

“Power is always dangerous. Power attracts the worst and corrupts the best.” Edward Abbey



*Prior to a settler tour, streets are cleared by Israeli Occupation Forces. Photo Courtesy of Robyn McBurney.*

## What Palestine Taught Me About Steadfastness— and What Americans Must Learn

By Robyn McBurney

I crossed the border into Palestine thinking I was prepared.

I had read the history. I had studied the language. I have a degree in Middle Eastern and North African Studies, focused largely on the Palestinian liberation struggle. I watched footage, listened to testimonies. I knew the vocabulary of occupation — checkpoints, settlements, raids, administrative detention, “closed military zones.” I knew the talking points Americans repeat to sound informed without acknowledging culpability, while our representatives pay lip service to peace and fund genocidal campaigns at home and abroad.

What I didn’t know — what you cannot know until you stand inside it — is what it does to your nervous system to live

under a regime built not only to control movement but to control dignity.

Within a day of arriving, I was strip-searched by the Israeli army because they suspected I might speak Arabic.

Let that sink in. Not because of something I did. Not because of a weapon. Not because of a crime or threat. Because of a language — because I might understand what was being said around me, because I might be visiting Palestine rather than the occupying tourist trap. Imagine the global uproar if Italy refused to allow Catholics into the Vatican because it disapproved of the Pope’s politics.

The soldiers shouting in my face were young enough to be teenagers, armed like they were patrolling a battlefield. The

**PALESTINE on Page THREE**

# WE ARE THE CANARY: Why Trans People Know Exactly What's Coming

By Ashley Stahl

When we were growing up, we all asked: "How did people let the Holocaust happen?" Teachers talked about Hitler's charisma, economic desperation, and propaganda. But they never explained how millions of ordinary people watched their neighbors disappear and did nothing. We're not asking anymore. Because we're watching it happen right now.

Trans people are living through the early stages of what happened in 1930s Germany. Not the death camps—we're not there yet—but the lead-up. The legal framework. The social permission. And when people accuse us of being hysterical for making Nazi comparisons, they're telling on themselves. Trans people are the canary in the coal mine for authoritarianism. And right now, the canary is screaming.

In 1933, the Nazis burned the Institut für Sexualwissenschaft in Berlin, the world's first center for transgender health care and queer research. They had decades of research on gender identity, performed gender-affirming surgeries, and maintained patient records for hundreds of trans people. Those iconic images of Nazis burning books? Most of the books were from the Institute. They destroyed our history, our health care, our documentation in one night.

On his first day in office in January 2025, Trump signed an executive order declaring the United States "will not fund, sponsor, promote, assist, or support the so-called 'transition' of a child from one sex to another." By December 2025, the admin-

istration had cut off federal Medicaid and Medicare funding from hospitals providing gender-affirming care to children. Twenty-five states banned or restricted this care. Scientific research grants mentioning LGBTQ+ topics were revoked. A suicide prevention lifeline for trans youth was canceled.

After burning the Institute, the Nazis erased trans people from official records. They made it illegal to present as a gender different from your assigned sex. They confiscated identification papers.

On January 20, 2025, Trump issued an executive order mandating the federal government recognize exclusively "an individual's immutable biological classification as either male or female," declaring gender identity "false" and "corrosive." The State Department stopped issuing passports with "X" gender markers. In November 2025, the Supreme Court allowed this policy, forcing trans people to carry documentation that outs us. The Social Security Administration no longer permits gender marker updates.

The Nazis used "protecting children" to justify anti-queer legislation. They claimed we were corrupting youth, groomers and predators.

Listen to today's rhetoric: "Groomer." "Protecting children." "Gender ideology extremism." Trump's January 28 executive order froze federal funding while assessing grants for "Marxist equity, transgenderism, and green new deal social engineering policies." Hundreds of books



*Costume Party at the Institut für Sexualwissenschaft, Unknown Date. Unknown Photographer. Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld (glasses) holds hands with his partner Karl Giese.*

## Get Involved!

**Solidarity Not Charity**  
Free Food for Free People  
Feeds every Saturday at 4pm  
3rd St. & South Ave. Grand Jct.  
solidaritynotcharitygjinfo@gmail.com

**Falconer Workers' Society**  
Anti-Capitalist and Revolutionary Book Club  
Grand Junction. Email for an invite.  
falconerworkerssociety@gmail.com

**The Vagina Monologues**  
Feb. 20th, 7pm  
Feb. 21st, 7pm  
Feb. 22nd, 3pm  
UUs of the Grand Valley  
536 Ouray Ave., Grand Jct.  
Tickets \$10 in Advance \$12 at the door  
threesisterstheaterco.com

**Colorado Rapid Response Network**  
West Slope Confirmer Trainings!  
  
**Edwards** 2/11, 5:30pm  
**Gypsum** 2/17, 5:30pm  
bit.ly/eagleCORRntraining  
  
**Grand Junction** 2/14  
mesacountyconfirmer@proton.me

**Be the Media!**  
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**The Revolutionist**  
therevolutionistgj@gmail.com

