



STOP COP CITY

ZINE DESIGN BY MAX CANNER

AN ANNOTATED
VERSION OF THE
INDICTMENT FILED
AGAINST
#STOPCOPCITY
ORGANIZERS

INTERRUPTING CRIMINALIZATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WHAT IS AN INDICTMENT?.....	3
I. CAPTION.....	6
II. WHAT ARE THE CHARGES?.....	9
III. "THEY WILL CALL YOU VIOLENT".....	14
IV. MUTUAL AID.....	21
V. FINANCIAL ALLEGATIONS.....	24
VI. COMMUNICATIONS & SAFEGUARDS.....	28
VII. MEDIA, FLYERS AND 'ZINES.....	30
VIII. PROTEST TACTICS AS "DOMESTIC TERRORISM".....	32
IX. DISARMING THE INDICTMENT.....	34
FURTHER READING/FOR MORE INFORMATION.....	35

WHAT IS AN INDICTMENT?

An indictment is simply a formal set of unproven accusations of lawbreaking made by a prosecutor (an attorney for the state). **Nothing in the indictment has been proven, nor have the allegations in it been verified by anyone—it’s just a story the Georgia Attorney General wants the public, the court, and ultimately, a jury, to believe.**

Once upon a time, in a land called Atlanta, bears turned into pigeons and began attacking elephants... You get the picture. The indictment contains many unproven and provably false allegations, contested facts, extrapolations, and baseless conclusions.

The fact that an indictment was issued simply means that a group of 23 people selected to serve on this grand jury agreed that the Georgia Attorney General should get a chance to try to prove his story. That’s it. Grand juries are different from trial juries. Their role is simply to decide whether they believe a prosecutor’s story enough to bring formal charges — that is, whether a case should be brought before a judge. The grand jury process is highly secretive and completely one-sided. The prosecutor controls the entire process — including which witnesses and evidence are presented, and how they are framed. While the judge and grand jurors have the right to ask questions, they rarely do, and are often actively discouraged from doing so. Neither the people accused nor their lawyers are allowed to be present, tell their side of the story, or challenge the prosecutor’s version of events. As a general practice, grand jurors do not hear any evidence that contradicts the prosecutor’s story. In this case, we don’t even know what the Attorney General told the grand jury because there are no transcripts of the proceedings. For more information on grand juries and indictments, please visit beyondcourts.org.

This indictment is clearly a public relations tool being deployed in an effort to crush a powerful movement in opposition to the construction of a \$90+million militarized police training facility on the original territories of the Mvskogee Creek peoples, in a forest that has been described as the “lungs of Atlanta” and is located in a historically Black community. The facility, dubbed Cop City by organizers because it will feature a replica of an urban environment, will be used to train police from across the country and around the world in militarized “urban warfare” tactics used to violently suppress resistance movements. This will likely include [“counterterrorism” training](#) by and with Israeli Police and members of the Israeli Defense Forces through an international law enforcement exchange program, GILEE, run by Georgia State University.

Attorney General Chris Carr’s prosecution of 61 people for “racketeering” and conspiracy, domestic terrorism, and financial fraud is a blueprint for future suppression of broad-based movements for racial and climate justice and divestment from

policing. It represents a blatant and transparent attempt to terrorize and neutralize the opponents of Cop City into silence and inaction. These indictments are also intended to drive a wedge between organizers engaged in direct action, mutual aid, and bail support and the thousands of Atlantans who have come out to City Council hearings in opposition to the construction of the facility and signed petitions demanding an electoral referendum to [#StopCopCity](#). The indictment attempts to frighten away potential political and financial supporters by painting a powerful and popular resistance movement with deep roots in Atlanta as a small group of sinister, violent outsiders conspiring to destroy society as we know it.

The indictment is the centerpiece of a broader, blatantly undemocratic strategy to suppress widespread public opposition to the construction of Cop City. Despite the very successful petition for a referendum, the city has refused to place a measure on the ballot that would allow voters to decide whether the facility should be built and [*has published the names and addresses of 116,000 people who signed the petitions in order to intimidate them.*](#)

The City's attempts to block Atlanta residents from having a say have met with widespread and vocal criticism from groups including the [King Center](#), the [NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund](#), and the [Southern Center for Human Rights](#). Over 90 organizations have called for withdrawal of the indictment, including the [Center for Constitutional Rights and Amnesty International](#).

This is a political prosecution, an attempt to indict a movement.

The indictment suggests that everyday practices of neighbors helping neighbors and sharing resources with each other are somehow evidence of wrongdoing. The document implies that “mutual aid,” “solidarity,” and collective approaches are somehow associated with violent intent and criminalized acts. The indictment is also a blatant attempt to discredit both the Atlanta Solidarity Fund, which has consistently supported protest movements and challenged police violence in the city, and other protest-related bail funds.

Finally, the indictment attempts to criminalize commonly used communication channels, community organizing activities, and financial practices by citing the following everyday activities as evidence of a nefarious criminal conspiracy:

- the use of the internet to share ideas;
- the use of common communication channels and privacy tools such as in-person communication, websites, Signal, Twitter, Telegram, Tor, VPNs;
- the use of common strategies for sharing information and perspectives including press releases and press conferences, calls to action, flyers, and ‘zines;

- the use of common forms and practices of protest, including letter writing campaigns, calling and promoting weeks of action, occupations, and keeping the number of an attorney handy in the event of arrest;
- and the use of common financial practices like reimbursing participants for supplies, meals, and trainings.

In fact, under the broad brush the Attorney General is using to paint everyday activities and community organizing, documents like the one you are reading right now could potentially be cited in the next indictment as bogus evidence of criminal intent.

What follows is a section-by-section breakdown of the indictment with commentary, resources for more information, and questions for discussion. We encourage you to use it to read the indictment with friends, family, community members and organizers, and hope it will encourage you to join in resistance to repression.

WHAT HAPPENED ON NOVEMBER 6TH?

While the indictment was filed on August 29, 2023, there has been ongoing confusion about when grand jury arrest warrants were issued and signed for the protesters' arrest.

Since then, people named in the indictment were in limbo, unclear as to when and how they would be required to appear in court and whether they would be able to negotiate to be released on bond pending trial. Several were told by the Attorney General's office that they were required to travel to Georgia on certain dates, only to later learn that no arrest warrants had been signed and that no court appearances were scheduled for those days.

The people accused were arraigned on November 6th. - this means the charges were formally read to the people accused, they had an opportunity to plead not guilty, and the formal case against them begins. The judge in the case required all people named in the indictment to turn themselves in to Fulton County jail – where many who were previously arrested on related charges had had harrowing experiences. All but one (who remains in immigration detention) are expected to be released on consent bonds – meaning that bond will be set and the court, prosecution and defense agree on the conditions for their release.

