

Military Resistance 13C7

Afghan Militia, Organized By U.S., Terrorizes Villages: “We Are Shivering With Fear” “We Cannot Stand Their Brutality” “He And His Neighbors Did Not Fear The Taliban Nearly As Much”



Local Afghan police prepare for a mission in Kakeran, Afghanistan. Photo: BRYAN DENTON, STR

One of them is Abdullah, a militia commander with a chiseled, almost gaunt face, who wishes “my brothers,” as he still calls the American Special Forces soldiers, had not left late last year. “Whatever they wanted me to do, I would do for them,” he said. “If they tell me to kill someone, I will kill them.”

March 17, 2015 By Joseph Goldstein, NEW YORK TIMES

KABUL, Afghanistan - Rahimullah used to be a farmer - just a "normal person living an ordinary life," as he put it. Then he formed his own militia last year and found himself swept up in America's exit strategy from Afghanistan.

With about 20 men loyal to him, Rahimullah, 56, soon discovered a patron in the U.S. Special Forces, who provided everything he needed: rifles, ammunition, cash, even sandbags for a guard post in Aghu Jan, a remote village in Ghazni province.

Then the Americans pulled out, leaving Rahimullah behind as the local strongman, and as his village's only defense against a Taliban takeover.

"We are shivering with fear," said one resident, Abdul Ahad. Then he explained: He and his neighbors did not fear the Taliban nearly as much as they did their protectors, Rahimullah's militiamen, who have turned to kidnappings and extortion.

Mr. Ahad ran afoul of them in January, he said in a telephone interview. Militiamen hauled him to a guard station and beat him so badly that neighbors had to use a wheelbarrow to get him home.

Scattered across Afghanistan, men like Rahimullah continue to hold ground and rule villages. They are a significant part of the legacy of the American war here, brought to power amid a Special Operations counterinsurgency strategy that mobilized anti-Taliban militias in areas beyond the grasp of the Afghan Army.

From the start, some Afghan officials, including former President Hamid Karzai, objected to the Americans' practice of forming militias that did not answer directly to the Afghan government. They saw the militias as destabilizing forces that undermined the government's authority and competed with efforts to build up large and professional military and police forces.

Now, many of those concerns have become a daily reality in Afghan villages.

"For God's sake, take these people away from us," Mr. Ahad, 36, said of Rahimullah's militiamen. "We cannot stand their brutality."

About 50 miles northeast of Mr. Ahad's village, other anti-Taliban fighters arrested a 13- or 14-year-old boy in January and then killed him, the boy's father said.

And in the northern province of Kunduz, men in a militia that had received American support raped a 15-year-old boy last year after forcing him to join, according to a United Nations inquiry.

From the beginning of the American presence here, the United States doled out cash to militias and warlords. Paramilitary forces were raised to guard American bases. The C.I.A. trained and funded at least six paramilitary forces, with names such as the Khost Protection Force and 0-4, to pursue the Taliban and Al Qaeda.

The Afghan Local Police program, with nearly 30,000 Special Forces-trained militiamen nominally answering to the central government, is the biggest and best-known result of the American counterinsurgency strategy, and it has been successful in places.

But reports of abuses and banditry by units in the program have hurt its reputation.

Then there are militia groups like Rahimullah's that have also received American training or support over the years but operate under even less oversight.

In Ghazni Province, the drive to create militias gained momentum after a series of anti-Taliban uprisings in 2012 emerged in areas once considered lost. Until they pulled out of Ghazni's districts last year, American Special Operations units gave cash, ammunition and even armored vehicles to men who had little or no official connection to the Afghan government and were often former insurgents themselves.

One of them is Abdullah, a militia commander with a chiseled, almost gaunt face, who wishes "my brothers," as he still calls the American Special Forces soldiers, had not left late last year.

"Whatever they wanted me to do, I would do for them," he said. "If they tell me to kill someone, I will kill them."

The Americans, he said, had once fought alongside him in Ghazni's Andar district, offering a sense of discipline — not to mention firepower and air support.

Abdullah described the growing desperation and brutality of a war he and his 150 men now fight mostly alone against the Taliban.

Abdullah said 11 of his men were killed in their sleep in late January by a Taliban infiltrator posing as a new recruit.

Then the Taliban followed up with a coordinated attack on his guard post.

"In this attack, the Taliban hit me hard," Abdullah said during an interview last month in Kabul. He had come here to get medical treatment for a gunshot wound he received in the attack, and to seek support from Afghanistan's intelligence agency.

Human rights groups portray Abdullah as being among Afghanistan's most notorious militia commanders.

Human Rights Watch and the human rights division of the United Nations have censured his militia in the past year, citing extrajudicial killings.

In an episode in January, one of Abdullah's sub-commanders killed the 13- or 14-year-old after questioning him about roadside bombs, the boy's father, Khial Mohammad, said.

"After they killed my son, they said he was involved in planting bombs on roadsides and cooperating with the Taliban fighters," Mr. Mohammad said. But he added that his son had had no involvement with the Taliban.