**Durango Food Not Bombs**  
Every Sunday 2pm to 4pm  
Buckley Park  
1200 Main Ave.  
Durango, Colo

**GJ Indivisible Pop-Up Protest**  
12-1pm every Tuesday and Thursday at various locations.  
igjpopups@gmail.com

**Join your local Democratic Socialists of America (DSA)**  
**Contact your local chapter:**  
Mesa County: info@mesadsa.org  
GarCo: CAD.Garfield.county.DSA@proton.me  
YDSA @ CMU: cmuydsa@protonmail.com

**Black Citizens and Friends**  
Black History Live: Paul Robeson  
Feb. 24th, 12pm  
Central Branch of Mesa County Public Library

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## BRIEFS from Page THIRTEEN

### ICE Agents Guilty of Rape

The *Pacific Antifascist Research Collective* released a report containing 30 ICE and BPC agents that have been convicted of sexual assault and domestic violence. The research has been verified and republished by the Ohio Immigrant Alliance. Recent cases include that of Luis Uribe, who was indicted in December 2025, for numerous gunpoint rapes in the Chicago area. Uribe targeted sex workers. In January, Efrén Lopez Cornejo, a Tucson Border Patrol Agent, was sentenced to lifetime parole but no jail time for 14 felonies, including child molestation. Additionally, David Courvelle, a Geo Group detentions officer, plead guilty to sexual abuse of a detainee in a GEO Group facility in Louisiana in December.

### O&G Leases Again Receive No Bids

On January 15, the Bureau of Land Management attempted to auction off oil and gas rights for 20,000 acres of public lands in Colorado; the parcels received no bids. The parcels previously received no bids in an auction in December, where only 60 percent of leases received bids. The Big “Brutal” Bill contained provisions to open up large swaths of public land to extractive industries, seemingly without even consulting the industry.

### Journalist Under Fire

January was not a good month for journalists. On January 14, Hannah Natanson, a *Washington Post* reporter, had her home raided by the FBI and her notes and computers confiscated. On January 21, an air strike in Gaza targeted and killed three journalists, including Abed Shaat, a cameraman for CBS. On the front lines in Minneapolis, at least six journalists have been violently assaulted by federal forces. Even well-known journalist Don Lemmon and his producer have been arrested for covering a protest at church led in part by the region's ICE supervisor. Lemmon has been threatened with a 40-year prison sentence by the MAGA regime.

### Appeasement Not on EU's Agenda

At Davos, Europe presented a united front against the MAGA regime's ambitions in Greenland. Additionally, NATO deployed

a “trip wire” force composed of soldiers from many nations to Greenland ahead of planned NATO drills. Trump has since changed his tune.

### ICE Leaves Death Cards in Eagle

*Voces Unidas*, a Latino and Immigrants rights organization serving the central Rockies, has reported an increase in ICE activity in Eagle, Garfield and Pitkin Counties. In a number of cases, *Voces* reports that “death cards” were placed in vehicles of the victims for their families to find.



### AI Surveillance State Insider Running in CO3

Alex Kelloff is just one of two Democrats running for Colorado's third congressional district. Voters should be concerned by his CV, which is dominated by managing the money of the billionaire class and advancing the AI surveillance state. Especially concerning is his experience with Booz Allen Hamilton. Booz Allen Hamilton, famously, was the National Security Agency contractor that employed whistleblower Edward Snowden, and has close ties to Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.

### Rev Exposes Fake ICE Tracking Website

In between issues, we broke a story online about a fake ICE tracker website. We exposed the site as AI slop — spreading disinformation and likely harvesting users' data for unknown nefarious purposes. Twelve days later, *ice-tracker.info* was pulled down. Make sure to follow us online. [therevolutionistgj.org](http://therevolutionistgj.org) and on Facebook, Insta, Blusky, and Substack.

## PALESTINE from Page ONE

power differential was the point. The humiliation was the point. Even the casualness of it — the curtain opening, another soldier looking at my uncovered body and leaving without explanation — was part of the design: You are not entitled to privacy. You are not entitled to comfort. You are not entitled to respect.

And then, after hours of escalation, I was allowed through. A pat down turned into a smile. The same woman who'd forced me to expose my body told me she hoped I'd “enjoy Israel.”

That whip-lash is intentional. Occupation isn't just brutality; it's the constant reminder that your treatment is arbitrary, dispensed at the whim of individuals and a system that will never have to justify itself to you.

When

Americans talk about Palestine, many treat it like an abstract moral debate. A policy issue. A “complex conflict.” But in Palestine, the architecture of control is unmistakable.

In Al Khalil (Hebron), where I volunteered, occupation isn't hidden behind euphemisms. It's a daily, physical presence: armed soldiers posted at choke points, surveillance cameras fixed like unblinking eyes, streets closed on command, rooftops turned into sniper perches, shop fronts shuttered not by economics but by military orders, sometimes permanently.