For more information on arraignments and other criminal court procedures, please visit: <https://beyondcourts.org/en/story>

1. CAPTION

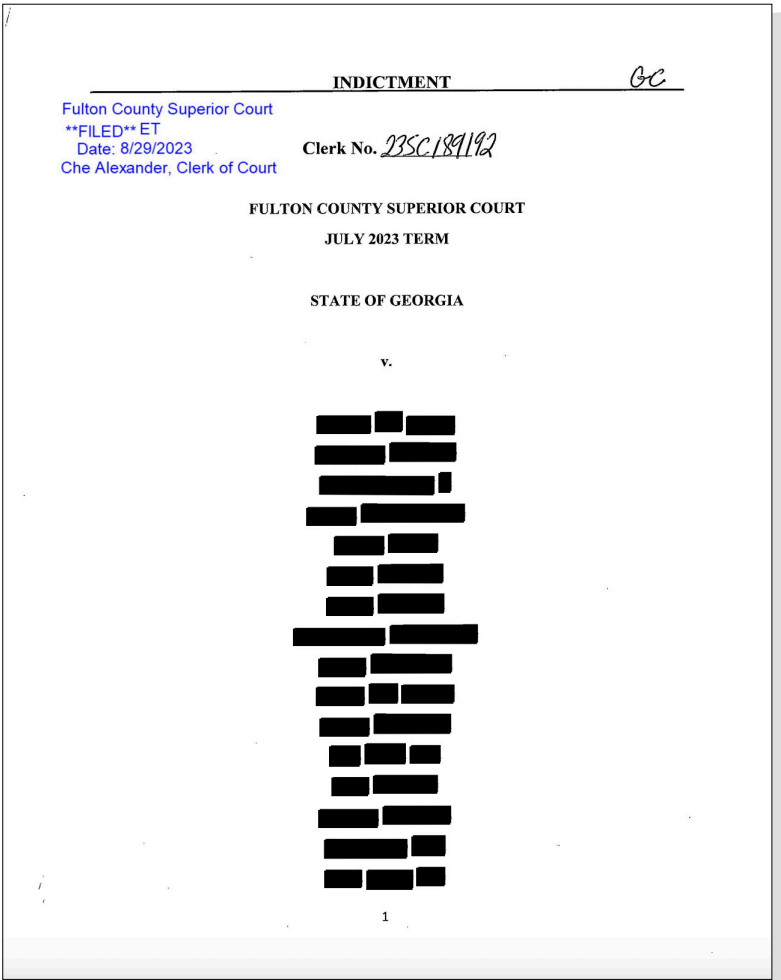
The indictment was filed on August 29, 2023 in Fulton County Superior Court by Georgia Attorney General Chris Carr. In a highly strategic decision intended to legitimize the indictment in the eyes of the public, Carr obtained the indictment from the same grand jury that indicted Donald Trump and his associates for election interference.

While Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis did not join Carr in filing this indictment, she is jointly prosecuting seven related [#StopCopCity](#) cases with him.

Notably, another local district attorney has declined to join Carr in [#StopCopCity](#) prosecutions.

In neighboring DeKalb County (where Cop City is supposed to be built), District Attorney Sherri Boston withdrew from related cases against [#StopCopCity](#) protestors in June, stating that protestors, citing philosophical differences with the Attorney General regarding the charges and noting after a thorough review of the evidence, that she would only proceed on charges that could be proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

Under Georgia law, both state and local prosecutors have jurisdiction over domestic terrorism charges, so Attorney General Carr can prosecute these cases with or without the participation of local district attorneys.



WHO IS CHRIS CARR?

Chris Carr is the Attorney General of Georgia and is part of Brian Kemp's administration. He has made no secret of the fact that he is ying for the Governor's job—and these political prosecutions are a centerpiece of his campaign.

Carr is a former Vice President and General Counsel of the Georgia Public Policy Foundation, a right-wing think tank. He also served as Chief of Staff for a U.S. Senator who supported Donald Trump. His top donors include corporations whose leaders serve on the Executive Committee and Board of Directors of the Atlanta Police Foundation, the entity behind the push to build Cop City.

WHO IS CHRIS CARR
GA ATTORNEY GENERAL
PROFILE OF MAN BOUGHT AND PAID FOR

Quick facts about Chris

- Started career working for Koch Brothers subsidiary
- Former VP of Koch Bro's think-tank
- A passion for making corporations happy. Theme of his campaigns and speeches.
- Former Chief of Staff to Trump Supporting US Senator

On September 5th, GA Attorney General Chris Carr indicted 60+ activists for participating in the #StopCopCity movement.

**Who does Chris Answer to?
Here are his top donors.**

- Centene Corp
- Home Depot
- Jones Day LLP

While he was investigating them for fraud

Atlanta Police Foundation Board Member

Atlanta Police Foundation Board Member

*Carr, and he also worked for Atlanta Brink, LLP, another AIF Board Member

THESE INDICTMENTS ARE A TARGETED POLITICAL ATTACK

BY A BOUGHT AND PAID FOR CORPORATE HACK

RICO charges are not facts. They are just a story the AG tells. We know who is helping Chris Carr tell this story. This indictment is filled with errors and contested accounts. Cop City will NEVER be built.

WHO ARE THE PEOPLE ACCUSED?

The 61 people named in the indictment include students, writers, teachers, therapists, elders, a security guard, and three people who run the Atlanta Solidarity Fund, a bail fund for protesters established in 2016.

42 of the people named in the indictment had been previously arrested and charged with domestic terrorism for activities related to the #StopCopCity campaign:

- o 23 were arrested at a music festival during a March 2023 week of action
- o 19 were arrested in December 2022 and January 2023 and previously charged with domestic terrorism for activities such as “occupying a tree house,” “wearing camouflage and a gas mask,” possessing road flares, and participating in a direct action downtown.

Additionally,

- o 3 people were arrested and charged with financial offenses during a May 2023 pre-dawn raid at the home of Atlanta Solidarity Fund organizers.

- 3 people were arrested and charged with felonies for flyering the neighborhoods of the cops who killed Manuel “Tortuguita” Paez Teran, a [#StopCopCity](#) organizer and forest defender, in January 2023.

Many of the people previously arrested were held in Fulton County jail without bond under abominable conditions for days to weeks. All 48 people previously arrested were eventually released on bond, but one was immediately picked up by ICE and remains incarcerated in a federal facility. The remaining 47 are subject to a no-contact order preventing them from communicating with each other, a banishment order preventing those who do not already live in the city of Atlanta from traveling there, except to attend court, and limitations on their use of social media. These conditions are all intended to isolate and intimidate them and limit their freedom of association, speech, and movement, even though no wrongdoing on their part has been proven.

All 61 people named in the RICO indictment appeared for [arraignment](#) on November 6, 2023.

While nothing in the indictment has been proven, the consequences of the indictment are very real for everyone named in it. The people accused in it are already facing vigilante violence and threats, raising serious concerns for their safety. In some cases, their bank accounts have been frozen or closed, they have lost jobs and been denied educational opportunities, and they are having trouble finding housing—all because of draconian, politically motivated charges against them based on unproven allegations.

The indictment also names “unindicted co-conspirators”— some of whom may be real people who are allegedly “known” to Carr and the grand jury but were not indicted, while others are described as “unknown” – either because they were not named to the grand jury or because they only exist in Carr’s imagination.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- How does the information about Chris Carr’s donors, supporters, and political aspirations shape your understanding of the indictment?
- Imagine having your name published and widely circulated on national news as someone accused of “domestic terrorism” without any context or proof—how do you imagine your daily life would be affected?
- How can you support and [speak up in defense of the people charged?](#)
 - [Donate](#) to support the people accused

- Donate to [legal defense funds](#)
- Call for the indictment to be withdrawn and all charges against #StopCopCity protesters to be dropped.

II. WHAT ARE THE CHARGES?

WHAT IS RICO?

Advent of the RICO Act

The [Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations \(RICO\) Act](#) is U.S. federal legislation (signed into law in 1970) that includes 35 offenses under its umbrella of illegal activities, which range from [murder](#) and [kidnapping](#) to [conspiracy](#) and [extortion](#). Several of the crimes that can be prosecuted as racketeering are [white-collar crimes](#), and many today involve the [Internet](#)—for example, online [gambling](#) rings. Many states have also enacted RICO laws, some of which are considerably broader in scope than the federal statute.

