, and others. Their stories are moving, often tragic, yet deeply inspiring.

Johns Hopkins professor N.D.B. Connolly says of the book, "As a collection of oral histories, Davidson's *Rattling the Cages* provides an essential archive on both the breathtaking cruelty of American prisons and on the courage and humanity of those locked away."

Collectively, those interviewed have spent hundreds of years behind bars, and their experiences speak directly to the cruelty and immorality of our prison and so-called criminal justice systems.

Although their sentences and the conditions they have endured vary dramatically, this wide range of voices come together to embody what bell hooks called "a legacy of defiance." It is this legacy—of tirelessly struggling to right today's wrongs and create a better tomorrow that the prison system tries, yet fails, to extinguish.

Eric King, a 34-year-old vegan anarchist political prisoner and poet, helped in the editing of this collection from prison. He has been in prison since 2014, after an act of politically motivated property destruction in solidarity with protesters in Ferguson, Missouri after the police killing of Michael Brown. Eric is currently imprisoned at Florence AdMax in Colorado, the most restrictive and high-profile prison in the country. He is scheduled for release in early 2024.

Royalties from book sales are split between the Anarchist Black Cross Federation's Warchest, which provides financial support to currently imprisoned political prisoners, and Eric.

Contributors to *Rattling the Cages* include Donna Willmott, James Kilgore, Mark Cook, Rebecca Rubin, Hanif Shabazz Bey, Chelsea Manning, Oso Blanco, Ann Hansen, Sean Swain, Martha Hennessy, Hill Muntaqim, Jeremy Hammond, Kojo Bomani Sababu, Laura Whitehorn, Eric King, Rattler, Ray Luc Levasseur, Elizabeth McAlister, Malik Smith, David Campbell, Xinachtli, David Gilbert, Susan Rosenberg, Daniel McGowan, Linda Evans, Herman

Bell, Jennifer Rose, Ed Mead, Jerry Koch, Michael Kimble, Bill Harris, Jaan Laaman, Jake Conroy, Marius Mason, Bill Dunne, and Oscar Lopez Rivera.

Pre-order from AK Press: [akpress.org/rattling-the-cages](http://akpress.org/rattling-the-cages)

Burning Books: [burningbooks.com/products/preorder-rattling-the-cages](http://burningbooks.com/products/preorder-rattling-the-cages)

Solidarity with Eric King: [supportericking.org](http://supportericking.org)

Certain Days: The 2024 Freedom for Political Prisoners calendar is available from Burning Books: [burning-books.com](http://burning-books.com)

# fifth Estate

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