And then there are the settlers.

If you've never walked through a city where illegal settlers live above Palestinian families — literally above them — dumping trash and contaminated water onto the streets below, you might still be-

lieve the lie that this is a normal neighbor dispute. It isn't. It's displacement by denied permits, harassment in uniform, theft with tour guides.

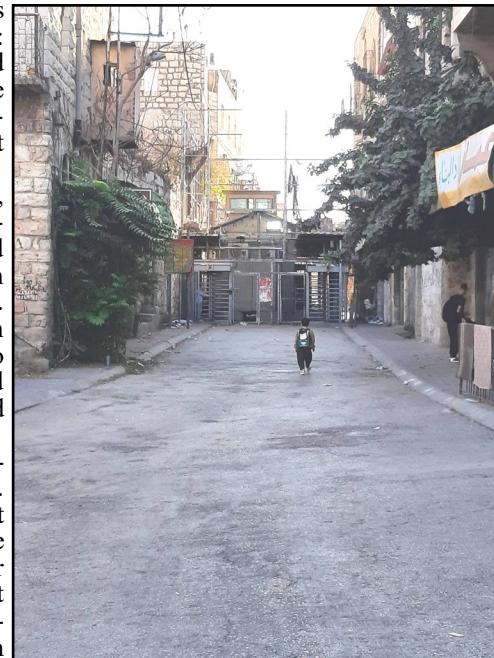
Yes, tour guides. In Hebron, soldiers clear Palestinians from their own streets so groups of potential settlers — often from abroad — can walk through the Old City and imagine themselves inheriting someone else's homes and shops. The army puts on a show. The streets become a stage. Rifles and live ammunition are props. The message is choreographed: Your home is not yours, even if your grandparents built it. Even if your children were born here. Zionist graffiti and political banners around Al Khalil declare “Palestine never existed, and never will.”

I watched families with strollers roll down streets cleared at gunpoint minutes earlier of local children playing

soccer. I watched journalists get threatened for filming it, laser sights trained on marked press. I watched the occupation outdo itself daily, confident in its impunity.

And yet — this is what I need Americans to understand — Palestinians endure all of this while still insisting on life.

They insist on school, even when it's reduced to three days a week as teachers go unpaid. They insist on prayer, even when checkpoints become holding pens and soldiers delay worshippers past prayer time. They insist on harvesting their crops, even when settlers show up masked and in groups to beat them off their land. They insist on working, opening shops under wire netting meant to catch what's maliciously thrown from above. They insist on community, offering coffee and candy to



*Palestinian child approaches Checkpoint 56 in Al-Khalil. Photo Courtesy of International Solidarity Movement.*

volunteers at dawn, thanking us for simply bearing witness.

This is steadfastness. Sumud. Not passive suffering. Not quiet acceptance. A disciplined, deliberate refusal to disappear.

In the U.S., we love the aesthetics of resistance. We quote Dr. King and Katiniss and post black-and-white photos of marches. We buy shirts that say “Be the change.” We treat courage like a brand.

But Palestinians practice something harder: endurance without applause.

They practice it when there is no trending hashtag, no sympathetic cable news segment, no promise of justice in their lifetime. They practice it knowing tomorrow will likely bring another demolition, another raid, another neighbor martyred — and still, they go on. They practice it knowing this isn’t a string of isolated incidents but a system designed to make life unlivable.

Americans, by contrast, are conditioned to quit when resistance becomes inconvenient. We confuse discomfort with danger. We’re encouraged to believe that if a problem doesn’t yield to a phone call, a vote, or a viral post, it must be unsolvable — or worse, not worth our time. We have a protest culture that treats showing up once as the moral equivalent of dedicated organizing.

Palestine exposes that fragility.

Because Palestinians don’t get to “take a break from politics.” Politics shows up as an armed teenager at your door. As a gate that won’t open. As a roadblock that turns a 40-minute commute into three hours. As a “closed military zone” that includes your family’s olive grove. As a

bureaucracy that holds bodies hostage from grieving families — by policy.

And nevertheless, they persist.

If you’re an American reading this, you might feel the urge to ask, “What can I do?” Sometimes that question is genuine. Sometimes it’s a way to soothe our guilt by turning horror into a checklist. So here’s the harder question: What are you willing to sustain?



The aftermath of pre-dawn firebombing of Mashhour Sidqi Al-Tamimi's tailor shop in Al-Khalil's Old City. Photo Credit Robyn McBurney.

Palestinians don’t need Americans to feel sorry for them. They need Americans to stop funding, excusing, and normalizing the machinery that crushes them — politically, economically, culturally. They need us to recognize that “neutrality” in the face of apartheid is not neutrality; it is collaboration.