The federal RICO Act was originally devised to help combat [organized crime](#) in the [United States](#). Being able to [prosecute](#) racketeering strengthened the power of federal investigators by opening an avenue to pursue criminal charges that may have been otherwise left to the consideration of individual states. It also created an avenue to bring charges against individuals prospering from crimes that resulted from their orders but not their direct actions, such as a mob boss commanding a hitman. Using racketeering charges, prosecutors could stack seemingly unrelated crimes against an organization instead of just targeting individuals for single crimes. The penalties were also expanded to include minimum sentences that were longer than those that would have been typically applied for a single [crime](#) committed by an individual. Other penalties include fines and forfeiture of property or profits gained during illegal activities.

Racketeering, engaging in a pattern of [illegal](#) scheming and activity for profit. A “racket” is a [fraudulent](#) and often illegal activity that is often carried out by means of [extortion](#) or intimidation. For example, in a protection racket, business owners in an area must pay local criminals to [avoid](#) physical harm or property damage, either by criminals from that organization or a different one.

“ First passed in 1970 to bolster prosecutions of the mafia, RICO laws dramatically expand the state’s ability to prosecute and punish alleged conspirators. Under RICO, the state can aggregate even legal activities as proof of a criminal enterprise pursued by an unsavory lot...

Conspiracy charges are a gift to prosecutors, who can use guilt-by-association connections to criminalize what would otherwise be constitutionally protected activity. They carry stiff penalties: Under the Georgia law, any RICO convictions carry a prison term of up to 20 years and large fines—on top of whatever sentences attend the underlying alleged conspiracy...

When it comes to the left, the state uses RICO to criminalize radicals as thieves and separate them from a broader base of support. Whatever the outcome, the use of RICO is damaging.”

— historian Dan Berger in [RICO, Cop City, and the Long War Against the Left](#)

This is not the first time the RICO statute has been used to stifle dissent. In 1985, former New York City prosecutor and Mayor Rudy Giuliani brought criminal RICO charges against a group of Black organizers known as the [New York 8](#). Unions and union organizers regularly face civil RICO charges (which carry financial penalties but no risk of incarceration) after calling for boycotts and mounting corporate campaigns against abusive employers. In 2013, Fulton County filed RICO criminal charges against a [group of 35 educators made up predominantly of Black women teachers](#).

2022 Georgia Code

Title 16 - Crimes and Offenses

Chapter 14 - Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations

§ 16-14-4. Prohibited Activities

Universal Citation: [GA Code § 16-14-4 \(2022\)](#)

- a. It shall be unlawful for any person, through a pattern of racketeering activity or proceeds derived therefrom, to acquire or maintain, directly or indirectly, any interest in or control of any enterprise, real property, or personal property of any nature, including money.
- b. It shall be unlawful for any person employed by or associated with any enterprise to conduct or participate in, directly or indirectly, such enterprise through a pattern of racketeering activity.
- c. It shall be unlawful for any person to conspire or endeavor to violate any of the provisions of subsection (a) or (b) of this Code section. A person violates this subsection when:
 1. He or she together with one or more persons conspires to violate any of the provisions of subsection (a) or (b) of this Code section and any one or more of such persons commits any overt act to effect the object of the conspiracy; or
 2. He or she endeavors to violate any of the provisions of subsection (a) or (b) of this Code section and commits any overt act to effect the object of the endeavor.

PART I

THE ENTERPRISE

a. Introduction

The purpose of Defend the Atlanta Forest is to occupy of parts or all of 381 forested acres in DeKalb County, Georgia that is owned by Atlanta Police Foundation and leased by the City of Atlanta for the purpose of preventing the construction of the Atlanta Public Safety Training Center. Each individual charged in this indictment knowing joined the conspiracy in an attempt to prevent the training center from being built. That conspiracy contained a common purpose to commit two or more acts of racketeering activity in Fulton County, Georgia, elsewhere in the State of Georgia, and in other states.

and administrators over allegations of cheating on standardized tests—even though teachers in another district were accused of doing the same thing but were not charged. (That prosecution was led by then-Assistant District Attorney Fani Willis.)

What does the state have to prove under the Georgia RICO law?

- o The existence of an “enterprise” or a structured group
- o A pattern of “racketeering activity” or acts “in furtherance” of a conspiracy

The indictment alleges the existence of a criminal organization (“the enterprise”) called “Defend the Atlanta Forest” and claims its purpose is to occupy the forest where the city proposes to build Cop City. In fact, no such organization exists. @DefendTheAtlantaForest is a social media account on Twitter and Instagram.

The indictment claims that the people accused are part of a conspiracy to engage in “racketeering activity” in furtherance of the “conspiracy” to stop the construction of Cop City and the destruction of the forest. It is unclear who is supposed to have profited from this activity, who has been “extorted” to the benefit of the people accused, and how any of the individual actions named in the indictment add up to involvement in a “pattern of racketeering” activity.

In the assessment of expert Georgia civil rights attorney Don Samuels, the 109-page indictment *“doesn’t allege specifically a single racketeering act. Not one. This is a conspiracy case, it is a conspiracy to violate RICO, which is really mind-boggling to*

b. Defend the Atlanta Forest

Defend the Atlanta Forest is a self-identified coalition and enterprise of militant anarchists, eco-activists, and community organizers. Based in Atlanta, this anarchist, anti-police, and environmental activism organization coordinates, advertises, and conducts “direct action” designed to prevent the construction of the Atlanta Police Public Safety Training Center and Shadowbox Studios (previously known as Blackhall Studios) and promote anarchist ideas. This self-proclaimed “direct action” has included vandalizing of private property, arson, destruction of government property, attacks on utility workers, attacks on law enforcement, attacks on private citizens, and gun violence. The purpose of these actions is to prevent the construction of the Atlanta Police Public Safety Training Center and a movie studio, all while promoting virulent anarchist ideals.

imagine what this actually means.”— [Understanding the RICO Indictments Against Stop Cop City Activists](#), National Lawyers Guild.

INDICTING A MOVEMENT

The indictment claims that the people accused are involved in a **conspiracy that began on May 25, 2020, the day George Floyd was murdered by Minneapolis Police Department**, which sparked nationwide protests against police violence and for racial justice. The language of the indictment casts an incredibly wide net, attempting to connect the supposed [#StopCopCity](#) conspiracy to these “demonstrations centered around a message of anti-police violence that arose from a spate of high-profile nationwide police shootings” — which drew over 20 million everyday people across the country into the streets on a single day in June 2020. **In other words, this indictment seeks to frame an entire movement challenging the violence of policing as a criminal enterprise and any critique of police violence as evidence of criminal conspiracy.**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- o How is the state’s effort to paint [#StopCopCity](#) organizers as mobsters through RICO charges playing out in your community? How can you counter these narratives?
- o How does the breadth of the claimed criminal conspiracy make you feel?

- Worried that you might be next?
- Scared to raise money for or take action in support of the people accused?
- Concerned about engaging in acts of solidarity and support with the movement to [#StopCopCity](#)?
- What do you and others in your community need to know or do to address these concerns?
 - Learn more about RICO: watch the [National Lawyers' Guild training](#) about the charges
 - Know Your Rights! Check out the NLG's ["Know Your Rights" for Protesters](#) and the Center for Constitutional Rights' ["If an Agent Knocks"](#)

One intended purpose of the indictment is to fuel these fears and concerns in order to isolate [#StopCopCity](#) organizers from broader movements. Our hope in producing this document is to demystify the indictment and alleviate some of these concerns.

