

STAY CALM

*some tips for keeping safe
in times of state repression*



The spectre of state repression has been growing over Bay Area radical milieus. Grand juries in the Pacific Northwest and in Santa Cruz, threats by police of using gang enhancements against activists, the recent string of mass arrests, the profusion of political divisions and threats, abundant conspiracy theories, surveillance of our social spaces, FOIA paperwork that references a confidential informer--The list goes on and on and on.

Murmurs of imminent repression can be heard everywhere. Even though everything we hear cannot be entirely proven or disproven, recent events underscore the importance of preparing for a possible crackdown. The state seeks to isolate us with repression, as individuals and within our tendencies. Against that, we can prepare together, support each other and continue actively struggling against the oppression and misery of this world.

Repression always exists and now is the time to take security very seriously. Without knowing the exact form the repression will take, there are some likely scenarios to prepare for, as well as some precautions that can be taken to reduce the ability of the feds and police agencies to monitor, divide and prosecute our networks.

Sound the Alarm if an Agent Knocks . . .

. . . or if an agent calls your parents, shows up at your place of employment or is waiting for you at a BART station.

Don't say anything to the cop, except that you will remain silent and that you are going to talk to a lawyer. Request the agent's business card to give to your lawyer and share with comrades. They may threaten you, your friends, and your family or they may seem genuinely concerned for your safety: Whatever they say, their intention is to send you and your friends to prison. *Don't tell them anything.*

Let your friends and comrades know that you were visited and what, if anything, the agent said to you. Spreading this information will help others prepare for the possibility of getting visits, frustrate the state's ability to isolate people, and help you get the support you might need.

Preemptively, it could be useful to talk to your parents, employers, and housemates about the possibility of police or FBI visits. *Tell them not to say anything at all*; even the smallest slips of the tongue have totally fucked people over.

House Raids

As has happened recently in the Northwest, and in countless past investigations, houses of active activists and antagonists might be raided by local police or the feds. In the selection below, remember that "sensitive material" has, in the past, meant everything from black clothing to anarchist literature to shoes to a pack of tampons. Keeping in mind the events of the past year here, remove materials from your house that could be construed by the police as evidence.

Some advice on preparing for the possibility of house raids, from the *Practical Security Handbook*:

Keep all sensitive material in your house together so that if you have to remove it in a hurry, you are not wasting time searching for that elusive but damning piece of paper. Planning a process to deal with the risky information in your house will make this much easier; it helps prevent you losing material and gives you a greater degree of control over it. Remember, if you are being watched, any panicky action will be noted, thus bringing further attention yourself. This is one reason why police knock on activist doors – they may know

you are not going to tell them anything, but if they can rattle your cage enough so that you slip up then they may be able to get something on you.

Sensitive material should be removed from your house on a regular basis in a calm manner – not furtively! This does not prevent you from practicing counter-surveillance techniques, but do so discretely. [...] If you get wind that something has happened and you suspect you may get a visit as a result, stay calm and prioritize what you need to get out of your house. Get friends to call around and take stuff out for you, or ‘take back their possessions’.

Grand Juries

Right now, there are Grand Juries targeting radicals in the Northwest. Three people have been imprisoned indefinitely for refusing to testify against themselves and their comrades. Treat this situation as if it is actively threatening your city as well. Because it is. It has been confirmed that one Grand Jury was convened in March of 2012, and is not limited to (what was publicized as) investigation of the May 1st demonstrations in Seattle. It will continue through March of 2014. The comrades who have been subpoenaed are from all across the northwest and it is entirely possible that additional subpoenas will be delivered to others.

Comrades and radicals in the Bay Area should be prepared for the possibility of a grand jury here. In-depth information about Grand Juries can be found in the pamphlets *If An Agent Knocks* and *Grand Jury Investigations*. Both are full of valuable information about how grand juries work and how to resist them.

Some basic advice for dealing with Grand Jury Subpoenas, from *If An Agent Knocks*:

Grand jury subpoenas are served by law enforcement agents, usually police officers or federal marshals. A grand jury subpoena must be personally served on you, meaning, it must be handed to you. If you refuse to accept it, it must be placed near you.

A grand jury subpoena does not give an agent the right to search a home, office, car or anywhere else, nor does it require you to relinquish any documents or say anything at that time. A grand jury subpoena only requires you to do something on the future date stated on the subpoena.

If an agent shows up and tries to serve you with a subpoena, take it and do not do anything else. Do not answer any questions; do not consent to a search; and do not invite them into your home for any reason.

De-escalate Interpersonal Conflicts

Stop publicizing interpersonal conflicts and de-escalate the conflicts within your milieu. Rumors, personal drama and gossip have always been an exploitable tool of the state. Contradictions and tensions are obviously an important part of our shared political and social spaces but this is probably not the best time to pick fights and draw out divisions. Let's find ways to continue to explore our political differences, acknowledging our common commitment to liberatory struggle against the state, capital, patriarchy and white supremacy.

Phones

It should be no surprise that phone calls and text messages shouldn't reference illegal activities. Beyond surveillance of the content of messages, care should also be taken in the pattern of calling and text messaging. I.e. if a house raid were to happen, the investigators could look back at the patterns of calls from confiscated phones to map social networks. Having unmediated (real world) ways to find people and have conversations is very important in our hyper-mediated world.