Palestine taught me that oppression depends on people in the imperial core being willing to look away. Intimidation works best when no one’s watching. Sometimes, merely filming — merely standing there — changes the calculus. Not always. But sometimes. The presence of eyes matters. Why else do they wait for global attention to wane before ramping up killings? Like clockwork.

It also taught me that steadfastness is contagious. I saw it in shopkeepers

Heads Roll in Telluride Post-Strike

The recent strike by the Telluride Ski Patrol exposed the naked reality of resort towns across the state, namely that they are company towns whose economic stability and community health are at the whims of aloof billionaires. During the strike, elected officials from both Telluride and Mountain Village attempted to broker a secret deal with Telski’s owner, Chuck Horning, where the towns would buy a 51 percent share in the resort. The ensuing controversy has led to the resignation of Mountain Village Mayor Marti Prohaska and Telluride Mayor-Pro Meehan Fee.

Sex Shop Becomes Mutual Aid Hub

One of the many inspirational stories of solidarity and community coming out of all the violence and heart break in Minneapolis is that of the Smitten Kitten, a feminist/queer-owned and -operated radical sex shop. The Smitten Kitten has become a hub for mutual aid and community defense in action. The Smitten Kitten and her staff have raised funds and distributed mountains of supplies to those hiding from ICE, as well as aid for those on the streets documenting and resisting.

Vallario Calls It Quits; Loya Makes Bid

Lou Vallario, the controversial and long-standing sheriff in Garfield County, is retiring. Lou has come under increasing fire for his unwavering support and aid of federal immigration enforcement and his general disregard for Colorado law. But this is not an opportunity to celebrate—his hand-picked protege, Dan Loya, has announced his candidacy. Loya, currently an under-sheriff in Eagle County, has some concerning baggage. Loya was the deputy whose disregard of legal process crippled the 2003 Kobe Bryant rape case in Vail. He is also currently being sued for the wrongful death of Ian David Lockhart. If elected, he will likely follow in Vallario’s legally questionable footprints.

Hottest, Driest Winter on Record

This winter is shaping up to be the driest, warmest winter ever recorded in Colorado. Most basins hover between 50 to 60 percent of normal snowpack. Some scientists

are saying this has been the warmest winter in 1,000 years. Recent ice fishing tournaments at Vallecito reservoir in southern Colorado and Stage Coach reservoir in northern Colorado were canceled due to the lack of ice.

Tina Peters on Camera Assaulting Inmate

Tina Peters’ case has become a national shit show, with Trump demanding her release and Polis considering it. Footage was recently released that shows Tina assaulting another female prisoner, grabbing the much smaller woman by the throat. That cannot help her appeal. Readers shouldn’t forget that she assaulted a GJPD officer when she was arrested, and she assaulted a well-known local reporter during her trial.



Sanctions Have Killed 38 Million Since 1970

In what is certainly the most censored story of the past month, the *Lancet Journal of Global Health* published a study by Denver University Professor Francisco Rodriguez that finds that unilateral U.S. and Western sanctions killed at least 38 million people between 1971 and 2021. The report found that “Sanctions have substantial adverse effects on health conditions in target countries, effects similar in magnitude to those of armed conflict.” Rodriguez told the *Rev*, “the more that can be done to disseminate these findings, the better, particularly in terms of strengthening public debate on a key issue.”

## POETS from page ELEVEN

before his bloody execution by firing squad. It reads:

My Will is easy to decide,  
For there is nothing To divide  
My kin don't need to fuss and moan—  
"Moss does not cling to a rolling stone"  
My body? — Oh! — If I could choose  
I would want to ashes it reduce,  
And let The merry breezes blow  
My dust to where some flowers grow  
Perhaps some fading flower then  
Would come to life and bloom again  
This is my Last and Final Will. —  
Good Luck to All of you.

At Hill's well-attended funeral, former Grand Junction bookstore owner, Wobbly, and socialist George Falconer sang:

"Long-haired preachers come out every night

***These are the rare moments in history where the veil can be pierced, the illusion can be shattered, where we can glimpse behind the curtains, and our best tool is always our creativity***

Try to tell you what's wrong and what's right  
But when asked about something to eat  
They will answer with voices so sweet:  
You will eat (You will eat) bye and bye  
(Bye and bye)  
In that glorious land above the sky  
(Way up high)"

The lines are from Hill's song "The Preacher and the Slave."

Pat Roberson in the 1930s, Phil Ochs in the 1960s, and Joan Baez in the '70s and '80s have since made the "Ballad of Joe Hill" a testament to fearlessness in the face of oppression and bravery in the face of death.

Today, yet again, the poets are becoming the martyrs and fodder for both verse and action.

The deaths of Pretti and Good, as well as the example of resistance being set by the citizens of Minneapolis, are more than worthy of being commemorated in verse and sung at lines of riot police through bullhorns.

The people have responded with Joe Hill's fearlessness while becoming louder like Franti advised, and have shown

up in the same ways Renée Good and Alex Pretti did for their community.