Abdullah insisted that he did not kill civilians. The Taliban, he said, not he, were responsible for escalating the brutality.

Abdullah recalled the Americans lecturing him about the laws of war and human rights, but those notions barely seemed to register. He admitted to desecrating the bodies of his enemies.

“Yes, dead bodies are left on the ground,” he said. “We drag their dead bodies with a car.”

The last time he saw the American Special Forces team was some five months ago. ‘You did great work with us,’ Abdullah recalled the soldiers telling him in parting. “‘If we stay in Afghanistan and we need something to get done, we need people like you to do it for us,’ they said.”

Since the Americans left, many of these militias have become more predatory, officials in Ghazni say, partly to feed themselves and partly because there is no one to stop them.

“These uprisers, they are like roundworms in your stomach,” said Khial Mohammad Hussaini, a tribal elder from Ghazni Province. “They are eating everything.”

In another part of Ghazni, Rahimullah became a militia leader last year, starting with about 20 men who joined him after the Taliban kidnapped and killed his son.

In an interview, he expressed pride: In the eight months since he had come to power, a school had reopened, and a new road was being built in Aghu Jan, home to about 1,500 families, he said.

Asked about his militia’s treatment of the people, he acknowledged expelling several of his men who had abused villagers. “I warned them several times not to rob or harass the people,” Rahimullah said.

But in the same interview, he also claimed that many of the accusations against his men were part of a pro-Taliban conspiracy.

He said that he had the support of Afghanistan’s intelligence service, the National Directorate of Security, as well as the people of Aghu Jan. But tribal elders routinely travel from Aghu Jan to the district and provincial capital to complain about the heavy-handed ways of his men.

In January, when a roadside bomb wounded Rahimullah, retribution was swift — and random. Militiamen rounded up over a dozen people and brought them to the guard post the Americans had helped construct.

Mr. Ahad was one of those who was arrested. But he insists that he and the others had nothing to do with the roadside bombing.

Their innocence was corroborated by the district police chief, Mohammad Hashem, who described the men rounded up as day laborers and farmers. In the guard station, the men were beaten with chains taken from motorcycles.

Rahimullah's men told them the only thing they could do to save themselves, Mr. Ahad said: "They started asking each of us to pay 50,000 or 100,000 rupees, depending on who we were."

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Resistance Action

Mar 19 2015 By Sayed Jawad, Khaama Press & AP

An Afghan provincial police chief visiting the country's capital was killed by a bomber disguised as a woman, officials said Thursday.

Mattiullah Khan, chief of police in central Uruzgan province, was in western Kabul when he was killed late Wednesday by a bomber "dressed in women's clothes and a burqa," the Interior Ministry said in a statement.

Gen. Khan was one of the prominent security officials who was serving as provincial police chief for Uruzgan since 2011.

A spokesman for the Taliban group, Qari Yousuf Ahmadi, claimed responsibility behind the attack.

The incident took place around 8:15 pm local time in Qala-e-Ali Mardan area in the sixth police district of Kabul city.

March 18, 2015 ABC Radio

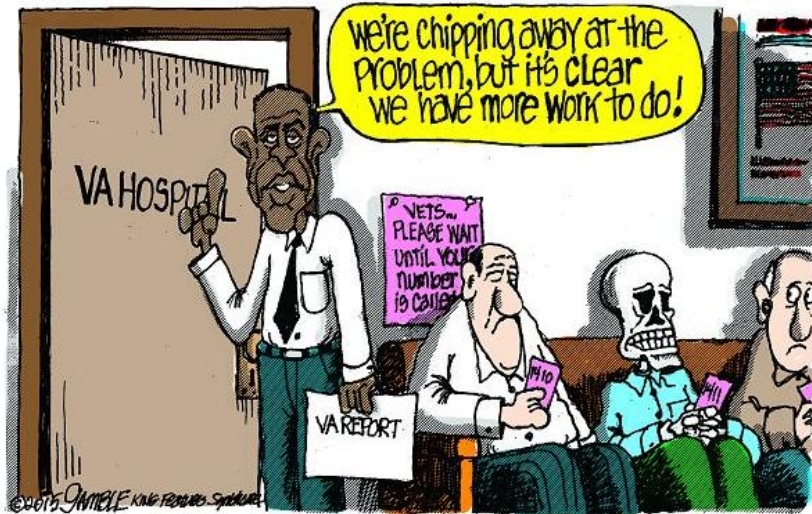
KABUL, Afghanistan) -- Seven people were killed and dozens more were wounded in Afghanistan Wednesday when a car bomber detonated his vehicle at the wall of the governor's house in Helmand province, according to the deputy governor.

The explosion also caused a lot of structural damage to many nearby buildings.

Among those injured was the spokesperson for the governor of Helmand province. He was in his office at the time of the explosion

<p>IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION</p>

MILITARY NEWS



[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in. She writes: "Didn't we see this cartoon last year?"]

Islamic State Insurgents Hold Central Districts Of Tikrit: Iraqi Authorities Halt Offensive "To Reduce Casualties Among Our Heroic Forces"

Mar 16, 2015 By Isabel Coles and Maggie Fick, Reuters [Excerpts]

In Tikrit, military officials said there was no fighting on Monday.