HOW WE FIGHT BACK:

- Speak up! Remember, people have defeated RICO charges and civil suits connected to protest activity & union organizing with broad-based support. Now is not the time to shy away from supporting the people accused in the indictment or the movements they are part of—it is the time to speak out. The more of us who join groups like the Southern Center for Human Rights, the Center for Constitutional Rights, and Amnesty International to [call for withdrawal](#) of the indictment and all charges against the people named in it, the less the state succeeds in suppressing our movements.
- Let's talk about the real extortion rackets!
 - The Atlanta Police Department is extorting almost half of the city's budget in exchange for promises of "safety" they do not and cannot deliver;
 - the Atlanta Police Foundation is extorting the city of Atlanta for \$30+ million dollars to build Cop City;
 - The criminal punishment system extorts bail, bond, fees, fines and diversion costs from low income Black and Brown people while cutting funding for housing, health care, and human needs.

III. "THEY WILL CALL YOU VIOLENT"

In *Let This Radicalize You*, Kelly Hayes and Mariame Kaba call out the state's tried and true tactic of demonizing anyone who resists the status quo as "violent"—in this case, targeting anyone who opposes spending an ever-expanding share of our collective resources on fueling the violence of policing through the construction of Cop City.

112 • Let This Radicalize You

They Will Call You Violent

If your tactics disrupt the order of things under capitalism, you may well be accused of violence, because "violence" is an elastic term often deployed to vilify people who threaten the status quo. Conditions that the state characterizes as "peaceful" are, in reality, quite violent. Even as people experience the violence of poverty, the torture of imprisonment, the brutality of policing, the denial of health care, and many other violent functions of this system, we are told we are experiencing peace, so long as everyone is cooperating. When state actors refer to "peace," they are really talking about *order*. And when they refer to "peaceful protest," they are talking about *cooperative* protest that obediently stays within the lines drawn by the state. The more uncooperative you are, the more you will be accused of aggression and violence. It is therefore imperative that the state not be the arbiter of what violence means among people seeking justice.

In the past, activists frequently leveraged the violence of police, taking actions they believed police would likely respond to with violence, in order to expose the brutality of policing and force the public to witness and confront it. Many of those actions, including protests carried out by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference or the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee during the civil rights movement, took place in a context that was very different from today's world of pervasive mass media. Today people are much more accustomed to witnessing violence, including violence against protesters, as such imagery is shared widely on a regular basis, particularly through social media. The public has largely become inured to such imagery.

The violence of the state in response to protest is rarely scrutinized to the degree that protesters are scrutinized. The idea that if you are defiant in the face of authority you should expect to incur its wrath is firmly entrenched in our culture. When people who defy police are abused, we often hear people ask, "What did they think was going to happen?" The ubiquity of the abuse puts the onus to avoid it on the abused, because they simply "should have known better." Protesters are expected to remain "nonviolent" at all times,

This indictment, clearly a public relations effort sway opinion in a hotly contested fight to #StopCopCity, is a prime example of this tactic. The Attorney General engages in a transparent attempt to isolate and drive a wedge between the public and a popular, decentralized movement of community organizers by painting #StopCopCity organizers and forest defenders as a powerful group of fundamentally violent people who want to overthrow the government.

b. Defend the Atlanta Forest

Defend the Atlanta Forest is a self-identified coalition and enterprise of militant anarchists, eco-activists, and community organizers. Based in Atlanta, this anarchist, anti-police, and environmental activism organization coordinates, advertises, and conducts “direct action” designed to prevent the construction of the Atlanta Police Public Safety Training Center and Shadowbox Studios (previously known as Blackhall Studios) and promote anarchist ideas. This self-proclaimed “direct action” has included vandalizing of private property, arson, destruction of government property, attacks on utility workers, attacks on law enforcement, attacks on private citizens, and gun violence. The purpose of these actions is to prevent the construction of the Atlanta Police Public Safety Training Center and a movie studio, all while promoting virulent anarchist ideals.

c. Anarchy Background of Defend the Atlanta Forest

Anarchy is a philosophy that is opposed to forms of authority or hierarchy. Beginnings of anarchist ideals date back centuries, though usage of the term “anarchy” did not exist until the 1800s. Over time, various philosophical forms of anarchy have emerged. Numerous anarchist philosophies exist, though anarchists are not required to subscribe to one particular belief of anarchy. Rather, the notion of anarchy, being grounded in an anti-authority mindset, primarily targets government because it views government as unnecessarily oppressive. Instead of relying on a modicum of government structure, anarchy relies on human association instead of government to fulfill all human needs. Some of the major ideas that anarchists promote include collectivism, mutualism/mutual aid, and social solidarity, and these same ideas are frequently seen in the Defend the Atlanta Forest movement.

Collectivism is the idea that individual needs are subordinate to the good of the whole society. That is, decisions are made based upon what is best for the group and not necessarily what is best for individuals. In embracing collectivism, individuals are expected to sacrifice personal income, personal liberty, or personal property if it benefits society as a whole. The decision of whether an individual should sacrifice their own individual needs is not made by the individual. Rather, in a true collectivist society, the society as a whole decides whether the individual must forfeit their own needs or property if it is deemed to benefit the society. Nevertheless, in an ideal collectivist society, individuals already make the decision to donate to the collective without prompting from others.

The indictment's not-so-subtle message is "They are using violent tactics to dismantle society as you know it, and they are coming for what's yours."

writings of anarchists. In addition to the term "solidarity," and other anarchist terms, anarchists often weave the term "mutual aid" and "collective" into their jargon and writings.

Violence is part of the anarchism in some anarchist beliefs. Viewing their own violent acts as political violence, violent anarchists attempt to frame the government as violent oppressionists, thereby justifying the anarchists' own violence. Indeed, the belief is that the government is engaging in a form of violence by denying individuals basic needs through capitalism, government action, and law enforcement by police. Anarchists often point to law enforcement as one of the chief violent actors, and they accuse the government of using law enforcement to oppress societal change, and they view the structure of government as inherently oppressive and violent. As a result, violent anarchists often engage in violent activity towards law enforcement, and it is justified because of the anarchist belief that the ends justify the anarchist means. A local anarchist supporting the Stop Cop City movement recently wrote as such:

And, just as Hayes and Kaba describe, the indictment seeks to shift focus away from the violence of police and the state toward the alleged violence of “anti-police, anti-government, anti-development,” “extremist” resistance.

The goal of this message is clear: to undermine popular support for the movement, especially among the Black working class communities located next to the forest, and to feed right-wing narratives about social movements.

objections to Shadowbox Studios and the development of Michelle Obama Park. This way, the group could recruit more members by expanding its message from a simple anti-police message to an anti-government message. Recruiting anti-police, anti-government, and anti-development people from around the country resulted in the Defend the Atlanta Forest group that exists today to conduct acts of violence, intimidation, and property destruction.

g. Defend the Atlanta Forest Overview

Defend the Atlanta Forest is an unofficial, Atlanta-based organization that frames itself as a broad, decentralized, autonomous movement that uses advocacy and direct action to stop the “forest [from being] bulldozed in favor of police and sold out to Hollywood.” Defend the Atlanta Forest does not recruit from a single location, nor do all Defend the Atlanta Forest members have a history of working together as a group in a single location. Nevertheless, the group shares a unified opposition to the construction of the Atlanta Police Department Training Facility, construction companies associated with the project, and companies associated with construction properties in the around surrounding the forest. As the group has grown and recruited, it has evolved into a broader anti-government, anti-police, and anti-corporate extremist organization.

What does the indictment use as evidence that the people it names promote and engage in “anarchist violent extremism”?