The people are responding like poets — hearts heavy with emotion, mouths full of chants and full-throated denunciations, fists full of keyboards, pencils, and picket signs.

The fearlessness of the American people can best be seen in the videos of the recent killings. In these videos, you see people from all walks of life not taking cover — not running away, not turning away, not remaining silent, but instead filming, running fearlessly toward the violence to help, to document, to demand justice.

As a nation, we are witnessing daily emperor-wears-no-clothes moments. Moments where we are asked to believe the regime and their media instead of our own eyes and hearts. The contradiction it creates is something ripe that inspires both resistance and art.

These are the rare moments in

history where the veil can be pierced, the illusion can be shattered, where we can glimpse behind the curtains, and our best tool is always our creativity — both in verse and art but especially in the streets.

These are the moments that demand sharp words and decisive collective action.

Can you feel it too? The ground swelling? As if the killings of Renée Good and Alex Pretti have awoken something great and immeasurable, something that Percy Bysshe Shelly spoke to in his 1819 poem "The Masque of Anarchy."

The poem, penned after the Peterloo Massacre, in which 18 peaceful protesters were killed and 400 to 700 more were wounded by the king's soldiers, is seen by many literary and political scholars as the first modern articulation of the idea of nonviolent resistance. It ends triumphantly:

"Rise like Lions after slumber  
In unvanquishable number,  
Shake your chains to earth like dew  
Which in sleep had fallen on you —  
Ye are many — they are few."

## CANARY from Page TWO

about gender were removed from Department of Defense school libraries.

By 1935, the Nuremberg Laws had legally defined who was Jewish and stripped them of citizenship. The laws also targeted queer people. You could be arrested, imprisoned, or institutionalized simply for being queer or trans.

We're watching the legal framework being built now. In January 2025, Trump banned trans people from the military, forcing out active duty service members.

Commander Emily Shilling, a naval aviator with nearly two decades of service, was forced out in June 2025. Trans service members were told to choose "voluntary" or "involuntary" separation. As Shilling said, "Nobody feels like this is voluntary. This is coercion." The Department of Justice instructed prison inspectors to stop using standards protecting transgender prisoners from sexual assault. Trans women in federal prisons are being transferred to men's facilities. ICE stopped reporting data on transgender people in custody. This past week, Kansas passed a bill allowing citizens to collect \$10,000 bounties for reporting trans people using bathrooms. Sports bans. Drag performance bans. Together, they make it functionally illegal to exist as a trans person in public.

The death camps weren't where Nazi Germany started; they were where it ended. It started with legal discrimination, neighbors turning on neighbors, ordinary people making small choices that built the infrastructure of genocide. Victor Klemperer, a Jewish professor in Dresden, wrote in March 1933: "It is shocking how day after day naked acts of violence, breaches of the law, barbaric opinions appear quite undisguised as official decree." His neighbor, Berger the greengrocer, was "anti-Hitlerist, but of course pleased at the good ex-

change" when he received Klemperer's confiscated house. Not a Nazi. Just someone who benefited.

How many people do we know who aren't actively transphobic but are comfortable with trans people losing rights as long as it doesn't affect them?

When the Nuremberg Laws passed, most Germans accepted them, hoping "legal boundaries would at least end the lawlessness." Today, people say, "I don't agree with it, but it's the law." "ICE is just doing their job." The same deference to legality over morality.

Klemperer's diaries prove ordinary Germans knew what was happening. By 1942, people were talking about mass shootings, about Auschwitz, about millions dead. They knew. After the war, they claimed they hadn't. Everyone knows what's happening to trans people right now. They know about health care being denied. They know about the violence. And people are already practicing the excuses: "I don't follow the news." "I can't

handle more bad news."

Trans people are called hysterical for making Nazi comparisons because people don't want to confront what those comparisons reveal: that they are ordinary Germans. They are the neighbors who stayed silent.

We're not in 1945; we're in 1933. The camps aren't built yet. But the legal framework is being constructed. Social permission is being granted. The small choices that make atrocity possible are being made every day by ordinary people who think they don't have the power, they are just staying neutral, they are just following the law.

Trans people know what's coming because we've read the history. We know we're the canary. And the canary is dying. The question isn't whether anyone would have resisted the Nazis; the question is what people are doing right now, today, while trans people are losing health care, losing documentation, being forced out of the military, losing the legal right to exist in public. This is when the choices are being made.



Nazi's ransacking the Institut für Sexualwissenschaft, 1933. Photographer Unknown.

## PALESTINE from page FOUR

who asked us to stand nearby during incursions, knowing harassment increases when they're alone. I saw it in families offering food and thanks after a disappointing harvest, because community is resistance. I saw it in Palestinians who could still joke, still make art, still show grace Americans might call miraculous — but is really practiced.

And it taught me that Americans misunderstand power. We think power is what governments do. But power is also what ordinary people refuse to accept as normal. It's what workers withhold. What students disrupt. What communities organize. What humans demand — repeatedly, relentlessly, without waiting for permission.