Islamic State insurgents controlling large parts of north and west Iraq and territory in neighboring Syria have held onto central districts of Saddam's home city and have laid explosives to hold up the advancing forces.

The offensive by Iraqi security forces and mainly Shi'ite militia, who entered Tikrit last week, is their largest yet against Islamic State, but it stalled on Friday.

Government forces control of most of the northern Qadisiya district as well as the southern and western outskirts of the city, trapping the militants in an area bounded by a river along Tikrit's eastern edge.

“We need air support from any force that can work with us against IS,” Deputy Minister of Defence Ibrahim al-Lami told Reuters, declining to say whether he meant from the U.S.-led coalition or Iran, which is playing a role in the assault.

The Pentagon said it did not view the offensive in Tikrit as stalled. “Offensive operations like this have a rhythm to them,” said Pentagon spokesman Army Colonel Steve Warren.

“There’s always going to be a requirement to regenerate combat power, to consolidate and reorganize before the next phase,” he said.

Warren said the U.S.-led coalition helping Iraq had not conducted any strikes in support of operations in Tikrit.

Powerful militia commander Hadi al-Amiri, head of the Shi’ite paramilitary Badr Organisation, said earlier in the offensive that militia victories before the Tikrit battle had been won without coalition air support.

Interior Minister Mohammed al-Ghaban said authorities had temporarily halted the offensive in Tikrit “to reduce casualties among our heroic forces... and to preserve the remaining infrastructure.”

“We will choose the appropriate time to attack the enemy and liberate the area,” he told journalists in Samarra, 95 kilometers (60 miles) north of Baghdad.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.

“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.

“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”

“The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppose.”

Frederick Douglass, 1852

The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.

-- Karl Marx, “Theses on Feuerbach”

Exposing The Shame



Photograph by Mike Hastie

From: Mike Hastie”

To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Sent: March 12, 2015
Subject: Exposing The Shame

Exposing The Shame

**Creech Air Force Base Demonstration.
March 6, 2015, Indian Springs, Nevada.
Of all the people who were there from
around the country, this peace activist
had one of the most blatant messages
about drone warfare.**

**What antiwar activists do the most when
they confront the American Empire is they
expose National Shame.**

**This is why the system does everything
possible to shut up the voices who expose
shame.**

**The Vietnam War was one of the most
shameful truths ever revealed in U.S.
history.**

**That is why the U.S. Government is doing
everything possible to bury that history.
Recently, I spoke in three university classes
on the subject of the Vietnam War.**

**These students were juniors and seniors.
When I asked them if they had ever heard
of the My Lai Massacre, not one hand went
up.**

**You bury the history... you bury the shame.
Drone Warfare, the new criminal rampage.**

**Mike Hastie
Army Medic Vietnam
March 12, 2015**

**The further a society drifts from truth
the more it will hate those who speak it.
George Orwell
1984**

**Photo and caption from the portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam
1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at:
hastiemike@earthlink.net) T)**

**One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head.
The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a
so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen
of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.**

**Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
December 13, 2004**

Red Ropes

From: Dennis Serdel
To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Sent: March 20, 2014
Subject: Red Ropes

Written by Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div. 11th
Brigade; United Auto Workers GM Retiree

Red Ropes

**The room has a Stage
in the old High School
the people are sitting
in the worn out seating
& those who talk
have only 5 minutes
at the mike
Then a Sarge screams out
like a toxic jelly fish
wrapped around orders
for 3 teenage black girls
who proudly march
& then stop at attention
in their clean camouflaged
uniforms & boots
& sly berets on heads &
march around the stage
& then they are gone
like a female teenager
in Vietnam
who is bit by a venomous
snake with no
anti-venom medicine
& because she is poor
she dies
The power line up before the
High School Teacher's Board
First a Quaker like a poisonous
spider blasts them**

for letting Junior ROTC
& War into the School
in the first place
All War is wrong he says
& you're Brainwashing these
young naive teenagers
Then a fat Vietnam veteran
slips up to the mike
like a toxic ocean snail
with 6 pieces
of medium size red rope
He tells the Board
that Soldiers in Afghanistan
tie ropes around their
thighs as he takes 2
red ropes & ties them
around his faded bluejeans
then he takes 2 ropes
& ties them around his calves
finally he says they tie
2 ropes around each
of their arms so when
they step on a land mine
they hope they won't bleed out
before medivac's & surgery
then the Veteran walks back
to his seat with the
6 red ropes around him
Finally a young man steps up
to the mike like a mega
dragon lizard 11 feet long
& he spits out his poison
that the School has to pay
for the uniforms boots
& berets & part of Sarge's wages
provide him a room
with office supplies
with a computer
you just haven't received
the bills yet
Then a black women on the Board
blurts out we thought
the Army pays for all of that
because we just had to
buy a new frame for a school bus
& bolt on the old body to it
because we didn't have
the money to buy a new bus
the lizard then crawls back
to his seat knowing
they are dead

**A week later at the School Board
Office the Board says they can
Not afford JR ROTC**

written by Dennis Serdel for Military Resistance

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?



