The Final Straw is a weekly anarchist and anti-authoritarian radio show bringing you voices and ideas from struggle around the world. Since 2010, we’ve been broadcasting from occupied Tsalagi land in Southern Appalachia (Asheville, NC).

We also frequently feature commentary (serious and humors) by anarchist prisoner, Sean Swain.

You can send us letters at:
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JENNIFER A ROSE

A brief conversation with Jennifer Rose, a member of the Fire Ant Collective which just released it’s 8th issue. She is a trans woman who came up in the southern California punk scene, became politicized and began organizing inside of prison since the late 1990’s.

Aired on April 23, 2020
First you’ll hear Jennifer Rose. Jennifer, formerly known as Jennifer Gann, is a member of the Fire Ant Collective which just released it’s 8th issue. She is a trans woman who came up in the southern California punk scene, became politicized and began organizing inside of prison since the late 1990’s. You can learn more about Jennifer Rose’s case by visiting BabyGirlGann.noblogs.org where you can find out how to donate to her legal fund. You can read issues of Fire Ant Journal up at Bloomington ABC’s (https://bloomingtonabc.noblogs.org) & Blue Ridge ABC’s website (https://brabc.blackblogs.org/).

As of the date of publication (Feb 16, 2021) you can write to Jennifer at:

Jennifer Rose E – 23852
Salinas Valley State Prison D3-1250
P.O. Box 1050
Soledad, CA 93960

you can double check that information at https://bloomingtonabc.noblogs.org/anarchist-prisoners/jennifer-gann/

You can find out how to format support letters, you can email her lawyer, Richard Rutledge at RLaw@RutledgeAttorneys.com or write to Mr Rutledge at:

Richard Rutledge, Attorney At Law
7960 B
Soquel Drive #354
Aptos, CA 95003

You can also visit Jennifer’s blog at: https://betweenthebars.org/blogs/490/jennifer-amelia-rose

for miscellaneous writing, poetry and art (such as the back cover image).
Robcat, Michael Kimble, Sean Swain and Bloomington ABC. We all had similar ideas of trying to organize and facilitate a national or international anarchist prisoner conference where we could bring together the collective voice of imprisoned anarchist rebels, perhaps publish a paper, start a support fund to raise funds and material aid, and generally build anarchist prisoner solidarity in a way we haven’t yet seen!

We’ve always had ABC and National Jericho Movement mainly focus on leftist ‘political prisoners.’ Many imprisoned anarchists are not recognized as ‘political’. In point of fact, we are anti-political! However, we believe that ALL prisons are political. Anyways, the part I played is pulling all these comrades’ ideas together, and putting them in direct contact about this exciting project.

Once Robcat offered to facilitate a zine, Bloomington ABC offered to provide printing and distribution free! And they also haheda had a support fund set up. So we all pulled together and formed the Fire Ant collective. Robcat came up with the name and we all contributed to the zine connecting our individual and collective struggles from prisons across the U.S. and internationally! I’m proud to be an accomplice in this sedition’s conspiracy toward worldwide anarchist insurgency.

**TFSR: There have been some victories of recent in your sentence. Can you talk about what happened?**

**Jennifer Rose:** As far as my recent sentence reduction on October 28, 2019, this only affected one of my sentences for assault and battery on the prosecutor, a ‘non-serious’ felony, which was knocked down from 25-years-to-life to 8 years. Yay!

**TFSR:** Similarly, you were telling me of improvements in the conditions of your confinement as relates to gender, right? And what are next steps for you and what can listeners do to support you and try to hasten your release?

**Jennifer Rose:** My next steps are getting my surgery, transferring to a women’s facility, and a parole suitability hearing on July 28, 2020 with the Board of Parole Hearings (BPH). The greatest support comes in the form of letters to the Board and/or the Governor advocating for my

**TFSR:** Could you please introduce yourself for the audience? Who are you and where are you?

**Jennifer Rose:** I’m glad to hear from you and happy to have this opportunity to participate in The Final Straw Radio.

So, to introduce myself, my name is Jennifer Rose. I’m a a trans woman incarcerated in California and currently held at Salinas Valley State Prison, a men’s facility.

**TFSR:** Can you tell us a bit about where you came from and how you came to be incarcerated?

**Jennifer Rose:** I’m from Southern California, born and raised in Riverside, and spent my teenage years living in Huntington Beach (Orange County). I was in the 1980’s punk rock scene around the L.A. area doing a lot of drinking and drugs which led to my involvement in an attempted robbery and another armed robbery for which I was jailed, convicted and sent to prison for seven years.