- o Acts of vandalism, graffiti, and property destruction—and alleged “gun violence” (this is a reference to the state’s contested claim that Tortuguita was armed and shot at a cop)
- o the use of “symbols associated with anti-fascist movements,” including “a raised clenched fist” and the phrase “ACAB.”
- o public statements and advocacy that purportedly promote “anarchist violent extremism.”

A number of the allegations are based on generalized statements made in a video posted by a “black clad Defend the Atlanta Forest participant” about what they believe to be necessary in the fight to #StopCopCity, referencing global resistance movements, including the Zapatistas and the widely read and cited treatise “Art of War” by 6th century Chinese general Sun Tzu. **The indictment cites no concrete evidence connecting the generalized statements made on the video by an unnamed individual and the actions listed in the indictment, or the people who are accused by it.** Instead, it seeks to raise the specter of violence by repeatedly referencing statements made by a shadowy, anonymous, threatening figure in a video posted online.

THE INDICTMENT IS BUILT ON LIES

The indictment also **falsely claims that the people accused in the indictment have been branded as “domestic violent extremists”** by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, which explicitly denied this allegation in response to an inquiry from Senator Ralph Warnock. In fact, the bulletin cited by the indictment simply reports that Georgia officials have made such allegations—in other words, the state of Georgia is citing its own claims as evidence of them.

The United States Department of Homeland Security has classified the individuals as alleged Domestic Violent Extremists (DVE). In a bulletin posting, the Department of Homeland Security concluded that “alleged DVEs in Georgia have cited anarchist violent extremism, animal rights/environmental violent extremism, and anti-law enforcement sentiment to justify criminal activity in opposition to a planned public safety training facility in Atlanta. Criminal acts have included an alleged shooting and assaults targeting law enforcement and property damage targeting the facility, construction companies, and financial institutions for their perceived involvement with the planned facility.”

Defend the Atlanta Forest frequently uses symbols associated with anarchist movements, to include but not limited to, the capital letter “A” surrounded by a circle, a raised clenched fist, Antifa flags and symbols associated with anti-fascist movements, graffiti which includes these symbols, as well as “Defend the Atlanta Forest,” “Defend the Atlanta Forest,” “Stop Cop City,” “Kill Cops,” “All Cops are Bastards” (ACAB), and “1312” – the numerical equivalent of ACAB. These are prevalent in the area surrounding Intrenchment Creek Park and the neighboring abandoned Old Atlanta Prison farm. Additional graffiti which encourages violence against law enforcement is visible throughout the Atlanta area, and it has appeared in other large cities across the country.

Another egregious example of the indictment’s effort to frame people resisting the violence of policing as the perpetrators of violence is the reference to the police killing of #StopCopCity protester and forest defender Manuel “Tortuguita” Paez Teran during a January 2023 raid of a forest encampment coordinated by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Georgia State Troopers, and members of the Atlanta Police Department.

One of the most common false narratives promoted by Defend the Atlanta Forest is that of police aggression. The purpose of this disinformation campaign is to turn public opinion against law enforcement, thus justifying their violence and destruction of property. On or about January 18, 2023, a Defend the Atlanta Forest member shot a Georgia State Trooper who was assisting in clearing the forest. Troopers returned fire, killing the suspect. Defend the Atlanta Forest immediately began a propaganda campaign against police by claiming that Troopers shot the Defend the Atlanta Forest member first. Despite its efforts to sway public opinion with false information, evidence demonstrated that the Defend the Atlanta Forest member shot the trooper first, and a Scenes Blog posting even admitted that its member shot the trooper first:

“Tortuguita died trying to kill a cop in defense of the Weelaunee forest. . . We attack the same machines that threaten the forest in Atlanta and everything wild. FIRE TO THE EARTH DESTROYERS. Until every cop is dead and all they defend burnt to ashes.”

Defend the Atlanta Forest also operates a website located at defendtheatlantaforest.org where it posts press releases, misleading information, propaganda, and disinformation. Using this website, Defend the Atlanta Forest solicits donations to the Forest Justice Defense Fund. As

The police have offered no concrete evidence that Manuel “Tortuguita” Paez Teran possessed a weapon or shot at anyone, much less a police officer — no gun was found on them or nearby, and their killing has been ruled a homicide by the DeKalb County Medical Examiner. An independent autopsy revealed that they were killed while sitting cross-legged in their tent, with their hands raised in surrender. The indictment relies on a single statement made by an unknown person on an anonymous blog posted online to claim otherwise.

Ultimately, the state’s goal is to brand general statements, advocacy, and acts of resistance to the violence of policing “extremist” in an effort to alienate, isolate and quash movements for racial and climate justice.

The indictment also posits policing as a natural and necessary response to violence, rather than a source of violence, and Cop City as necessary to making policing less violent—when, in fact, the facility is intended to train police in “urban warfare” techniques designed to suppress movements.

eventually ended, but an undercurrent of threatening, violent anti-police sentiment persisted with some individuals in the Atlanta area, including those that make up Defend the Atlanta Forest, and it remains as one of Defend the Atlanta Forest’s core driving motives.

e. The Atlanta Police Public Safety Training Center

In April of 2021, Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms announced the lease of 381 acres in DeKalb County, Georgia from the Atlanta Police Foundation for the purpose of building a police training facility. On September 7, 2021, the Atlanta City Council approved the lease by a 10-4 vote during an open meeting and after public discussion. The land will be used for the development of an 85 acre police/fire training facility that would be built on part of the grounds. The purpose of the police training site is to better train police to deal with Atlanta’s increase in violence while also training law enforcement in de-escalation techniques that avoid unnecessary violence. When completed, the site will be the largest and most advanced police training site in the United States.

“The indictment paints the organizing, which is being done by many different people using different tactics, from a range of ideologies but all opposed to this terrible expansion of police infrastructure, as a criminal conspiracy, and makes getting the word out, supporting criminalized protestors, organizing events, sharing food, and doing direct action all part of that conspiracy..”

The numbered part of the indictment reads like a list-poem about how a campaign works--we buy food, we buy tarps, we recruit members, we do cop watch, we spread the word about what is happening, we reimburse each other for expenses, we bail people out, we flyer, we make calls to action.”

— Dean Spade

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- o How does characterization of words, symbols, individuals and direct actions (including occupations & property damage) as “violent” undermine support for movements?

- o What are some ways to talk about “violence,” direct action, and resistance that counter these effects?

IV. MUTUAL AID

“Law enforcement agencies seeking to repress social movements recognize that mutual aid is a vital part of resistance struggles that seek to change conditions, including movements that oppose the racist policing and punishment system.”
—Dean Spade

Ultimately, the indictment seeks to attack the very concepts of “mutual aid” and “solidarity” by characterizing everyday activities of neighbors helping neighbors as evidence of a criminal enterprise. If that is the case, then who else might be deemed dangerous?

Mutual Aid is a term popularized by anarchists to describe individuals who exchange goods and services to assist other individuals in society without government intervention.

Closely related to collectivism, mutual aid is not a new term, nor is it limited to anarchy.

However, the major factor in anarchist mutual aid is the absence of government and the absence of hierarchy. Indeed, an anarchist belief relies on the notion that once government is abolished, individuals will rely on mutual aid to exist. In doing so, anarchists believe that individuals will work together and voluntarily contribute their own resources to insure that each individual has its own needs met.