U.S. soldier in Beijia village Iraq, Feb. 4, 2008. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

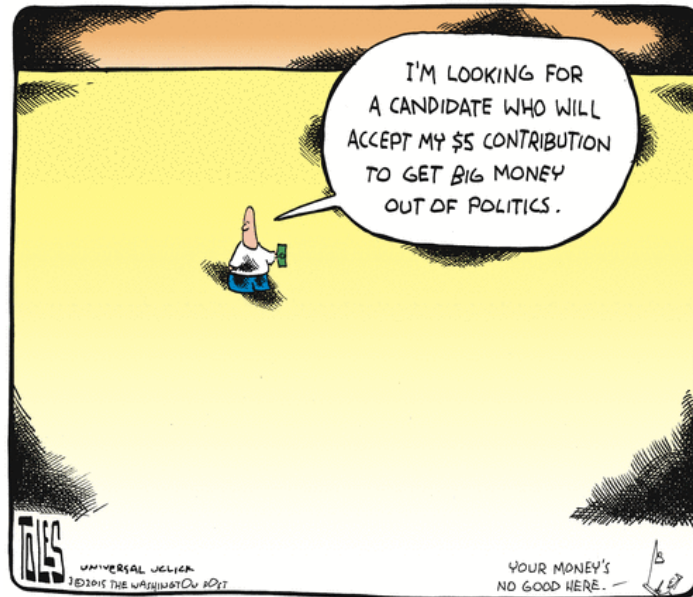
Forward Military Resistance along, or send us the email address if you wish and we'll send it regularly with your best wishes. Whether in Afghanistan or at a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to injustices, inside the armed services and at home.

Send email requests to address up top or write to: Military Resistance, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657.

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DANGER: CAPITALISTS AT WORK



DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

**11-Year-Old Suspended From School For A Year And Charged By Police For Not Possessing Marijuana:
Cruel, Stupid Shitheads Running Virginia School And Cruel, Stupid Shitheads At Bedford County Sheriff's Office Unite To Cause Kid "Panic Attacks And Depression"**

Deputy M.M. Calohan, A School Resource Officer, Commits Perjury By Filing Marijuana Possession Charges Against Boy Despite Field Tests That Showed No Marijuana: “Months After The Fact” Parents Finally Learn “The Substance Wasn’t Marijuana”

[NOTE: After reading, you may wish to express an opinion to the Bedford Middle School scumbags. Phone number 540-586-7735. T]

March 15, 2015 By Dan Casey, THE ROANOKE TIMES

At first blush it sounds like an open-and-shut school disciplinary matter in a zero-tolerance age:

Some schoolchildren claim another student bragged about having marijuana. They inform school administrators. An assistant principal finds a leaf and a lighter in the boy’s knapsack. The student is suspended for a year.

A sheriff’s deputy files marijuana possession charges in juvenile court.

All of the above and more happened last September to the 11-year-old son of Bedford County residents Bruce and Linda Bays.

He was a sixth-grader in the gifted-and-talented program at Bedford Middle School.

There was only one problem: Months after the fact, the couple learned the substance wasn’t marijuana.

A prosecutor dropped the juvenile court charge because the leaf had field-tested negative three times.

Their son remains out of school — he’s due to return Monday on strict probation.

But in the meantime, the events of the past six months have wreaked havoc on the formerly happy-go-lucky boy’s psyche. His parents say he’s withdrawn socially, and is now under the care of a pediatric psychiatrist for panic attacks and depression.

The couple — both are schoolteachers — have filed a federal lawsuit against Bedford County Schools and the Bedford County Sheriff’s Office. It refers to their son only by the initials R.M.B.

It alleges Bedford Middle School Assistant Principal Brian Wilson and school operations chief Frederick “Mac” Duis violated his due process rights under the U.S. Constitution.

“Essentially they kicked him out of school for something they couldn’t prove he did,” said Roanoke attorney Melvin Williams, the Bays’ lawyer.

It also accuses the Bedford County Sheriff’s Office of malicious prosecution, because Deputy M.M. Calohan, a school resource officer, filed marijuana possession charges against the boy despite field tests that indicated otherwise.

“The field test came back not inconclusive, but negative,” Williams said. “Yet she went to a magistrate and swore he possessed marijuana at school.”

Filed Feb. 3 in U.S. District Court in Lynchburg, the lawsuit doesn’t ask for specific damages. “We intend to see what a jury would say about that,” Williams said.

Bedford Sheriff Mike Brown did not return my phone call Thursday (a woman in his office said he was off work last week). Wilson and Duis each declined to comment, and instead referred me to the school system’s lawyer, Salem attorney Jim Guynn. He’s also representing the sheriff.

Guynn has moved to dismiss the suit for a couple of reasons that we’ll get into below.

One argument, he told me, is that under the school board’s anti-drug policies it may not matter whether the leaf was marijuana or not.

