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## Urine Tests, No Travel, Financial Probes Feds Get Rough With Mumia Activists

On April 27, Judge Arnold C. Rapoport of US District Court, Eastern District of Pennsylvania found Mitchell Cohen of Brooklyn guilty of "failing to obey a lawful order" to disperse. This charge stemmed from his arrest, along with 96 others, at a non-violent civil disobedience demonstration (with plenty of non-arrested observer-participants) on behalf of a new trial for Mumia Abu-Jamal and Leonard Peltier last July 3rd, at the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia.

This was a mere violation or a low-level misdemeanor. Most of the arrestees copped pleas to the same charge and were sentenced to pay a \$250 fine, and \$25 to a victims' restitution fund. That was it.

But Cohen and a number of others went to trial asserting their innocence of the charges against them. Cohen submitted a motion for a jury trial, but the judge said that since the prosecutor wasn't asking for jail time, he was not entitled to one. Cohen told the court "I had no idea what the prosecutor is asking for" and that there was absolutely no contact between the US Attorney (prosecutor) and himself at any time. He didn't even know the charges until he got to court, and never even pleaded.

After a 2-day trial, in which Cohen served as his own attorney (with some legal assistance), he and one other person were found guilty, just as had a number of others the week before. He was sentenced — same as the others — to a \$250 fine, plus the \$25, plus one year probation (reviewable in either 30 days or 60 days depending on which agency you ask). Among the requirements of probation (which he signed, under duress of being thrown into jail), was a whole host of things, including regular urine tests, no

consorting with "other" felons, and confinement to the Judicial District, in this case the Southern District of NY, which is Queens, Brooklyn & Staten Island. The rest of the City and Long Island were thrown in as a "special privilege". Cohen was not allowed to travel out of that area for any reason.

All of this, and more, not for a felony, not even a serious misdemeanor, but for the legal equivalent of "jay-walking." These sort of cases are usually thrown out of court, with at worst a \$25 fine.

After his conviction Cohen wrote a polite letter to the judge requesting that he be allowed to travel to New Paltz, NY—just 1-1/2 hours away—where he was supposed to be a featured speaker at a program concerning genetic engineering, and was to receive a stipend for his talk. Cohen also asked that the judge allow him to attend a long-planned environmental conference in Brussels next week, where he was also to be remunerated. (Judges and probation officers are generally supposed to make exceptions for legal activities done in order to make one's living.) Cohen explained that he was on the editorial board of several newspapers and magazines (Green Times, Green Politics, Synthesis/Regeneration, Red Balloon Magazine), a journalist and speaker and that preventing him from traveling to conferences was depriving him of his living.

The judge was evidently provoked by this very nicely written letter, to which Cohen had attached the Brussels invitation. He spoke with the probation office and asked them to lift Cohen's passport. And he notified US Customs to add Cohen to their computerized registry of criminals (Mumia continued on page 6)

# Our Little Secrets

## DEATH OF LITTLE CRIZEL

As long-time readers know, CounterPunch has long looked askance at the fundraising and promotional practices of Morris Dees, the civil rights grifter who heads the Southern Poverty Law Center. But even Dees might have drawn the line at a stunt recently pulled by Greenpeace, involving the use of the death of a young girl for promotional purposes.

The story arose in late February when Crizel Jane Valencia, a six-year-old Filipino girl, died of leukemia while visiting the Rainbow Warrior. Crizel—swiftly dubbed the “child toxic warrior” by Greenpeace activists—lived at Clark Air Force Base, where her family was resettled when its village was destroyed by a volcanic eruption in 1991. Greenpeace says Crizel’s illness was caused by toxic waste left by the US Air Force, which occupied Clark until nine years ago.

Rick Hind of Greenpeace in Washington tells us that his organization felt that Crizel’s passing was so tragic that it didn’t seem right to call much attention to the fact. “It was sacrosanct so we really played it down,” he said. “We didn’t want to be

tasteless about it.”

