

Protect Kevin “Rashid” Johnson from Prison Repression!

kersplebedeb.com/posts/protect-kevin-rashid-johnson-from-prison-repression/



PLEASE FORWARD WIDELY

WHEN: Anytime, but esp. on January 5th

WHAT: Protect imprisoned activist-journalist Kevin “Rashid” Johnson

FACEBOOK EVENT: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1794902884117144/>

On December 21, 2016, Kevin “Rashid” Johnson was the victim of an assault by guards at the Clements Unit where he is currently being held, just outside Amarillo, Texas. Rashid was sprayed with OC pepper gas while handcuffed in his cell, and then left in the contaminated cell for hours with no possibility to shower and no access to fresh air. It was in fact days before he was supplied with new sheets or clothes (his bed was covered with the toxic OC residue), and to this day his cell has not been properly decontaminated.

This assault came on the heels of another serious move against Rashid, as guards followed up on threats to confiscate all of his property – not only files required for legal matters, but also art supplies, cups to drink water out of, and food he had recently purchased from the commissary. The guards in question were working under the direction of Captain Patricia Flowers, who had previously told Rashid that she intended to seize all of his personal belongings as retaliation for his writings about mistreatment of prisoners, up to and including assaults and purposeful medical negligence that have led to numerous deaths in custody. Specifically, Rashid’s writings have called attention to the deaths of Christopher Woolverton, Joseph Comeaux, and Alton Rodgers, and he has been contacted by lawyers litigating on behalf of the families of at least two of these men.

As a journalist and activist literally embedded within the bowels of the world's largest prison system, Rashid relies on his files and notes for correspondence, legal matters, and his various news reports. Furthermore, Rashid is a self-taught artist of considerable talent (his work has appeared in numerous magazines, newspapers, and books); needless to say, the guards were also instructed to seize his art materials and the drawings he was working on.

(For a more complete description of Rashid's ordeal on and following December 21, see his recent article "Bound and Gassed: My Reward for Exposing Abuses and Killings of Texas Prisoners" at <http://rashidmod.com/?p=2321>)

Particularly worrisome, is the fact that the abuse currently directed against Rashid is almost a carbon-copy of what was directed against Joseph Comeaux in 2013, who was eventually even denied urgently needed medical care. Comeaux died shortly thereafter.

This is the time to step up and take action to protect Rashid; and the only protection we can provide, from the outside, is to make sure prison authorities know that we are watching. Whether you have read his articles about prison conditions, his political or philosophical polemics (and whether you agreed with him or not!), or just appreciate his artwork – even if this is the first you are hearing about Rashid – we need you to step up and make a few phone calls and send some emails. When doing so, let officials know you are contacting them about Kevin Johnson, ID #1859887, and the incident in which he was gassed and his property confiscated on December 21, 2016. The officials to contact are:

Warden Kevin Foley

Clements Unit

telephone: (806) 381-7080 (you will reach the general switchboard; ask to speak to the warden's office)

Tell Warden Foley that you have heard of the gas attack on Rashid. Specific demands you can make:

- That Kevin Johnson's property be returned to him
- That Kevin Johnson's cell be thoroughly decontaminated
- That Captain Patricia Flowers, Lieutenant Crystal Turner, Lieutenant Arleen Waak, and Corrections Officer Andrew Leonard be sanctioned for targeting Kevin Johnson for retaliation for his writings
- That measures be taken to ensure that whistleblowers amongst staff and the prisoner population not be targeted for any reprisals from guards or other authorities. (This is important because at least one guard and several prisoners have signed statements asserting that Rashid was left in his gassed cell for hours, and that his property should not have been seized.)

Try to be polite, while expressing how concerned you are for Kevin Johnson's safety. You will almost certainly be told that because other people have already called and there is an ongoing investigation – or else, because you are not a member of his family — that you cannot be given any information. Say that you understand, but that you still wish to have your concerns noted, and that you want the prison to know that you will be keeping track of what happens to Mr Johnson.

The following other authorities should also be contacted. These bodies may claim they are unable to directly intervene, however we know that by creating a situation where they are receiving complaints, they will eventually contact other authorities who can intervene to see what the fuss is all about. So it's important to get on their cases too:

TDCJ Ombudsman: ombudsman@tdcj.texas.gov

The Inspector General: 512-671-2480

Let these "watchdogs" know you are concerned that Kevin Johnson #1859887 was the victim of a gas attack in Clements Unit on December 21, 2016. Numerous witnesses have signed statements confirming that he was

handcuffed, in his cell, and not threatening anyone at the time he was gassed. Furthermore, he was not allowed to shower for hours, and his cell was never properly decontaminated, so that he was still suffering the effects of the gas days later. It is also essential to mention that his property was improperly confiscated, and that he had previously been threatened with having this happen as retaliation for his writing about prison conditions. Kevin Johnson's property must be returned!

Finally, complaints should also be directed to the director of the VA DOC Harold Clarke and the VA DOC's Interstate Compact Supervisor, Terry Glenn. This is because Rashid is in fact a Virginia prisoner, who has been exiled from Virginia under something called the Interstate Compact, which is used by some states as a way to be rid of activist prisoners, while at the same time separating them from their families and supporters. Please contact:

VADOC Director, Harold Clarke
804-887-8081
Director.Clarke@vadic.virginia.gov

Interstate Compact director, Terry Glenn
804-887-7866

Let them know that you are phoning about Kevin Johnson, a Virginia prisoner who has been sent to Texas under the Interstate Compact. His Texas ID # is 1859887 however his Virginia ID # is 1007485. Inform them that Mr Johnson has been gassed by guards and has had his property seized as retaliation for his writing about prison conditions. These are serious legal and human rights violations, and even though they occurred in Texas, the Virginia Department of Corrections is responsible as Mr Johnson is a Virginia prisoner. Despite the fact that they may ask you who you are, and how you know about this, and for your contact information, they will likely simply conclude by saying that they will not be getting back to you. Nonetheless, it is worth urging them to contact Texas officials about this matter.

It is good to call whenever you are able. However, in order to maximize our impact, for those who can, we are suggesting that people make their phone calls on Thursday, January 5.

And at the same time, please take a moment to sign the online petition to support Rashid, up at the Roots Action website: <https://diy.rootsaction.org/petitions/prison-activist-gassed-in-clements-unit-prison-texas-law-enforcement-is-violently-out-of-control>

Rashid has taken considerable risks in reporting on the abuse he witnesses at the Clements Unit, just as he has at other prisons. Indeed, he has continued to report on the violence and medical neglect to which prisoners are subjected, despite threats from prison staff. If we, as a movement, are serious about working to resist and eventually abolish the U.S. prison system, we must do all we can to assist and protect those like Rashid who take it upon themselves to stand up and speak out. As Ojore Lutalo once put it, "Any movement that does not support their political internees ... is a sham movement."

To learn more about Kevin "Rashid" Johnson, the abuses in the Texas prison system, as well as his work in founding and leading the New Afrikan Black Panther Party-Prison Chapter, see his website at <http://www.rashidmod.com>

© 2017 Kersplebedeb

Powered by [Esplanade Theme](#) and [WordPress](#)

© 2017 Kersplebedeb

