

If I Don't Get Arrested

Revoluciana

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I could flee, but where would I go?

I've spent a lot of time helping others flee, and even left the US for a minute with my family during a particularly harrowing moment under this regime. I certainly don't have any judgement for those who flee.

Maybe a little actually, but not for the marginalized. My judgement is reserved for the privileged, those with means and without targets on their backs. The kind that pass as fascists among the fascists. The kind that are afraid of the fascists, but make friends with them, anyway.

Shit, I think I'm just describing fascists again.

Nine people sitting down for a friendly meal with a fascist? That's just ten fascists. Or however the saying goes.

Sometimes I wonder what would happen if I got arrested. I made sure that I'm up to date on my hepatitis b and HPV vaccinations just in case. An ace friend of mine takes PrEP as a precaution so that they don't get HIV if they get arrested at a pride celebration or whatever.

You think you know what happens to transfeminine people in prison, but you don't, and if I described it to you, it would wreck your day. You already know they basically all get forced into the men's jails and prisons. I've seen statistics that show between 50% and 70% of trans women who have seen the inside of jail or prison cell, for any length of time at all, even if it's just overnight, report having been sexually assaulted during their time there. A lot of time they get put into solitary for months at a time to segregate them from the general population, which is a war crime under international law when done for more than a couple weeks. Not that anyone cares about international law.

If you truly want to wreck your day, look up a term called v-coding, but don't say I didn't warn you.

So yeah, I guess I don't really wonder what would happen if I get arrested. I already know.

Yet, here I am, writing to you, saying fuck fascists and fuck this regime and I'm an anarchist and I'm anti-fascist and trans and whatever. I print this stuff out and make zines and hand deliver it to bookstores and into people's hands at radical and non-radical events alike and I leave them lying around in conspicuous places. Sometimes I put them in little free libraries.

After my medical issues last year, I've been trying to get out to more radical events and protests and whatever. Not nearly as many as I'd like yet, but I'm working on it.

I can't be quiet. I'm incapable.

I'm not the loudest, but I'm loud.

I don't want to lead, I want to be part of a chorus of voices yelling against all the injustice that we're forced to witness and experience every day. Don't you want that, too?

But so often people are quiet. And I'm still not leading anything in these circumstances when I'm loud because others don't seem ready to join in. I wish they would. It can get lonely being loud.

But I'm loud. I'm fortunate that I have friends and community who are loud, too. It's exhausting being loud when you're the only one. You've got to find others.

Solidarity matters.

Solidarity is everything when it comes to being loud.

If you're reading this, you likely care what is going on around us. Are you loud? If not, why? Don't tell me the answer, look inside, and try to be honest with yourself.

I can't stop thinking about the Prairieland case. When I first heard about the case, it was in reference to Daniel Sanchez Estrada who got sentenced to 30 years in prison for moving a box of zines. Have you heard about this?

Terrorism. They're all charged with terrorism. Primarily for being "members" of anti-fa which isn't even a group, let alone something someone can be a member of. For a box of zines.

I won't lie, one cop got shot after the cops started brandishing their weapons at fleeing unarmed protesters, not by Estrada. In any event, the cop who got shot is fine, and it's not even clear who shot the bullet, let alone whether or not it was intended to hit the guy or just intimidate him. But they're all getting imprisoned on terrorism charges. They brought fireworks because it was a noise demonstration. The government says these were evidence of terrorism because they're explosives.

They're getting terrorism charges, regardless of whether or not they were even there when it happened, or if they were there but they were just moving a box of zines out of the way.

I had to look what zines there were that were presented as evidence. Do you have any idea how many zines there are out there in the world? Titles, authors, decades upon decades?

I took a look at the picture they used as evidence. The top zine in the picture I first saw is one that happened to be sitting in the cupholder of my vehicle at that very moment. It spent the entire winter in my coat pocket because I never bothered to take it out.

Yesterday, I was reading a transcript of an interview with Autumn Hill who was sentenced to 50 years on terrorism charges in the same case. She went to the protest, which was outside an ICE facility, made some noise, dispersed when she was told to, and left hours before anything happened. They arrested her the next day. 50 years.

These two were not the only ones sentenced from 30-100 years, and there were additional people who took plea deals between 2-15 years.

Terrorism, because, you know, trans and anti-fascist. That's the focus for anti-terrorism in the US these days. Officially.