*Ten-year old Muhammed Bahjat Al-Hallaq being rushed to the hospital where he later succumb to his injuries he sustained at the hands of Israeli Occupation Forces. Photo Courtesy of*

That kind of power requires sumud.

If Palestine can teach Americans anything, it's that freedom isn't won in one dramatic moment; it is built through thousands of small acts of refusal: refusing to abandon a home. Refusing to let the world forget. Refusing to accept cruelty as "just



*Palestinian worshipers in AK are regularly held arbitrarily and prevented from reaching the mosque to pray. Photo credit ISM.*

how things are." Refusing to be erased.

I came to Palestine expecting to witness struggle. What I witnessed was a people practicing life as an act of defiance.

So if you want to honor Palestinians — don't just repost. Don't just rage. Don't just mourn.

Learn steadfastness. Learn the discipline of sustained moral clarity. Learn to keep going when it stops being trendy. Learn to resist the pressure to "both sides" the unacceptable. Learn to hold your own government accountable — not someday, not when it's convenient, but now and consistently.

Because Palestinians don't get to log off. And the least we can do, with all our safety and supposed democracy, is refuse to look away — and refuse to back down.

## POETS From Page TEN

about Fred Trump, the bastard landlord that gave Donald a billion dollars as a birthright — a billion made on the backs of the poor and the taxpayer.

"I suppose that Old Man Trump  
knows just how much racial hate  
He stirred up in that bloodpot of human  
hearts  
When he drew that color line  
Here at his Beach Haven family project  
...  
Beach Haven is Trump's Tower  
Where no black folks come to roam,  
No, no, Old Man Trump!  
Old Beach Haven ain't my home!"

Far too often, the poets, the writers, and the songwriters are the ones we end up memorializing when they, too, are killed or repressed by the state.

Renée Good was a poet. In 2020, she won awards for her poem "On Learning to Dissect Fetal Pigs," which deals with her conflicts between faith and science:

"it's the ruler by which i reduce all  
things now; hard-edged & splin  
tering from knowledge that  
used to sit, a cloth against fevered  
forehead."

Finding her poem has become difficult because the thousands of lines of verse that have sought to make sense of her violent death, remember her life, honor her sacrifice, and/or rally our collective spirits for the fight ahead have proliferated and multiplied on the internet.

It's like poets and creatives instinctively understood what Michael Franti meant when he sang after the infamous 1999 Battle in Seattle:

"I'm a little under the weather today,  
too much pepper spray can make a  
brother congested.  
You know what I'm saying,  
but the harder they hit us the louder  
we become  
like the skin of a drum,"

There are some sources that indicate that Alex Pretti was also a poet or writer at some level, and it begs the ques-

tion: Why are artists always at the forefront of movements for change?

A snippet of dialogue from Puerto Rican poet and novelist Giannina Braschi's book, *Ya Ya Boing!*, sums it up.

"Poets and anarchists are always the first to go./ Where./ To the frontline. Wherever it is."

This was famously true with Joe Hill, a radical labor organizer, songwriter, and Wobbler. Hill was a Swedish immigrant and prolific songwriter with the Industrial Workers of the World in the 1900s and 1910s.

Hill was framed for a murder in Salt Lake City, Utah, and was martyred by the state in 1915. The conviction is widely considered illegitimate. Hill's only crime was being a well-known Wobbler songwriter in the wrong jurisdiction.

One of his last communications was to labor legend Big Bill Haywood, and it ended, "Don't waste any time mourning. Organize!" The line can still be found on posters, T-shirts, and in song lyrics.

Hill's last poem, titled "My Last Will," was sent out of the prison just hours



*Linocut by Carlos Cortez, 1979*

# Poets to the Front, or We Are Many and They Are Few

By Jacob Richards

The state killings of Alex Pretti and Renée Good in Minneapolis have not only galvanized a nation and led to widespread protest, general strikes, and student walkouts, but they have also inspired a tidal wave of poetry, music, and art.

Most prominently, Bruce Springsteen's "Streets on Minneapolis," is topping the charts. Its lyrics hark back not just to the "Star Spangled Banner" but also to Minneapolis-born protest-folk legend Bob Dylan.

"Against smoke and rubber bullets  
In the dawn's early light  
citizens stood for justice  
their voices ringing through the night."

Springsteen is far from the only songwriter responding to the state violence. In recent days, perennial punk staple NOFX has dropped "Minnesota Nazis." Country band The Midnight Republic released "Not One More." Folk-punk protest anthem regular Billy Bragg released "City of Heroes." Dozens of other smaller bands have dropped tracks inspired by the killings of Pretti and Good as well as the city-wide general strike, nationwide protests, and walkouts and disruptions to business as usual.

