

for Keven Rashid Johnson (<https://4strugglemag.org/2017/06/27/kevin-rashid-johnson-snatched-from-texas-prison/>)—“Transfers have been opportunities for prison officials to arrange for violence and abuse”—I’m not clear on what this means.

Depends of the reason for the transfer and the particular prisoner(s). The circumstances with Rashid are such that folks should be very concerned about his treatment. Most mistreatment takes place in seg (the most isolated part of a prison), and seg is where all new transfers initially land. One example - after the "crack riots" in the 90's, those considered ringleaders were sent to ADX (Administrative Maximum, i.e. the federal government's "supermax" prison, the end of the line, solitary) and were assaulted by guards when they arrived. Those with medical/health issues are at increased risk when transferring and getting stuck in seg.

Q3. As a political prisoner, what’s the lived difference between where Laaman has been housed, the SHU where he is at the moment, the transfer he faces, and the final destination: a CMU?

General population is where you want to be in prison. It allows for more space, contact with other prisoners, better conditions than more restricted housing. Conditions-wise the worst place to be is SHU (seg). Partly because seg is not designed for long term use, the conditions range from draconian to horrid, and the guards working seg units tend to range from nitwits to sadists. CMU is a separate, isolated unit within a larger prison. CMUs are small group isolation with highly restricted communications with the outside world.

Q4. As a former prisoner, do the letters and postcards we send really make a difference to those inside the wire?

For a prisoner letters and cards are a lifeline. Every PP and former PP I've met will tell you this. They make a positive difference to someone who would otherwise risk being buried by isolation.

Q5. When we send postcards to the BoP, the regional director, or the warden, do they read what we send? Do they have any impact?

Sometimes letters/cards/calls to the BOP make a positive difference, sometimes not. You can't always predict because so much depends on time, place, conditions and the particular details of whatever problem/issue is being addressed. One thing this outside intervention does do is it demonstrates to the powers-that-be a prisoner may be isolated but he/she is not alone and that people are watching the situation. Prison administrators thrive on avoiding the public eye and oversight. When they're aware their actions are being monitored, they are more likely than they would be otherwise to avoid blatant abuse. Such efforts and "campaigns" can also serve as a small building block for further support of a PP.

Q6. For people who have never served time, what’s the most important thing we need to understand about Jaan’s situation right now?

Solitary is hell in a very small space. People's letters to him help relieve the pain of seemingly endless days in that box. Understand that he is being punished for expressing his political views. Understand that the punishment will continue in another guise if he's transferred to a CMU. Support the Center for Constitutional Rights' ongoing suit against CMU's: *Aref v. Lynch*, 833 F.3d 242 (DC Cir 2016).

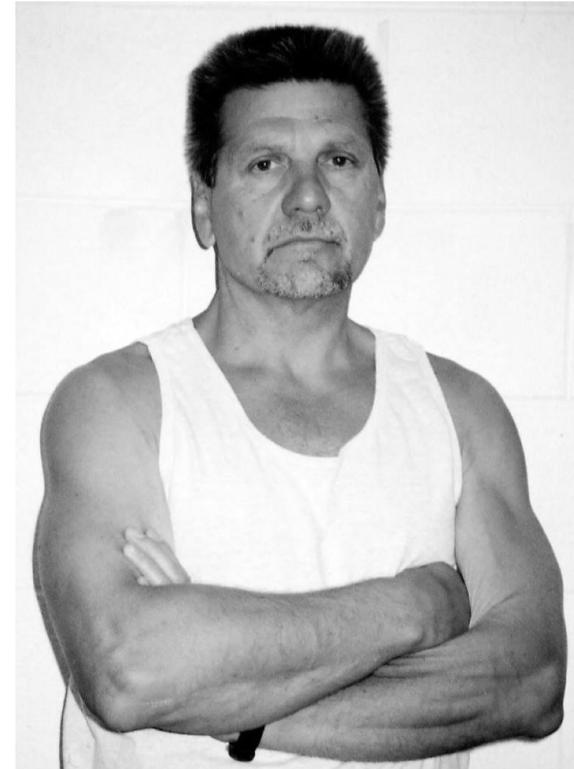
Please feel free to repost, link, and share this interview! We need ACTION as much as words right now.