Social solidarity is another term that is embraced by anarchists that is tied closely to mutual aid and collectivism. Social solidarity is the idea that individuals can live together without government and can provide for each other. The notion of social solidarity relies heavily on the idea of human altruism; that is, individuals will voluntarily offer goods, services, and resources without anything compelling it. Anarchists often shorten the term “social solidarity” simply into the term “solidarity,” and it is frequently woven into the speeches, statements, and

Some (alleged) famous anarchists by the indictment's logic.

Solidarity is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all

– Pope John Paul II



POPE JOHN PAUL II

(Alleged) famous anarchists continued.

To all people of good will who are working for social justice: never tire of working for a more just world, marked by greater solidarity!

– Pope Francis



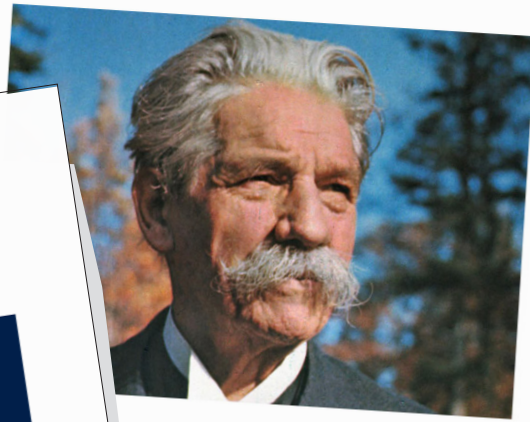
POPE FRANCIS

ALLEGED ANARCHIST

Still more (alleged) famous anarchists!

The first step in the evolution of ethics is a sense of solidarity with other human beings.

-- Albert Schweitzer

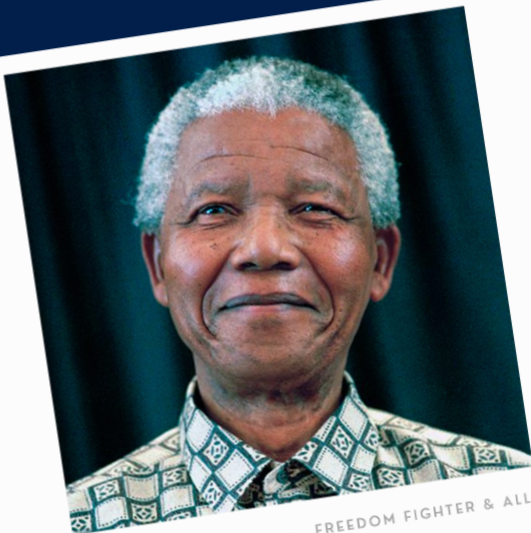


ALLEGED ANARCHIST

One more (alleged) famous anarchist.

As the years progress one increasingly realises the importance of friendship and human solidarity. And if a 90-year-old may offer some unsolicited advice on this occasion, it would be that you, irrespective of your age, should place human solidarity, the concern for the other, at the centre of the values by which you live.

-- Nelson Mandela



NELSON MANDELA

FREEDOM FIGHTER & ALLEGED ANARCHIST

V. FINANCIAL ALLEGATIONS

In the early morning of May 31st, 2023, the Atlanta Police Department raided and searched the home of three individuals who run the Atlanta Solidarity Fund, an organization formed to bail out protesters, and arrested them on charges of financial fraud. These charges are repeated in the more recent indictment.

The basis of these charges is simply that the Solidarity Fund organizers politically and financially supported forest defenders and the movement to [#StopCopCity](#) beyond paying bail when they were arrested. The Attorney General's claim is that they committed fraud by reimbursing organizers, including people who were also occupying the forest as a form of protest and direct action to stop the construction of Cop City, for the costs of signs, food, tarps, ropes, water hoses, tools, porta-potties, a generator, communications equipment, and camping supplies. These charges are clearly part of an effort to discredit the movement to [#StopCopCity](#) by alleging financial improprieties and suggesting that the Solidarity Fund founders are somehow profiting from the mismanagement of donated funds.

In an effort to make innocuous transactions that take place every day in community organizations across the country appear nefarious, the indictment makes a vague reference to “prolific spending,” and includes dozens of pages cataloging reimbursements made to organizers by the Forest Defense Fund, managed by the Solidarity Fund. The majority are for amounts below \$100, for things like water hoses, glue, printed materials, and kitchen supplies.

“Money laundering and charity fraud are central charges here--the indictment suggests that somehow donors were tricked into giving money to this struggle, even though the indictment also goes on at length about how the people soliciting donations were sharing their political perspectives widely, on websites, in zines, and on social media.”

— Dean Spade

The state's argument seems to be that the money used for these expenses was raised under false pretenses, namely for the purposes of aying individual bail, not to reimburse organizers engaged in protest activities. But “charity fraud” requires funds to be used for non-charitable purposes—i.e., for profit or someone's personal benefit, which is clearly not the case here. It also suggests that the organization was hiding

This did not leave that bank account without funds, however; the Atlanta Solidarity Fund simply chooses to only bond out certain individuals with certain belief structures.

██████████ ██████████ ██████████ ██████████ ██████████ created the Forest Justice Defense Fund as an arm of the Network for Strong Communities in July of 2021, and they were the administrators of the Fund. This is the same month as the protests surrounding the shooting of Rayshard Brooks and at the height of protests against police violence. In piggybacking off the momentum of the protests, the Network for Strong Communities began co-mingling funds from its various causes and raising money to support the occupation of the forest where the Atlanta Public Safety Training Center would be built. As a result, good faith donors donated their own money to a certain charitable cause, and the money was spent on the occupation of the forest. support the occupation of Defend the Atlanta Forest and promote anarchist ideas. The various accounts are controlled by ██████████ ██████████ ██████████, and money has been moved via various banks. At times, the various bank accounts supporting the occupation of the forest has had millions of dollars, though the number has dropped at times due to prolific spending by the Network for Strong Communities. Seed money for the Network for Strong Communities was received from a larger political organization, but the significant majority of the funds come from public donation and political donations. The Network for Strong Communities accomplished this fundraising by painting itself as legitimate, law-abiding social justice organization, and as a result, members of the public donated to the organization with the legitimate belief that their monies go to lawful purposes. In 2021 alone, the account received over 70,000 donations from the public. Some donations are very small, ranging from a few cents to a few dollars, and other donations are many thousands of dollars.

what it was doing, when the Solidarity Fund made no secret of its material support of organizers: for instance, in December 2021, the organization publicly announced that it made grants to several community organizations. In fact, the state was able to access the transactions listed in the indictment because the Solidarity Fund uses the Open Collective program to create a publicly available accounting of how it spends the funds

it raises. The state’s effort to suggest that by creating usernames (something each of us does for every online program we use) Solidarity Fund organizers were somehow trying to hide their identities is particularly preposterous.

“But these organizers aren’t frauds out to steal money from unsuspecting donors to spend it on terrorists, as Carr’s indictment suggests. They are people engaged in social movement work to support people in crisis and stop harmful government action.”

— Dean Spade, [Mutual Aid and the Movement to Stop Cop City](#).

“Money laundering” requires that funds acquired through criminalized activity be hidden in a legitimate business, but the indictment contains no allegations that the funds used to reimburse organizers for supplies came from any illicit business.

The indictment cites perfectly legal transfers between organizational accounts as evidence of both “money laundering” and “charity fraud”—even though the funds were both legitimately raised and spent, no funds were transferred between personal and business accounts, and there is no indication of any personal benefit to anyone associated with the Solidarity Fund.

While noting the Solidarity Fund’s explicit purpose of supporting protesters and organizers, the indictment nevertheless seeks to further cast aspersions on the organization by noting that it paid an exorbitant bond set for an individual targeted by the state with a draconian “domestic terrorism” charge while leaving indigent defendants in jail—but the real culprit here is the very state that is lobbying this thinly veiled accusation: by law, indigent people should never be incarcerated based on their inability to pay bail.

