

Grand Jury press conference

Notes on Grand Jury resistance

May 18, 2006, 10:30am

My name is [Lauren Regan](#), and I am the Executive Director and Attorney with the [Civil Liberties Defense Center](#), a grassroots organization focused on defending the right to challenge the government and the corporations that run it.

With me are:

Jeff Hogg, a long-time local citizen who works with autistic adults in Eugene for many years, is a full-time nursing student, and ecologist. Subpoenaed to federal grand jury regarding the [Green Scare](#).

Kim Marks, with Forest Ethics, an international environmental group that holds corporations accountable for degradation to the planet.

Alejandro Queral—Executive Director, Northwest Constitutional Rights Center, Portland, Oregon—legal and advocacy organization that works to protect the civil and political rights of activists.

There are many events in the history of the US for us to be proud of; this time in history is not one of those periods.

Since the 1990s corporations have fought with malice to control our government in the face of global citizen protests against corporate dominance, resource extraction, and the degradation of society and labor rights. During the 40s our government unconstitutionally and appallingly rounded up American citizens with Japanese ancestry because of fear, ignorance and racism. In the 50s it was a gov't attack on "communists"—the Red Scare, branding citizens as un-american because of ideology or associations. In the 60s the government was caught spying and intentionally disrupting American political groups and citizens, actions which were later found to be completely illegal and unconstitutional. The similarities between these historic periods and the current witch-hunt against environmentalists have led to the current federal cases to be labeled the "Green Scare."

We can only hope that the same outcome will occur with the current crimes our government is committing with regard to domestic spying. Without strong voices and actions opposing the current gov't and its criminal acts, the corporate and

gov't evildoers will destroy life on this planet within our lifetimes, in exchange for their own short-term economic benefits. The US will continue to dump white phosphorous on innocent people and children in Iraq--watching their bodies melt to the bone in the name of our country at the bidding of corporate oil profiteers, who are making record profits as this travesty of a war continues. Without serious action by "We the People," corporations like Haliburton will continue to be awarded huge gov't contracts like the current one to build detention camps that the gov't states are needed for an "emergency influx of immigrants" and other "new programs" the gov't sees fit.

OUR country was founded and made strong by those who dissented against business as usual in our gov't. At this point in history, the gov't thru the DOJ/FBI are going after political dissenters--whether you oppose the war, clearcutting, or animal torture for drug companies, or simply talk on the telephone--the feds have their eyes and ears on you.

The US Attorney General's rhetoric, and the indictments regarding alleged acts of arson and property damage, makes it clear that these cases are politically motivated prosecutions from the highest levels in Washington DC. Anyone else indicted for arson and conspiracy to commit arson would be facing significantly less jail time than these individuals. Just look at the right wing groups who murdered doctors who performed abortion--they weren't labeled terrorists, and they killed humans. In these pending cases, there was no injury to humans or other animals. The difference clearly being the political and philosophical bias of our current gov't toward the underlying positions held by the defendants and their supporters. Clearly, the only difference between arson done to defraud an insurance company and the alleged arsons committed in these cases is that the latter appear to be politically motivated instead of based on personal greed. One would be threatened w/a short sentence; the others are looking at life plus 300 years in jail. The US government's decision to go after these individuals and label them as "terrorists" helps this faltering administration legitimize their argument that domestic spying is necessary, and allows them to justify the illegal persecution of political dissent domestically. The word terrorism is not mentioned a single time in the 83-page indictment. It is only the government, and the head attorney of this country, that has labeled these defendants--innocent until proven guilty under the laws of this country--as "domestic terrorists." A pathetic attempt at slander and hyperbole to draw attention away from the corruption and blatant attacks by our government on the constitution and Bill of Rights.

Grand juries are part of every felony criminal investigation, but when they are used

against resistance movements the government does not agree with, the arbitrary investigation of citizens becomes abusive. The continued use of the grand jury by federal prosecutors in this instance confirms that they are abusing their power to subpoena witnesses in order to prepare the federal case for trial--not to prosecute additional defendants as the law requires. This is clearly an improper use of the grand jury under federal law.

With regard to today's grand jury, we see a clear example of the gov't going beyond what the law allows in their zeal to persecute and diminish the ever-growing worldwide environmental movement. It is unfortunate that our neighbors and community members such as Mr. Jeff Hogg, become the innocent victims of government misconduct--much in the same way that most of the people brought before the McCarthy hearings went to jail not because they committed a crime, but because they had the strength to stand up against a corrupt and illegal government. It is because of their strength, and that of many other historical resistance movements, that our country has continued to base it's democracy on freedom of speech, freedom of association, and freedom to act against a government reaching for a dictatorship.

Today it is Jeff Hogg being ripped from his job, his family, his education, to stand up for all of us as a strong example of true patriotism--how even one small person can resist unconstitutional attacks by the machine of big government and stand up for strongly held principles and ethics, instead of cowering to fear and intimidation at the hands of the federal bureaucracy. Tomorrow, it could be any of us facing this same type of government inquisition. We must vigilantly question what is going on in our government and why. We must stop our government from continuing down a path that the vast majority of us find increasingly repugnant. If not us, who?

The government has indicated that this grand jury term ends on September 30, 2006. They may ask for an extension from the court under certain circumstances. If no extension is granted, Mr. Hogg would be released on this date. Otherwise, his attorney will be filing motions for his release in the near future. We are hopeful a challenge to the illegal closure of his public contempt hearing will also be filed to ensure that such illegal court closures do not occur again.