If your phone has a screen lock, use it. If it has full or partial encryption, use it. Delete your text messages regularly. Be careful in both the content and pattern of your phone calls, especially during or after actions, raids, and the like. Apps like TextSecure (for SMS) and RedPhone (for VoIP) are useful end-to-end encryption tools for cellular

communication. If you have an Android phone, turn USB debugging off.

While it is possible for cellular phones to be used as surveillance devices, don't let the absence of phones lull you into a false feeling of security. It is much more common for houses or cars to be bugged than for phones to be used to monitor conversations. That is to say, it is meaningless to put away one's phone and still have a conversation indoors.

Regardless of any encryption or anonymity, always assume that your phone's security can and will be compromised at some point. Accordingly, keep important information elsewhere and have sensitive conversations in person.

Social Networking

Limit your internet/electronic social networking interaction. Facebook, websites, Twitter, blogs, emails, etc. are becoming a favored sources of evidence for the state when they seek to destroy our networks. See: the RNC 8, the Asheville 11, the Latin Kings, the SHAC 7.

Computer Encryption

We all use computers to communicate about our activities and this makes us vulnerable. Having a working understanding of computer security and encryption could save you and others a lot of grief down the road. That said, don't assume the absolute safety of encryption. There shouldn't be any directly incriminating information on your computer, encrypted or not.

If you chat online, use encrypted instant messaging. For Windows and Linux, use Pidgin with the OTR (Off The Record) plugin. For Mac, use Adium.

Use encrypted email. Install Thunderbird and the Enigmail plugin. Or, set up PGP encryption, using GnuPGP for Mac OSX and GnuPG for Windows.

If you can full disk encrypt your computer, it will help reduce the amount of useful evidence it gives in the case of it being seized by the police. Know, however, that if your

computer is on when seized, the encryption is compromised. For Windows, TrueCrypt provides an easy utility for full disk encryption. With Linux, LUKS is a built-in utility that encrypts the most sensitive information on your computer. Use Truecrypt to encrypt all or part of your hard drive (OSX or Windows) and overwrite the disk's free space at regular intervals (CCleaner for Windows, Disk Utility for OSX).

Analysis & Practice

Let's understand our current moment and why we are seeing the forms of repression that are currently unfolding. In most places, that mass movement of 2011 has now largely dissipated and the participants have gone home. In some places, such as the Bay Area and the Pacific Northwest, radicals and militants have continued publicly and socially organizing. It might be that the state has been waiting for this moment, when they perceive us to be fractured and isolated, to pursue legal action; our response must show the strength and vitality of our networks.

Dealing With Sketchy Behavior

Those who are driven to paranoia and desperation by the threat of repression can be as dangerous as those that make no preparations whatsoever. Encourage your friends, gently but firmly, to go the extra mile to practice security culture. Encourage practicality. When someone seems overworried or paranoid, extend yourself to them for reassurance.

Bad security culture or naivete often lead to accusations of someone being an informant or undercover agent. Address the practices, not the accusations. If someone does not take the safety of themselves or others seriously, it might make sense to distance yourself from that person. Accusations of collaboration with the state, though, are to be taken very seriously and not thrown around lightly.

When it comes down to it, if someone is doing the work of the state then it doesn't necessarily matter whether they are actual paid infiltrators. If they are spreading paranoia or being disruptive or putting comrades in unnecessary risk then the important thing is to deal with them on those

grounds and not based on loose speculation as to their role in a government plot.

However, if there is strong evidence (usually court paperwork, public records requests, etc.) suggesting one's cooperation with the state, still be careful about putting it on blast. Talk to people in private to vet the accusations beyond any shadow of a doubt. If there is great degree of certainty, spread the information far and wide. If there isn't, deal with the situation privately. Either way, talk to a trusted lawyer.

Solidarity Against Isolation

Repression functions to isolate individuals. Our solidarity and support to those facing repression should affirm our shared lives and projects. Our safety lies in one another: When people are arrested or subpoenaed, our support and solidarity is a reminder not to snitch or cooperate. On another level, our safety lies in the strength of our connection to the world around us: If our networks respond to repression by becoming insular, we lose social insulation, risk becoming irrelevant and make us more susceptible to demonization.

Stay Calm

The looming possibility of repression, sometimes more than repression itself, can often send people into a whirlwind of panic. This sort of stress can prevent people from taking the necessary steps to take care of themselves and their friends. Beyond whatever specific preparations for house raids, FBI visits, or providing arrestee support, it is important to encourage our friends to take care of themselves and remain levelheaded. In the Bay Area, people have varied levels of experience with government repression. Some people need to be encouraged to take the possibility seriously, others need to be discouraged from becoming paralyzed in their paranoia. This active support also needs to extend beyond our immediate circles; political divisions, while important sites of dialogue and constructive conflict, cannot become fault lines that tear apart our solidarity against state repression.

Oakland. October 2012.

So the practice of revolutionary solidarity presents us with a challenge. Repression is growing as is specific focus by the authorities on anarchists. We will likely see more and more of us under investigation, facing trial and spending time in prison. It is very easy in such situations to simply retreat, to let things blow over or, worse, to distance ourselves from comrades facing prison or from actions that frighten us. This response would be a major victory for the state. So the challenge we face is developing the strength within ourselves to act on our own terms against the state and against systems of repression while also learning to coordinate these actions without compromising ourselves. [...] It is necessary to develop the clarity and candor from which relations of affinity can develop, spreading their complicity in revolt further and further - maybe even flowering into insurrection.

from *Revolutionary Solidarity: A Challenge*



STAY SAFE
& Be Dangerous