If you're not familiar with the new anti-terrorism focus in the US, I urge you to please familiarize yourself with NSPM-7 (wiki link, but contains link to the government document), a National Security Presidential Memorandum detailing what I've just described as government policy. It describes who it considers to be terrorists. It sounds an awful lot like me and a lot of people I know and love, and if you're reading this, quite possibly you, too.

You've seen others get murdered by the fascists at protests and for filming the secret police as they cart people off to concentration camps. I don't need to rehash. Renée Good. Alex Pretti. You've seen so much more.

But it's so quiet.

And what's happening to all of these people being carted off to concentration camps, do you know? Have you screamed about it? Have you even said anything about it around someone who would be uncomfortable with you speaking about it?

Maybe you're afraid to cause a scene. Maybe you're wondering what would happen if you got arrested.

Yes, you talk to your friends and you all talk about how awful it is and you say I can't wait till it's all over, or maybe you just sigh and hope for a blue wave to do pretty much nothing except slow the bleeding for an election cycle. Maybe.

But probably not.

We can't give into despair, you think. Gotta stay positive.

Positivity so often seems to be the thoughts and prayers of the liberals.

But what can I do, you might wonder.

And to that I would say, have you tried anything? Anything at all?

I'm not asking you to lead.

You know what, yeah, I am.

Not in the sense of authority, but you are allowed to take the first step, even if only just to speak when it makes others uncomfortable.

Why are we being so quiet? Silence is complicity. I always say, the most revolutionary act is the refusal to be complicit. We should all be loud.

Actually, that might be illegal. Words are illegal now. Prairieland demonstrates this so clearly.

So it's illegal to speak. Do it anyway.

Why do you give a shit? It's legal for them to put people away for life for a few words. It's legal for them to murder people in the streets. It's legal for them to call abortion murder and put them away for it. It's legal for them to put people in concentration camps. It's legal for them to commit multiple genocides and start ridiculous wars for no reason but their own ego and bloodlust.

Who gives a fuck what's legal or not legal in the face of any of this?

And you're afraid of speaking?

I don't really wonder what will happen if I get arrested. I already know. But like. What's the alternative?

I could flee, but where would I go? There is no place untouched, and quite frankly, I don't know if there are safe places for me. Some may stay safe longer than others, but it's only getting worse everywhere, and I've already got a bit of a reputation.

What's your reputation?

You have one, by the way, or didn't you know? The FBI announced they're doubling down on data collection and the use of AI in order to do the whole pre-crime thing like in Minority Report. They're explicitly linking it to NSPM-7. Basically, they want to catch the sort of people who are already vocally unsupportive of the regime or who they think are too loud or dangerous to their authority.

[I hesitate to include this link that describes the US pre-crime initiative in quite a bit of detail due to the source being the publication Reason, a US libertarian magazine, but as it stands, it's the most succinct summary I can find.]

I don't sit down and have friendly chats over dinner with fascists. That's my reputation, but I don't know about yours.

I'm quite content with this reputation.

At some point, I might get arrested. It's possible. I don't just have radical zines, I make them, I write them. Maybe someday these very words will be spoken in court to demonstrate that I am, in fact, a very bad person, because I said fuck fascists and stop genociding people or whatever.

Sometimes I even go to protests. That's all it takes. If I do get arrested, it might be because I'm trans, or because I'm an anarchist, or because I oppose fascism. Maybe it will be because of my zines, or maybe they'll catch me protesting or taking direct action by helping trans people get their hormones or accidentally dropping a box of nails somewhere or something.

Or maybe they'll make something up, which would be a disappointment, to be honest.

I'm not violent, I just can't be quiet.

Honestly, I'm shocked by how many of you are able to stay so quiet.

I don't really spend much time wondering what will happen if I get arrested. I already have a good sense of that.

I spend time wondering what will happen if I don't.

I don't want to get arrested. I don't want to be jailed or assaulted, to say the least, as punishment for my words and thoughtcrimes and my gender.

I'm far from the first one to say this, but if all the people who oppose fascism, who oppose genocide, who oppose injustice— if all of these people are meant to be imprisoned or worse, then I suppose that's where I'm meant to be, too.

I wonder, if you're loud, too, could they possibly arrest us both? Will they run out of space? What if there are more than the two of us? What if by being loud, other people will feel more confident in being loud? What if eventually it's all of us, do you think they would have enough space for us? Maybe, if given enough time, they could build enough prisons, but not if we're all fast enough, so what are you waiting for?

There's a thought that keeps running through my mind.

When all is said and done, in the face of all that is before us, *if I don't get arrested*, I hope to the depths of my stars that it's not because I was too quiet.

I don't know how I could live with myself.

no ends, only means

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