Notably, according to the website for the Network for Strong Communities, the Atlanta Solidarity Fund is not primarily designed as a bail fund to pay for bonds of indigent inmates that cannot afford bond. Rather, the Atlanta Solidarity Fund’s primary purpose is to “[provide] support for people who get arrested at protests, or otherwise prosecuted for their movement involvement.” A recent example includes posting a \$392,000 cash bond for a Defendant charged with Domestic Terrorism while indigent defendants remained incarcerated as pre-trial detainees.

The indictment’s efforts to intimidate, smear, and criminalize a community bail fund should be of concern to all of us, because it signals that all mutual aid efforts, whether bail funds, community food pantries, abortion or gender affirming care funds, or groups providing assistance to migrants, are potential targets for such baseless claims of “fraud.”

“Abortion care and advocacy has always relied on mutual aid, solidarity, and other principles highlighted by the Stop Cop City indictment. Without these ideals, abortion funds, networks, and advocacy organizations would not be able to operate effectively. But in the state’s view, the desire to directly help one’s community is evidence of a criminal, anti-state enterprise.”

— Nneka Ewulonu, [RICO repercussions: how threats to Stop Cop City implicate reproductive justice](#)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What questions do these charges bring up for you or people in your community? Are you now concerned about:
 - submitting receipts to an organizing group for reimbursement?
 - hosting a fundraiser for Stop Cop City?
 - donating to the bail fund, legal defense fund, or Vote to Stop Cop City?
 - Donating to a local bail fund, abortion fund, or mutual aid fund?
- How might you address these concerns?
- All of these activities are perfectly legal—but one goal of the indictment is to have us second guessing the risks of supporting social movements and mutual aid efforts.
- How can we engage in individual and collective political education around mutual aid and bail funds?
 - Watch this video with legal workers, bail fund organizers and abortion fund organizers: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M3qvlHdZ73E>
 - Check out these [legal resources](#) and [legal guide](#) for mutual aid programs
 - Reach out to [A Bookkeeping Coop](#) for a consultation if you have an accounting question or your mutual aid project (sliding scale available)

VI. COMMUNICATIONS & SAFEGUARDS

i. Communication

Communication from the Defend the Atlanta Forest management is conducted in many ways. Indeed, communication among the Defend the Atlanta Forest members is often cloaked in secrecy using sophisticated technology aimed at preventing law enforcement from viewing their communication and preventing recovery of the information. Members often use the dark web via Tor, use end-to-end encrypted messaging app Signal or Telegram, or use hand-held radios such as walkie-talkies while in the forest. Additionally, Defend the Atlanta Forest uses websites to broadly instruct its members on where to go and what to do. The communication paints itself as a “call to action” so that its appearance is benign; nevertheless, Defend the Atlanta Forest members are aware of the purpose of these calls to action, and they include violence and property damage. A final way that the Defend the Atlanta Forest members communicate is in person. A loose network of homes and buildings around the East Atlanta area serve as places where Defend the Atlanta Forest members can received “mutual aid” and remain “in solidarity” with other Defend the Atlanta Forest members.

Just as the indictment frames everyday activities such as neighbors helping neighbors, mutual aid, solidarity, or reimbursing people for every day expenses, it also cites everyday communication tools used by all kinds of people of all political stripes for all kinds of purposes as evidence of criminal intent, including websites, the internet, Twitter, Signal, Telegram, and walkie-talkies. The indictment even goes so far as to suggest that engaging in in-person communication reflects an intention to violate the law!

The indictment also points to common measures protesters use to protect themselves from the very kind of state repression the indictment represents as evidence of criminal intent, rather than as evidence of the violent repression of the state.

Similarly, in an effort to bootstrap common strategies used by mutual aid programs and social services into a criminal enterprise, the indictment frames providing material support to protesters as a deliberate effort to manipulate people into loyalty.

In addition to handing out documents, individuals who join Defend the Atlanta Forest are offered financial, personal, and emotional support to remain loyal to the movement. Indeed, the “Forest Defenders,” are provided with monetary, emotional, and personal support during their occupation of the forest, during their incarceration, and after their incarceration. The discussions of support often refer to providing “mutual aid” and “solidarity.” In addition to providing monetary and emotional support, there is preparation for arrest. Most “Forest Defenders” are aware that they are preparing to break the law, and this is demonstrated by premeditation of attacks. Preparation efforts including efforts to avoid detection, plans to disguise their identity, and preparation in case of arrest despite efforts to avoid capture. Preparation includes, but is not limited to, disguising their face, bringing changes of clothing to blend in after the crime is committed, hiding in crowds, and using technology avoidance devices such as Faraday bags and burner phones, and memorizing or writing the Atlanta Solidarity Fund’s phone number on their body in case of arrest. Shortly afterward, in an effort to de-legitimize the facts as relayed by law enforcement and to keep the loyalty of the Forest Defendants, members of Defend the Atlanta Forest often contact news media and flood social media with claims that their unlawful actions are protected by the First Amendment.

While legally baseless, these allegations are intended to stoke fear in organizing communities and chill communication.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Which of these communications and strategies to stay safe from state surveillance and violence have you used?
- Who else uses them? (i.e. Proud Boys, January 6th insurrectionists, etc.)
- What does it mean for the state to use our efforts to minimize the impacts of its suppression and repression of protest movements against us?

VII. MEDIA, FLYERS AND 'ZINES

Similarly, the indictment attempts to turn common communication strategies—like press releases and press conferences, issued and held almost daily by virtually every organization from the White House to local police departments in an effort to “control the story and promote their own narrative”—as well as publications much like the one you are reading right now as evidence of nefarious intent and purpose.

The indictment’s effort to frame ‘zines as a uniquely dangerous form of communication is particularly preposterous.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF 'ZINES, REFERENCED THREE TIMES IN THE INDICTMENT AS A METHOD OF COMMUNICATION USED BY #STOPCOPCITY ORGANIZERS, BY IC CREATIVE DIRECTOR EVA NAGAO:

‘Zines, shorthand for magazines, are self-published booklets, usually narrow in focus, non-commercial, and often easily reproduced. They come in many different forms, but are generally small-circulation, and usually inexpensive or free. Self-publishing has always included unconventional political ideas, but it is not the sole property of (or even primarily identified with) anarchists. ‘Zines are beloved by many generations of artists and free thinkers as a way to share ideas without interference from publishing gatekeepers or corporate interests.

Most collections date the roots of ‘zine history to the invention of the printing press, which enabled authors to more easily self-publish small batches of pamphlets. Early versions of ‘zines feature largely throughout history: Martin Luther’s 95 Theses, Thomas Payne’s Common Sense, and even Benjamin Franklin’s Poor Richard’s Almanack are often cited as examples.

In the United States, ‘zines began to flourish in the 20th century. Examples include women’s suffrage pamphlets (Solitude of Self), and the “little magazines” of the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s (Fire!!); science fiction “fanzines” shared at conferences in the 1930s (The Comet); and the beat poetry chapbooks of the 1940s (Howl). With the invention of the mimeograph in the 1930s, xerography in the 1940s, and the proliferation of typewriters, offset printing, and photocopy shops in the 1960s, ‘zine-making skyrocketed in numerous subcultures and marginalized communities, cementing ‘zines role as a part of avant garde political, literary, and music cultural production for decades to come.