You can find more information about how to TAKE ACTION TODAY at

4StruggleMag’s site:

<https://4strugglemag.org/2017/05/25/political-prisoner-jaan-laaman-is-still-being->

Jaan Laaman Needs Your Help!



Increase the Pressure and Free Jaan Laaman from Segregation & Solitary!

How you can support Jaan

Write/call/email the Bureau of Prisons and ask them to end the repression against Jaan!

Please write and ask that:

- 1- Jaane released from segregation & placed back into general population immediately.
- 2- That Jaan not be moved to a Communication Management Unit or punished further for exercising free speech.
- 3- That Jaan has his phone and email privileges be restored immediately.

Please remind them that Jaan is an elder prisoner, and you are concerned about his health in segregation and you would be concerned about his safety if he is moved to a Communication Management Unit.

1. Write to Mary M. Mitchell, Regional Director

BOP Regional Office
7338 Shoreline Dr
Stockton, CA 95219

Regional email: wxro/execassistant@bop.gov

Phone: 209-956-9700

Fax: 209-956-9793

2. Send a message through the Bureau of Prison (BOP)

website here: <https://www.bop.gov/inmates/concerns.jsp>

- Select 'USP Tucson'
- Send a message that includes his name and number: 'Jaan Laaman #10372-016'

Please be polite but firm in your letters and send the responses you get to jaanlaaman@gmail.com.

Write to Jaan and let him know he's in our hearts and on our minds. He has no access to news and access to phone calls. It's important we send him some letters right now. Send him articles, so that he gets some world news and messages of solidarity and support. Let the jailers see that Jaan has support from the community and cannot just be left in segregation or silenced.

Jaan Karl Laaman #10372-016
USP Tucson
P.O. Box 24550
Tucson, AZ 85734

Interview with Ray Luc Levasseur: Increase the Pressure

Context

Jaan Laaman is a political prisoner. He's been locked up in Federal prisons since 1984. Ray Luc Levasseur, one of Jaan's codefendants, explained the background concisely in an email to me:

"In 1986 Jaan me and 4 others were convicted of conspiracy and bombings. These were the UFF bombings which targeted corporate and government property (i.e. no injuries). Following our sentences in April we (along with 6 others) were indicted in May, 1986 (District of Massachusetts) for seditious conspiracy and RICO. It was a very long case and just before the trial itself charges against Jaan were dismissed. I [Ray] went to trial and was found not guilty of seditious conspiracy. The jury deadlocked in favor of acquittal on the 2 RICO charges, a mistrial was declared and the RICO charges dismissed."

Three decades running and Jaan still resists. Laaman remains involved with the movement, builds alliances, authors articles and calls to action, and edits 4StruggleMag (<https://4strugglemag.org/>), a publication dedicated to liberating political prisoners in North America. The Bureau of Prisons continues to punish Jaan in retaliation for his use of his First Amendment right: freedom of expression.

Since March 2017:

- Jaan's snail mail is being interfered with or disappeared.
- Jaan's phone privileges have been reduced or eliminated.
- Jaan has been placed in a Secure Housing Unit.

This marks escalation. The Bureau of Prisons wants to move Laaman into a Communication Management Unit (CMU). Activist, prison abolition, and radical political networks have issued calls to action: pressure the Bureau of Prisons to not relocate Laaman, to reinstate his telephone privileges, and to stop interfering with his communications.

Let's keep up the pressure. Our pressure, our letters, our emails, and our postcards ARE important. They make a difference. To help explain the importance of our work, Ray Luc Levasseur agreed to an interview about Laaman. Levasseur was convicted along with his comrades in 1986. Levasseur was released on parole in 2004. Since his release, Levasseur has continued the struggle to free his comrades: Jaan Laaman and Tom Manning.

Interview

Q1. What's so different about this round of suppression from the Bureau of Prisons than prior incidents?

The difference in this round of repression against Jaan is the form it's taking. In the past year they have increasingly tried to silence him by eliminating his access to phone and email. (This impacts his personal communications with family and friends and his means to express his political views). Also, the BOP is now trying to place him in a CMU so that further isolating and silencing him is enforced by the CMU's as a matter of policy.

Q2. Could you help us understand some of the risks or dangers involved with being transferred? While I read a brief comment at 4Struggle about the risks in transfer