"Song is a vehicle for us to grieve, it's a vehicle for us to feel rage, it's a vehicle for us to strengthen ourselves," said an unnamed chorist with Singing Resistance in Minneapolis to CNN. They added "that song 'I'm not afraid' that I sang, we're not singing it because we are actually not afraid. Like we are afraid, it is terrifying...and it's a way to gather our courage."

Poets, songwriters, and artists have critical roles to play in moments of history like we are living and resisting through today.



Still from Bruce Springsteen's "Streets of Minneapolis."

Songs and poems memorializing the martyrs of social revolutions punctuate our history dating back to the peasants' revolt of 1381 in England, at least, if not all the way back to the dawn of story-telling.

Union troops sang and improvised the song "John Brown's Body" about radical insurrectionary abolitionist John Brown who led a failed uprising at Harper's Ferry. They sang it

marching into the hellfire of the Civil War firing lines and red-hot grapeshot to give themselves both purpose and courage.

Labor songs were sung for courage on the picket lines and have since become timeless: "Which Side Are You On," "Solidarity Forever," and even "This Land is My Land," by Woody Guthrie, despite its colonial baggage, continue to take on new lives and find new relevancy as they cross genres and movements.

During the 1960s, protest and anti-war anthems abounded and often responded to the martyrs and injustices of the day. Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young's "Ohio" was a response to the killing of four protesters by the National Guard at Kent State, and "Fortunate Son" was written in a 20-minute rage by John Fogerty after he read an article about a senator's son weaseling out of the Vietnam draft.

Black liberation and Civil Rights martyrs Fred Hampton, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King Jr. still get regularly name-dropped on hip-hop tracks.

Some of this seems like ancient history, but Trump is ancient, and his wealth started somewhere. In fact, there's a folk song about it.

Prolific folk musician and communist Woody Guthrie's archives contain a song titled "Old Man Trump." The song is

# Stay Dangerous: a Q & A with NVR ENDVR

*Editor's Note: NVR ENDVR is one of the busiest local bands on the scene. They have regular local shows and tour nationally. Their energetic stage presence and provocative timely lyrics have made them a fan-favorite. Jake Duffney is vocal about his political beliefs that inspire both his music and his participation in local protest movement. This also marks tahrihi bochmann's first article as The Revolutionists' Arts and Culture Editor!*



Photo credit: @chirp\_world on Instagram.

**tahrihi bochmann:** How long have you been making music?

**Jake Duffney:** Oh god. I cut my teeth in church. As far as metal and stuff goes, 14. I was a drummer before anything else. The whole family was musical.

**tb:** So, you started with music at church, and now you're playing protest metalcore.

**JD:** Well, I subscribed to the whole American evangelist thing until I was about 18, 19 years old and left my parents' house. I didn't stop believing in God until I was, like, 26. There's a lot of trauma there. Believe it or not, I grew up really conservative until like my early 20s, when I understood more about the world outside of my rural suburb and got a better understanding of what people actually go through as the average American citizen.

**tb:** So you left your parents' house at 18. Did you start making your own music at that time too, or did that come later?

**JD:** No, I went and started working for the Department of Defense as a contractor.

**tb:** Oh, shit.

**JD:** Yeah, yeah, I was fucking...I had a horrific, traumatic career. I was a professional climber and outside machinist scaffold builder. So I worked a lot at over 150 feet, standing on pipes and building stuff as I went. I worked in confined spaces and was involved in some accidents where people got really fucked up. It changed my perspective on things. I worked with fucking L.A. gangbangers, like motherfuckers who had Los Sureños and shit tattooed on them. I worked with these people, and I lived with them, and they weren't bad people. I heard stories of their childhood, how they had to grow up in fucking ghettos, cause their parents were "illegals" and couldn't get fucking mortgages, couldn't get ahead, but the alternative for them was their dad either becomes a gangbanger or he takes his family to America. I saw that they were good people underneath the shit they had to do to survive. So it really changed my perspective on things, especially immigration. There were a lot of epiphanies along the way in my early 20s.

**tb:** Were there other places where you ended up in underprivileged communities?

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**JD:** I was in San Diego, Seattle, Norfolk, Mayport. You can literally see the red line in Norfolk. You still see the effects of Jim Crow in Norfolk today.

**tb:** When you started writing your own music, you were drawing on a lot of these experiences, right? And things happening in the political sphere today.

**JD:** I mean, the night Donald Trump said “they’re eating the cats” on live television, I started writing “Cat Birthday” immediately. The debate was still going, and I pulled out Logic and immediately got to fucking work on that shit. “Magic Eyes” is a little bit more satirical. “Innocence, Pt. 2” and “Asylum, Pt. 2” deal a lot with self-esteem and problems that I’ve been through in my life. And “Innocence, Pt. 2” is an apology to my son for my generational trauma that he inherited. “Post Car Crash Coitus” is about a car accident, sort of, but it’s also just a fucking train wreck of things after this car accident. Pretty much all of my songs are written through personal experience or things that I see and need talked about.