Even if the lawsuit is as meritless as he suggests, the case presents a cautionary tale about the current zero-tolerance drug climate in Virginia schools.

The events leading up the boy’s 364-day suspension began Sept. 22. The Bays said they’re still unclear about how or why school officials targeted their son — because they’ve heard three different stories about that.

“We know they relied on ‘tips’ that after the fact turn out to be less than reliable,” Williams said.

One was that R.M.B. was showing off the leaf on the school bus (which also transports Liberty High students) that day. The second was that it happened in a school bathroom. The third is that it occurred inside his homeroom class.

Word apparently made it through the school grapevine to Wilson, who took the Bays’ son out of gym class that day, along with his knapsack, which had been in an unsecured gym locker. They went to Wilson’s office.

There, Linda Bays said, Wilson asked their son “if he had anything he shouldn’t have. He said, ‘No.’”

Wilson then asked the boy to empty his knapsack. As their son did, the assistant principal personally unzipped a small pouch on the pack’s exterior, and found a crumpled leaf and a lighter. He summoned a school resource officer, Bedford County Sheriff’s Deputy M.M. Calohan

Next, Wilson called Linda Bays at work. She's a teacher at Stewartsville Elementary School.

"He told me (her son) had been seen in the bathroom with a marijuana leaf and lighter and that I needed to come to (Bedford Middle School) quickly," Linda said. She called her husband (a retired schoolteacher in both Bedford and Pittsylvania counties) and they met in Wilson's office.

"He had us sit down and he proceeded to tell us (our son) had been seen in the classroom with a lighter and a leaf," Linda said. Wilson added that their son told "several students" that "we had marijuana growing in our back yard and that his dad knew about it and didn't care," Linda said.

"It's farfetched," Bruce said. "Anybody who knows me knows that's not true."

The assistant principal also told the couple that their son had told Wilson a high-schooler on the bus had given him the leaf. (The couple said their son has told them repeatedly he has no idea how the leaf got in his backpack, that he didn't know it was there, and that he never showed it off to anyone.)

"I asked, 'Can I see the leaf?' and the deputy said, 'No, it's already in evidence,' " Linda told me.

"We have never seen the leaf. He's been out of school for six months."

The boy was immediately suspended for 10 days pending an administrative hearing. That happened before Duis on Sept. 29 at the Bedford Science and Technology Center.

Wilson was there but the deputy was not, the Bays said. In the meantime they'd hired Bedford attorney Emily Sitzler to represent their son for that hearing and his later one in juvenile court. They paid her \$1,500. (She didn't return my phone call Thursday.)

Bruce Bays said: "During the hearing I asked Wilson, 'What about the field test on the marijuana leaf?'"

The assistant principal hemmed and hawed "and finally he got around to it and said 'I'm not qualified to interpret the results of the field test,' " Bruce Bays said.

The couple said Duis ultimately rejected Wilson's recommendation for expulsion, but instead suspended their son for 364 days.

The reason Duis cited in a letter he sent later was "possession of marijuana."

The juvenile court hearing happened late in November. When the Bays got there, Sitzler informed them that the commonwealth was going to ask for a continuance because they had neglected to send the leaf off to a state lab for testing.

Linda Bays told Sitzler they wouldn't agree to a continuance. Sitzler went back to the prosecutor, "and she came back and said they were going to drop" the charge.

That's when the Bays learned the leaf had field-tested negative three times.

The lawyer "said the assistant commonwealth's attorney told her they were going to have problems with this case anyway," Linda Bays told me.

After that, "I immediately sent a letter to Dr. Duis requesting a new hearing," Linda Bays told me. His response: "The court system and the school system were two different entities."

Duis' suspension letter also made an allowance for R.M.B to attend Bedford County's alternative education program. Basically, that's a school full of students who are in trouble for all sorts of infractions.

When Linda Bays looked into that, she discovered her son would be searched before and after school every day. Besides that, he'd be going to school with the problem students from every other school. And she didn't want that.

Williams compared it to when a person with no criminal background is sent to prison. They end up getting educated in all kinds of nefarious conduct, the lawyer said.

Instead, the Bays worked out a deal with the school system. They would not appeal the suspension to the Bedford County School Board if their son was allowed to complete the alternative school's online educational program at home.

It's called Edgenuity.

However, that program is strictly timed and if their son could not keep up with it, he would have to attend the alternative school in person, Linda Bays said.

With that hanging over his head, their son was unable to concentrate on the online program and he fell behind. So the Bays worked out another arrangement allowing them to home-school their son. But that has meant he missed out on band practices, performances and the social aspect of school.

The school system also required the boy be evaluated for substance abuse problems. So the Bays took him to his longtime pediatrician in Lynchburg, who referred them to a pediatric psychiatrist.

They said the psychiatrist told them he didn't believe their son had a substance abuse problem. But by then, the boy had other problems.

After the disciplinary hearing, "he just broke down and said his life was over. He would never be able to get into college; he would never be able to get a job," Linda Bays said.

Now their son is skittish about going out in public, suffers from panic attacks and is depressed. The psychiatrist is treating him for that.