Yet even before little Crizel was buried, Greenpeace turned a picture she drew aboard the Rainbow Warrior into a poster to promote the Philippines leg of its “Toxic Free Asia Tour.” The drawing—surprisingly sophisticated for a six-year-old, particularly a dying one—shows a smiling sun shining brightly above a Greenpeace boat and a group of happy children holding balloons.

Greenpeace also posted a tribute to Crizel on its website. It called her a “very brave” girl and “keen supporter of Greenpeace”, who died while “living out her wish to visit the Rainbow Warrior”. A personal account of Crizel’s last hours, written by Ship’s Nurse Butch Turk, read like a made-for-TV tearjerker. After speculating that Crizel might have grown up to be an artist if not for her untimely demise, Turk reported that Crizel “became very agitated” when it was suggested that she skip a tour of the Rainbow Warrior in order to receive medical care.

The story continued: “Although she remained quiet throughout the boat ride, Crizel said she was enjoying herself when asked. She vomited a small amount once. When it was Crizel’s turn to drive she sat up straight, grasped the wheel with both hands, and even did a pretty decent job with a nice light touch to her steering. I don’t know if the skipped transfusion, exertion of the drive to the ship, and excitement of being aboard used up the last of her scanty reserves and hastened her death by a few days. Alternatively, it’s possible that she would have departed sooner if she didn’t have the Rainbow Warrior to look forward to. I choose to believe the latter.”

Hind said that Greenpeace didn’t take Crizel’s tale to the media, but at least one story did appear in the Filipino press and it seems likely that Greenpeace played a role in spinning the account. The article, which appeared in the Philippine Daily Inquirer, reported on the March 1 funeral for the “child toxic warrior”. It said that the girl’s parents were “wailing in grief” and “consoled by about 10 women whose children did not see the light of day because of spontaneous abortions or stillbirths.”

Greg Rushford of The Rushford Report, who first brought this story to our

attention, says that Greenpeace not only milked Crizel’s death for all it was worth, but also created a toxic legacy of its own in seeking to call attention to the problem of toxic waste at Clark. Two days after Crizel’s funeral, Greenpeace protestors turned up at the US embassy in Manila with a container holding parts from a high voltage transformer from the Air Base. They dumped the container, which was leaking cancer-causing PCBs, in front of the embassy gate, thereby creating a major toxic waste site in a heavily trafficked district of Manila. Philippine police officers hauled the PCB-laced container away and dumped it in an abandoned lot near a shantytown where, at last report, it still sits.

## WOLFE’S YAP

Someone made the odd, maybe malicious, certainly rash decision to put Tom Wolfe on the right hand side of the cover of Harper’s 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue, facing Mark Twain, a leonine, earthy, dignified old devil, sitting in alert repose, apparently listening. A man to whose energetic image the white suit is incidental. Over on the right hand side, Wolfe’s white suit is dominant, looking just a shade too big for its shriveled occupant, who gazes nowhere in particular with a smirk of wooden self-satisfaction, looking like some second-rank official from the British foreign office, retired to Bermuda, out of the closet at last.

The bizarre juxtaposition of Wolfe with Twain consummates thirty years’ inflation of the former’s modest talents. To read his breathless prose, shrill with yaps and self-importance, is like having a small dog attack one’s leg. Wolfe’s anniversary essay is called “In the Land of the Rococo Marxists: Why no one is celebrating the Second American Century.” As January 1, 2000 arrived, Wolfe asks, “did a single solitary savant note that the First American Century had just come to an end and the Second American Century had begun?” To which of course the answer is that Americans saw the millennial chronology as mostly hype, hooked loosely to the Christian calendar, and excitingly dressed up in the vestments of a modern Apocalypse or Second Coming, the Y2K circus.

Wolfe’s habitual technique is to say something and then repeat it at accelerating degrees of shrill enthusiasm for his own insight. In this case, paragraph one

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