**TFSR:** How did you become politicized?

**Jennifer Rose:** While I was serving my time at Folsom Prison, I became involved in prison protests and abolitionist struggle, for which I was targeted, placed in solitary confinement and beaten by guards.

This is how I became politicized as a prison rebel, resisting brutality and torture, sabotaging and breaking a dozen prison cell windows in the inhumane ‘Ad-Seg’ unit. I was involved in the gladiator fights where guards encouraged racial violence and then shot at us with 9mm assault rifles using live ammo. There were additional charges brought against me for attacking a pig officer, for weapon possession, and for two assaults on a state prosecutor and associate warden. For these I was given a 25 years-to-life sentence under the ‘three strikes’ law. This was around 1995 and 1996.

**TFSR:** Can you talk about the struggle of being a woman in a male-assigned prison? What sort of support have you received and what sorts of hurdles?
Jennifer Rose: To answer your question about being a transwoman in a men’s facility, we have faced the most adverse circumstances imaginable. From the discriminatory harassment and brutality of the pigs, to the hatred and violence of other prisoners, and even rapes and murder! This has began to change more recently, at last in California with many legal reforms and court victories.

I have been able to find widespread support from outside groups like Black & Pink and TGI Justice project, among others. Also, lots of support among abolitionist and anarchist collectives, and the extended family of LGBTQ prisoners. The main hurdles we face continue to be our unsafe housing conditions, exposure to homophobic and transmisogynist violence from gangs, domestic and sexual violence. We are in a very disadvantageous situation facing the various types of gender violence on a daily!

TFSR: Is there anything else you’d like to say about how you discovered anarchism and what inspires you about anarchy?

Jennifer Rose: I became politicized during the 1991 Folsom Prison Food Strike, which was a protest against proposed visiting restrictions that cut our visiting days from four times a week to twice (weekends and holidays). Just prior to this, I was given a copy of the anarchist zine Love & Rage by another prisoner and had also been influenced by Jailhouse Lawyers to educate myself about so-called legal rights and remedies for which I became a strong advocate.

Eventually I would learn the hard way that the pigs don’t give a fuck about the law, or peoples rights. It’s only used at their convenience as a tool of social control and criminalization of marginalized people and communities. The people thing that inspires me about Anarchy is the simplicity of the idea, of abolishing the State and it’s illegitimate Power. They claim their Authority from God and Natural Law... and originally as white male property owners under colonial government. That’s crap! I love the basic concept of Anarchy, which is Freedom! It’s basic principles of voluntary cooperation and mutual aid, non-hierarchy and autonomous collectives, internationalism and solidarity, etc.

TFSR: Have you been able to do much organizing within prison? If so, around what sorts of issues and how did it go?

Jennifer Rose: I’ve done a lot of organizing within prisons, including legal advocacy and ‘jailhouse lawyer’ work, as former leadership in Black & Pink and working with TGI Justice Project to change discriminatory policies and improve living conditions for trans women in the men’s prisons. We’ve had a lot of success and made progress over the past 12 years or so, including better access to basic trans health care (e.g. hormones, surgery, etc), access to and inclusion in prison programs and job assignments, accommodation of women’s clothing and cosmetics and more awareness of and prevention of sexual abuse among other things. I am currently awaiting an approved gender affirming surgery and transfer to a women’s facility sometime this year!

TFSR: You mentioned in a letter with me that you organized briefly with Maoists. Are you now or have you ever been a Maoist (that’s a Senator McCarthy joke)? But, really, how did that happen? What was that like?

Jennifer Rose: As for Maoists, yes, I did work with MIM-Prisons for a while which offered study group and worked directly with prisoners on many projects. I carried on a dialogue with them via correspondence, often debating with them over my anarchist sympathies and their political line on gender and State power (their ‘Dictatorship of the Proletariat’). I did think I could work within that Maoist framework at one point, but eventually had to reject the ideological bickering sectarianism of Maoists. I’ve always been an anarchist at heart, even when I went through this stage in my personal development. Eventually I came in contact with insurrectionary anarchist writings from Greek comrades in the FAI-IRF and CCF, which I was strongly influenced by, and developed friendships with like-minded comrades.

TFSR: You’re a collective member of Fire Ant. Can you talk about the project and what part you play in it?

Jennifer Rose: I’m extremely proud of my involvement as a member of the Fire Ant collective. The project started as a concept I was discussing with several different comrades via regular correspondence, including