In a letter to the school system, Linda Bays said, the doctor has recommended the best thing for their son would be to go back to school.

The school system has agreed to allow him to resume attending another school beginning Monday.

But their son will remain on strict probation until next September, under the terms of the original suspension letter. A minor infraction could get him kicked out again.

I spoke about this case Thursday with the school board's and the sheriff's attorney, Jim Guynn. He said he's filed motions to dismiss the malicious prosecution claim against the sheriff's deputy because it's in the wrong court.

"Malicious prosecution is a state claim," Guynn told me. "If you want to make a malicious prosecution claim you need to be in state court."

But beyond that, he argued, the deputy's filing of the juvenile court charge against R.M.B was not malicious. That's because she visually identified the leaf as marijuana, Guynn said.

"The young man was telling people on the bus that he had marijuana that was given to him by someone from the high school," Guynn told me. The attorney added the leaf was not dried, as marijuana typically is, but that "it was a little sprig" that looked to Guynn exactly like a photo of a marijuana leaf he found on the Internet.

And under the school system's anti-drug policy it may not matter whether the leaf was actually marijuana or a similar-looking leaf, such as from a Japanese maple tree.

That's because the policy treats "lookalike" and "imitation" drugs the same as the real thing.

Here's what it says:

"The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, use or being under the influence of alcohol, anabolic steroids, or any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana or other controlled substance ... (or) imitation controlled substances or drug paraphernalia while on school property, while going to and from school, or while engaged in or attending any school-sponsored or school approved activity or event, is prohibited, and will result in an automatic recommendation of expulsion."

Guynn called that "a pretty standard rule across the commonwealth."

"It's the same punishment and exactly the same result" whether the leaf was marijuana or not, he said. For that reason, the Bays' due-process claim should be tossed out, too, Guynn said.

Williams countered: “If the school argues now that they were justified in suspending him for possession of lookalike marijuana, that’s disingenuous because they’ve never argued that prior to the suit being filed.”

Gynn responded: “I understand what he’s saying. I disagree with that.”

In our interview Wednesday in Williams’ office, I asked the Bays if they thought it was possible their son had showed the leaf to other students and joked about having marijuana.

Back when I was in the sixth grade, I did something similar. I scratched the raised letters BAYER off an aspirin and told another student it was LSD. I think my parents ended up getting a phone call from the school. When they asked me about it later, I told them it was a joke. That was true.

There were no consequences because this happened in 1969, long before an anti-drug fervor had gripped this nation to such an extent that school drug policies covered schoolboy pranks.

The Bays are adamant that’s not what happened in this case, however. They said their son has no idea how the leaf or lighter got in his knapsack, and that he wasn’t joking around.

But there indeed have been consequences.

The Bays are out money for lawyers and doctors, and they’re out the time they’ve taken to homeschool their child. Meanwhile, his psyche is very fragile now compared to its state before Wilson found the leaf in his knapsack.

Linda Bays said that based on scuttlebutt she’s heard since his suspension, she believes one or two students who dislike her son put the leaf in his knapsack, probably on the bus, and then informed school officials about it.

That’s left a situation in which, Bruce Bays said, “any kid can tell on another kid and set that kid up. And a principal or assistant principal could potentially push a kid out of school.”

Linda Bays added: “Why would you want an 11-year-old gifted-and-talented student out of school for 364 days?” That’s a good question. It seems out of proportion to the offense.

Thursday, U.S. District Court Judge Norman Moon ordered the lawsuit be referred to mediation with U.S. Magistrate Robert Ballou. That hasn’t yet been scheduled.

“Three White Correctional Officers Took Him Into A

**Dayroom In Attica's C-Block
And Took Turns Punching,
Kicking, Beating Him With
Batons And Jumping On Him”
“Guards Handcuffed Him And
Threatened To Push Him Down A
Flight Of Stairs Unless He Walked”
“When He Couldn't, They Kept Their
Promise And Then Smashed His
Head Into A Wall”
“Both Of His Legs Were Broken, Along
With His Shoulder, Ribs And Orbital Eye
Socket”**

March 12, 2015 by Lichi D'Amelio and Lee Wengraf, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

It is a sign of our society's sick treatment of the people it incarcerates that George Williams could be described as “lucky.”

Williams survived a beating at the hands of at least three prison guards at New York's infamous Attica Correctional Facility on August 9, 2011. The incident has been described in gruesome detail by New York Times veteran investigative journalist Tom Robbins [1], who spent months interviewing prisoners and staff at the prison.

On March 2, a plea deal was announced that allowed Sgt. Sean Warner, Officer Matthew Rademacher and Officer Keith Swack to plead guilty to misdemeanor charges of official misconduct. “This marks the first time a prison guard in New York has been criminally charged with a nonsexual assault of a prisoner,” reported Democracy Now!'s Nermeen Shaikh [2]. “It's also the first time in state history a guard has pleaded guilty to committing an unauthorized violent act against a prisoner while on duty.”