'Zines have a long and illustrious history of providing spaces for voices excluded from mainstream and traditional publishing and press. Challenging ideas and authority — from British rule of the colonies in America to the 1967 cancellation of Star Trek after two seasons — has always been a part of 'zine culture. When most people think of 'zines, they think of the gritty, cut-and-paste, photocopied booklets circulating in the 1970s and playing a major role in the punk music scene throughout the 1980s and into the Riot grrl 'zine era of the 1990s, an integral part of the third wave feminist movement. 'Zines, historically embedded in counterculture, are right at home in the punk ethos of “do-it-yourself” non-conformity, and direct action. Pamphlets were punk before “zines” or punk existed.

'Zines have long been a refuge for literary experimentation (Dada), sexual expression (Vice Versa), outspoken political commentary (Southern Horrors), underground solidarity (Girl Germs), and book art. Most major library, university, and museum collections — The Library of Congress, Harvard's Schlesinger Library, Tate Britain — feature a wide array of zines throughout history, with a diverse collection of authors and aims. To say that dissemination of information through 'zines is evidence of criminal intent is preposterous.

Anarchist zines instruct its members on how to effectively promote its political messages while also promoting the false idea that the group is non-violent. These publications are used to teach and influence Defend the Atlanta Forest members and recruits on how to deal with the media to promote its political message. An example of one of the publications is “Talking to the Media: A Guide for Anarchists.” Telling its members to “have extremely low expectations” of the media, the zines paint the media as its enemy by writing that “you are a carnival freak for Homo Journalisticus,” and tells the reader that the media will immediately condescend to them. As such, the publications instruct the Defend the Atlanta Forest member how to manipulate the media to take up as much column space or television time as possible. Following these instructions, Defend the Atlanta Forest holds media-attended press conferences to control the story and promote their own narrative.

Anarchists publish their own zines and publish their own statements because they do not trust the media to carry their message. Defend the Atlanta Forest documentation recommended publishing zines and conducting publicity on their own because “the best advice is to trust a reporter about as far as you can throw them” because they view media “as lying scum, and it's best to treat them as such.” This is why Defend the Atlanta Forest anarchists often publish their own documents or conduct their own press conferences instead of allowing the media to report the story.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What 'zines have you created? Read? Used in your organizing?
- What made them effective?
- How might you use 'zines to engage in political education in your community about the fight to Stop Cop City?

VIII. PROTEST TACTICS AS "DOMESTIC TERRORISM"

The domestic terrorism charges filed against [#StopCopCity](#) organizers are clearly intended to chill protest activity. The Georgia "domestic terrorism" statute has been roundly critiqued by legal scholars as overbroad, potentially criminalizing activities ostensibly protected by the First Amendment. For instance, "critical infrastructure," as defined by the statute, could be interpreted to include virtually any potential target of protests. Definitions of "intimidation" and "coercion" are so broad that they could also reach tactics previously deemed protected by the First Amendment, such as flyering, boycotts, and other collective actions undertaken to influence public and corporate policy. The statute also covers actions that cause "major economic loss," potentially criminalizing boycotts and other efforts undertaken to put financial pressure on corporations to change their policies or practices. The statute is already the subject of a legal challenge in a related case.

The majority of people accused of "domestic terrorism" in the indictment were arrested at a concert held in the Weelaunee forest on March 5, 2023 during a week of action. The state has offered no proof of direct involvement in any criminalized activity, instead claiming that the accused joined an "organized mob and succeeded in overwhelming the police force, thereby aiding and abetting in the offense of Arson and Domestic Terrorism in an attempt to occupy the DeKalb forest and prevent the building of the Atlanta Public Safety Training Center." In other words, the basis for "domestic terrorism" charges against a group of individuals arrested more than a mile away from the location where a piece of construction machinery was set on fire is that the police were not able to stop the fire from happening.

The remaining people accused of "domestic terrorism" engaged in a direct action involving property damage at the Peachtree Center, a downtown area that it would be a stretch to characterize as "critical infrastructure."

Ultimately, the indictment seeks to suppress opposition to the construction of Cop City and to chill dissent by framing common forms and practices of protest, such as recruiting people to a cause, participating in, calling, and promoting weeks of action, letter writing campaigns, boycotts, corporate campaigns, cultural events, occupations, and direct actions as acts of “terrorism.”

2022 Georgia Code
Title 16 - Crimes and Offenses
Chapter 11 - Offenses Against Public Order and Safety
Article 6 - Domestic Terrorism
§ 16-11-220. Definitions

Universal Citation: [GA Code § 16-11-220 \(2022\)](#)

As used in this article, the term:

1. “Critical infrastructure” means publicly or privately owned facilities, systems, functions, or assets, whether physical or virtual, providing or distributing services for the benefit of the public, including, but not limited to, energy, fuel, water, agriculture, health care, finance, or communication.
2. “Domestic terrorism” means any felony violation of, or attempt to commit a felony violation of the laws of this state which, as part of a single unlawful act or a series of unlawful acts which are interrelated by distinguishing characteristics, is intended to cause serious bodily harm, kill any individual or group of individuals, or disable or destroy critical infrastructure, a state or government facility, or a public transportation system when such disability or destruction results in major economic loss, and is intended to:
 - A. Intimidate the civilian population of this state or any of its political subdivisions;
 - B. Alter, change, or coerce the policy of the government of this state or any of its political subdivisions by intimidation or coercion; or
 - C. Affect the conduct of the government of this state or any of its political subdivisions by use of destructive devices, assassination, or kidnapping.
3. “Public transportation system” means all facilities, conveyances, and instrumentalities, whether publicly or privately owned, that are used in or for publicly available services for the transportation of individuals or cargo.
4. “Serious bodily harm” means harm to the body of another by depriving him or her of a member of his or her body, by rendering a member of his or her body useless, or by seriously disfiguring his or her body or a member thereof.
5. “State or government facility” means any permanent or temporary facility or conveyance that is used or occupied by representatives of this state or any of its political subdivisions, by the legislature, by the judiciary, or by officials or employees of this state or any of its political subdivisions.

IX. DISARMING THE INDICTMENT

How do we counter the state's effort to frame our resistance to the violence of policing as violent, to criminalize our efforts to support each other through mutual aid, to make us scared of communicating our visions and strategies for a world free from violence, and to drive wedges between organizers and the communities we are part of through high profile political prosecutions?

We must respond with courage, not fear, while exercising wisdom and discernment. We need to demystify the charges in the indictment and the absence of any underlying basis for them and call for the state to drop them immediately. We need to name the political agendas and players behind it and call out the ways in which it seeks to divide us. We need to talk about it, and the struggle to [#StopCopCity](#), with our families, neighbors, friends, comrades, colleagues, and community members, using this document and the discussion questions it offers or those we come up with on our own. The indictment makes clear what is at stake for our movements—our ability to collaborate and collectively resist criminalization, policing, and the suppression of dissent, and the misappropriation of our collective resources to fund our repression at the expense of our survival.

We also need to recognize the seriousness of the threat to the individuals charged and the potential criminalization of our own organizing activity without letting these things silence us. RICO and domestic terrorism charges carry heavy penalties, including a lifetime in prison. The indictment, like the criminal punishment system more broadly, uses our words and actions against us and each other. That does not mean, however, that we should be afraid to speak out and to support the movement materially and politically—to the contrary, the more people who do so, the better. They can't indict us all. But it does mean we need to use our best judgment about what we say, where and how we say it, and to whom, including the media, with the knowledge that the state will weaponize our words and actions against us. This is not the time for faux and ill-informed bravado that places other people, including those charged, at greater risk. The critical question is this: how can we support the people charged and further our collective goals without further jeopardizing anyone?

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