**tb:** Have you or the band gotten pushback on your lyrics or messages?

**JD:** No, we really haven’t. The people who don’t agree with our message have come up to me and said, “I don’t agree with what you guys said, but that shit was fucking crazy.” So, even if our message doesn’t hit you, our vibe does, and ultimately, that’s what’s important. The music, but also who we are and what we actually do outside of the music.

**tb:** I’ve been to my fair share of NVR ENDVR shows, and that’s something I see every time. You guys are really invested in the community and it definitely shows.

**JD:** I’ve always said music is the most uni-

versal language in the world. I used to teach music back in Virginia Beach. I burned out of construction for a little bit, and I taught music for two years. And my first lesson with kids I would draw a bar and write some random note. And I would say, “Okay, how do you think this is written in Chinese? How about Swahili?” And they would say, “Well, maybe they use different letters or something like that.” And then I’d hit them with a no. This bar of music is written the exact same way in every country in the world. Music is the most universal language. It’s expression, it’s political. Music is just a raw form of human expression. I just love being a part of it.

**tb:** And NVR ENDVR’s been tearing it up. You guys just released your first EP, right?

**JD:** We dropped that back in July. We’re gonna be doing a full length

this summer. We’re tying in our next single with our festival It Wasn’t A Phase, Mom. Dandy’s gonna be opening, and then we’re gonna have Handbrake Hero, Buried in Lies, SALT, and us closing it out. Next year, I have sixteen bands booked already. That’s what we’re gonna be focusing on, making this next festival a big one, something that people look forward to every year.

**tb:** When is It Wasn’t A Phase, Mom happening this year?

**JD:** March 6th.

**tb:** I’m really proud of all the work that NVR ENDVR is putting in because I know it’s a lot, but you guys are fucking killing it.

**JD:** This band does not work with different members. It really doesn’t. I literally could not ever think of replacing anybody that we have. It’s been a dream come true.

**tb:** We’re all expecting great things.

**JD:** Thanks, homie.



NVR ENDVR backstage. Photo credit @chirp\_world on Instagram.

**tb:** You guys are constantly on the go, doing shows all the time. You have another tour planned, right?

**JD:** We have several tours coming up this year. We have a new booking agent — shout out Rob Volkov. Those announcements are around the corner.

**tb:** When you’re at home, you always show up at protests. Every time there’s a protest, you’re volunteering as a medic.

**JD:** I got my EMT basic when I was 16 years old, and, I don’t know, man. I like to help people, and being a medic at a protest is something that not a lot of people want to step up to do, cause you never know what can go wrong. It’s a really high-pressure situation, and my past experience kind of laid the groundwork for me to be able to do those things, and that’s just one way I can give back.

**tb:** How long have you been showing up for protests?

**JD:** It started after Trump won. I would say BLM inspired me the most to get out there and fucking say something. Those dudes were on the ground every single day, that’s why I’m doing what I’m doing now. I’m finding that the smaller protests are more important to hit than the larger ones. The consistent messaging is way more important than the big one every couple months. You gotta stay out there holding your sign, even if it’s by yourself.

**tb:** It’s a sign of resistance, but it’s also encouragement.

**JD:** You’re not alone.

**tb:** Anything else you want to add?

**JD:** Shout out to Rick and Henry at Mesa. Mesa Theater fucking rocks, I love playing there, and every band that comes through loves playing there. The staff take good care of us, we fucking get paid. Shout out

to the bandwives for holding shit down. That’s a big one. And just shout out to the community. The kids who are carrying it forward, fucking put that in there. All them high school kids that walked out of that fucking school yesterday (Jan 30th ICE

OUT protest). As soon as I saw that, I got up off my couch. Those kids literally made me walk out the door yesterday.

**tb:** I’m very, very proud of this generation.

**JD:** They’re being kind to each other. That’s what fucking throws me. I didn’t grow up like these kids. They’re all growing up being kind to each other and emotionally intelligent and shit.

**tb:** They’re all looking out for one another.

**JD:** They’re taking care of each other. That’s what hardcore and metalcore shows have always been about for me. I’m autistic as fuck, and I didn’t fit in very well growing up. My mom had me overmedicated on Adderall, and I was really fucking weird. And those shows just gave me a place to go and not have to worry about impressing anybody. I’ve always wanted to cultivate that environment for somebody since I started giving a shit. We got to keep taking care of each other, and we have to influence on the local level. Support your fucking neighbors, especially when we’re undergoing fucking ICE raids and everything. I think right now, that’s the most important issue. Whatever’s happening on a municipal level is kind of chum bait for our neighbors getting our fucking doors kicked in.

**tb:** Any last things that you want to say?

**JD:** Fight back by being better. The only way out is side by side. Stay dangerous, dude.



NVR ENDVR Released “Glusnfr” a track that tackles gun-culture and mass-shootings, consumer capitalism and endless militarism, in early January.