The plea bargain allows the correctional officers to serve no time for their crime and keep their pensions, in exchange for losing their jobs. As the Correctional Association

(CA) of New York, a nonprofit organization based in New York City, termed it [3], "This is historic, but it is not justice."

Williams, who is African American, was serving a sentence of two to four years for robbery, and had only four months left before he was to be released. He was 29 years old at the time, 5-foot-8-inches and "a solid 170 pounds," according to Robbins.

These details matter because the three white correctional officers who took him into a dayroom in Attica's C-Block and took turns punching, kicking, beating him with batons and jumping on him as he lay on the floor "begging for his life" range in size from 5-foot-11-inches and 240 pounds to 6-foot-3-inches and 300 pounds.

The beating was so severe that witnesses agree Williams was unable to walk when it was over. Still, the guards handcuffed him and threatened to push him down a flight of stairs unless he walked. When he couldn't, they kept their promise and then smashed his head into a wall. Both of his legs were broken, along with his shoulder, ribs and orbital eye socket.

The plan was to then take him to solitary, but the officer on duty there wouldn't accept him because he was in such bad shape. At the infirmary, a nurse who had been on the job for only 10 months at that point refused to accept Williams due to the severity of his injuries and recommended that he be taken to an outside hospital. Her decision likely saved his life.

Williams' injuries proved too much for the hospital in nearby Warsaw to handle--one of his legs would require surgery--so he had to be taken to a hospital 50 miles away in Buffalo.

"As he rode the highways of western New York that sweltering night, Williams worried that if he were to be brought back to Attica, he would be killed," writes Robbins, "He asked a medical attendant to lend him his cell phone so he could call his family. The attendant refused."

It's hard to imagine the sheer agony Williams felt that night, thinking it may have been the last chance to take some comfort in hearing the familiar voices of his loved ones. But those who are labeled "criminals" apparently don't deserve the same kind of humanity as other people, even when it could very well be their last night.

Before the beating, the guards claimed they were taking Williams to the dayroom for an impromptu drug test when they found he was carrying a weapon.

But a witness reported seeing one of the guards remove a razor from a plastic safety razor after the beating and yell loudly, "We got a weapon."

According to other prisoners, the beating was retribution for someone mouthing off to a guard distributing the mail that night--but, they say, it wasn't Williams.

Leaving aside the question of why a man with only four months left on his sentence would jeopardize his release, it says something disturbing about the culture in Attica that the guards felt confident their explanation for beating a man nearly to death while he lay cowering on the floor would be a perfectly acceptable one.

The assault on Williams is by no means an isolated incident. Violence and abuse at the hands of prison guards has a long history at Attica, along with inhuman conditions and suppression of prisoners' rights.

Attica is the site of the historic rebellion in 1971 [4], where prisoners took over the facility, calling for improved health care and educational programs, religious and politics freedoms, an end to segregation and the state minimum wage law for the incarcerated.

As Correctional Association investigations have documented [5], violence, racism and abuse at Attica is no less true today.

“The Abiding Problem In Attica Has Been An Underlying Culture Of Abuse That Essentially Normalizes The Brutalization Of The Mostly Black And Latino People Incarcerated There”

As a person incarcerated at Attica describes on the organization's website:

“Some people have been handcuffed, then beaten with sticks, and the cries for help are so loud, but useless, because there is no help. So our voices remain trapped behind this wall.

“The 1971 (Attica) riot led people across the country to hear the voice of incarcerated persons, exposing the foulness of the torture and inhumane conditions. Today, the same foulness that went on in the past is going on today.

Activists and advocates have called for Attica to be closed and for corrections authorities to end abuse elsewhere in the prison system. According to Edward-Yemil Rosario, formerly incarcerated in New York state and the Associate Director for the CA's Prison Visiting Project:

“For decades, the abiding problem in Attica has been an underlying culture of abuse--a banality of evil--that essentially normalizes the brutalization of the mostly Black and Latino people incarcerated there at the hands of white correctional officers. This culture is predicated on a deeply embedded racism that operates with impunity.

“Unfortunately, Attica is not alone in these abuses. Recent investigations of other New York prisons have uncovered similar systemic abuses. The people of New York must engage in envisioning a greater society in which the state-sanctioned violence of incarceration is not the default response to the issues of poverty, lack of educational access, and economic injustice. A necessary first step towards creating a greater society would be closing the real and symbolic epicenter of that violence: Attica.”

Antonio Yarbough, formerly incarcerated at Attica and recently exonerated [6], joined Tom Robbins on Democracy Now! to call for Attica to be shut down and turned into a museum.

The Williams case has pushed the depths of the abuse into the light of day, yet the struggle to close Attica will be an uphill fight. The facility is Wyoming County's biggest

employer. The 2,240 prisoners will undoubtedly now face guards who see that a vicious beating will lead to little more than a slap on the wrist, even when it is exposed.

Yet the call to close Attica and fight for prison reform and abolition will resonate with the wider radicalization about the urgency to end mass incarceration and the new Jim Crow, as well as police violence, both on the streets and behind bars.

Above all, what's important about George Williams's case is precisely what's not unique about it: heightened awareness of violence at Rikers Island in New York City [7], in overcrowded prisons in California and elsewhere have made the widespread horrific conditions at correctional facilities across the country painfully clear.

The complete and utter vulnerability of the incarcerated to the whims of sadistic, depraved guards is obscured by the label "criminal." As Michelle Alexander points out in *The New Jim Crow* [8], it's a label that immediately strips people of even the most basic of human rights. It's acceptable to do practically anything to a "criminal," and the concrete cover of the prison walls shields the banal cruelty of prison life from the eyes of the outside world.

A radical vision for change behind bars is urgently needed, and it was powerfully captured in the *Manifesto of Demands* [10] read out by LD Barkley, one of the leaders of the Attica rebellion who was killed along with 38 others when the prison was violently re-taken:

"We are men! We are not beasts and do not intend to be beaten or driven as such. The entire prison populace has set forth to change forever the ruthless brutalization and disregard for the lives of the prisoners here and throughout the United States.

"What has happened here is but the sound before the fury of those who are oppressed...We call upon all the conscientious citizens of America to assist us in putting an end to this situation that threatens not only our lives, but each and every citizen as well."

[1] <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/01/nyregion/attica-prison-infamous-for-bloodshed-faces-a-reckoning-as-guards-go-on-trial.html>

[2] http://www.democracynow.org/2015/3/5/atticas_ghosts_new_calls_to_close

[4] <http://socialistworker.org/2013/03/08/rebellion-at-attica>

[5] <http://www.correctionalassociation.org/resources/close-attica>

[6] http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/02/09/brooklyn-men-exonerated_n_4755897.html

[7] <http://socialistworker.org/2014/11/20/fighting-for-justice-inside-nyc-jails>

[8] <http://newjimcrow.com/>

[10] http://www.freedomarchives.org/audio_samples/Attica.html

[11] <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0>

Racist Emails By San Francisco Cops Published:

**“My Wife Friend Is Over With Their Kids And Her Husband Is Black!”
Reply: “Get Ur Pocket Gun. Keep It Available In Case The Monkey Returns To His Roots”
“Worth Every Penny” To Live In A Neighborhood “Away From The Savages”**

March 16, 2015 by Esther Yu-Hsi Lee, ThinkProgress [Excerpts]

The San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) will investigate dozens of racist and homophobic text exchanges between a former SFPD sergeant convicted of corruption charges and four other police officers, the San Francisco Chronicle first reported.

The texts made public Friday included jokes about Kwanzaa, calling African Americans monkeys, calling for the lynching of all African Americans, and even one that said, “Its not against the law to put an animal down.”

The four officers have been on the force for at least a decade, with two having faced disciplinary action in the past.

The text messages came to light after the Attorney General’s office filed a motion to release the texts to keep former SFPD Sgt. Ian Furminger in custody as a way “to show the officer’s character” and deny him bail, ABC News reported.

Furminger, a 20-year veteran, is currently seeking to appeal his conviction and a three-year prison sentence for charges stemming from “a scheme to steal money and property seized during searches and arrests in 2009,” a local CBS news affiliate reported.

Here is a selection of the text messages exchanged between October 2011 and June 2012, while Furminger was still on the police force:

In response to a text asking “Do you celebrate quanza (sic) at your school?” Furminger wrote: “Yeah we burn the cross on the field! Then we celebrate Whitemas.”

“The buffalo soldier was why the Indians Wouldnt shoot the niggers that found for the confederate They thought they were sacred buffalo and not human.”

In response to a text saying “niggers should be spayed,” Furminger wrote “I saw one an hour ago with 4 kids.”

In response to a text saying “All niggers must fucking hang,” Furminger wrote “Ask my 6 year old what he thinks about Obama.”

“I was trying to be nice to you as everyone knows your gay. I love calling you a fag. Good enough?”

“You are a total homo! And your gay!”

“I hate to tell you this but my wife friend is over with their kids and her husband is black! If is an Attorney but should I be worried?” Furminger’s friend, an SFPD officer, responded: “Get ur pocket gun. Keep it available in case the monkey returns to his roots. Its not against the law to put an animal down.”

Furminger responded, “Well said!”

In response to a text from another SFPD officer regarding the promotion of a black officer to sergeant, Furminger wrote: “Fuckin nigger.”

Furminger also wrote that he was watching one particular black family “like a hawk,” that it was “worth every penny” to live in a neighborhood “away from the savages,”

“White power,” and “Cross burning lowers blood pressure! I did the test myself!” His bail hearing is set for next week.

The four officers who exchanged virulently racist and homophobic text messages were identified by multiple sources with the San Francisco Chronicle as Michael Robison, Noel Schwab, Rain Daugherty and Michael Celis.

Last month, three officers were reassigned to non-public-contact positions in the department, while one took personal leave.

San Francisco police Chief Greg Suhr said Saturday that while he couldn’t confirm the identities of the police officers, he would fire the individuals who sent the text messages.

YOUR INVITATION:

Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome.

Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or email contact@militaryproject.org:

Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.

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