

PRESS RELEASE

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Rita Darlene Brown, a lesbian feminist revolutionary, plead guilty in Federal Court (Portland, Oregon) on January 11, 1978, to one count of robbery and one count of weapons violation. She was arrested on November 4, 1977 in Seattle by the FBI on a warrant from Oregon charging her with five counts of bank robbery and two weapons violations. On November 14 she was removed to Oregon and was held on \$100,000 bond. She had previously pleaded innocent to all the counts against her contained in an indictment returned by a grand jury in Portland in September 1977. Judge Belloni accepted Rita's guilty plea and dropped the remaining five counts. Brown is in prison in Alderson Women's Correctional Institution awaiting sentencing in late February. According to Prosecuting Attorney Charles Turner, investigations in Seattle will "probably culminate in a grand jury and further indictments against Brown."

Before Rita's arrest she had been sought for several months in the Pacific Northwest by the FBI. She is a member of the George Jackson Brigade, a revolutionary underground organization that has been operating in the Seattle area for about 2 years. In November 1977 they published a political statement of their principles, and history. Members of the Brigade are wanted in Washington and Oregon in connection with several bombings and bank robberies that have taken place in both states.

"The poor can continue to want more and have less--to pay 25% of their salaries to taxes and the rest to barely survive--to live in fear of the state and it's ever-growing police forces--to live in ghettos and prison cells--to live in fear of continual FBI illegal harassments such as phone taps and sneak picture taking, always in the name of intelligence OR they can get up off their knees and fight back! I have chosen to fight back, to resist, to work with others in doing what is necessary to see that our children have a future in which they will have control of their own lives. From each according to their ability--to each according to their need. This resistance, like everything else, requires capital. The banks hold this necessary capital and are vulnerable, so they become a target..." said Rita in a statement she made in court after she changed her plea.

Rita D. Brown has been involved in both the prison and women's movements in Seattle for many years. Because police believe that the GJB emerged from the prison movement in the Seattle area, they have been focusing their harassment on current movement activists, single mothers, and lesbians as part of their investigation. In early 1976, federal Grand Jury subpoenas were served to several people in the Seattle area. Since Rita's arrest, prison and women's movement activists have been subjected to a barrage of repressive tactics in Seattle, Portland and Eugene. Tactics have included tapping phones, surveillance, tailing people, harassing lesbian mothers, offering bribes and questioning collective businesses. It is appropriate to remember that refusing to talk to the FBI is a legal right; that lying to them is a felony; that anything said to them, however trivial, can be used in court against you or someone else.

Coverage by the Oregon media has been sparse, particularly since Rita's arrest. FBI District Director John Reed said the FBI is withholding specific information on her case "because we don't want to give the George Jackson Brigade people any more publicity. That's what they're after." Lack of information on the case has made it difficult for newspaper and TV people to report on Rita's situation.

Rita D. Brown is one of the many women to have been arrested world-wide for fighting against the system of class exploitation, racism and sexism. Her companions in herstory include Lolita Lebron, Assata Shakur, Susan Saxe, Emily Harris, Joann Little, Yvonne Wanrow and Inez Garcia.

For more information or donations in Eugene write: Rita D. Brown Defense Committee, P.O. Box 705, Eugene, OR. 97404 ; in Portland: 1915 N.E. Everett, Portland OR, 97232; in Seattle: P.O. Box 22204, Seattle, WA, 98122. Letters of support can be sent to Rita D. Brown, Alderson Federal Corrections Institution, Alderson W. Virginia, 24910.

Rita's sentencing is February 21, at the Federal Courthouse in Portland.

COURT STATEMENT--1/11/78--RITA DARLENE BROWN

I am a member of a revolutionary organization known as the George Jackson Brigade. This group of freedom fighters has and most certainly will continue to expropriate the funds necessary to promote guerilla warfare in amerikkka. This means that the GJB robs banks to help finance other revolutionary activities. This tactic is by no means new or the result of any individual illness. This sickness is capitalism/imperialism spreading across the world destroying the earth and its peoples to satisfy its greed and need to own everything--the rich get richer and fewer.

The poor can continue to want more and have less--to pay 25% of their salaries to taxes and the rest to barely survive--to live in fear of the state and its ever-growing police forces--to live in ghettos and prison cells--to live in fear of continual FBI illegal harassments such as phone taps and sneak picture-taking always in the name of intelligence OR they can get up off their knees and fight back!! I have chosen to fight back, to resist, to work with others in doing what is necessary to see that our children have a future in which they will have control of their own lives. From each according to their ability--to each according to their need. This resistance, like everything else, requires capital. The banks hold this necessary capital and are vulnerable, so they become a target.

"Robbery" has been a worldwide strategy since the man/hunters invaded and enslaved the women and children of ancient agricultural tribes. This "robbery" literally ripped off millions of Africans, destroyed their cultures and made beasts of those who survived the slave ships. This "robbery" murdered and then confined the remains of native American tribes rich with cultures of respect for all living things. This "robbery" has been the strategy of the very rich and very white ruling class used to conquer and destroy. But this strategy has more recently reached a turning point. In the hands of the working peoples of this earth, this "robbery" is dead. A new concept, expropriation is born--to take rich private property for public use, to make the state pay for its own destruction. Today in Africa, in Asia, in Europe, in South America and in North America expropriation is a tool used to finance the inevitable revolution. Expropriation is only one of the many tools used to help expose and fight the real robber barons of the world.

A close study of the actions and communiques of the GJB will clearly show that there is no desire or intention to harm any member of the working class. The immediate goals, as i see them, are to point out the crimes of the ruling pigs, to strike repeated solid blows to the belly of the beast (the oppressor state), and to encourage others to fight back by demonstrating that it is possible to do so.

The purpose of this room--all the big words used here, the games of slick dressing, the games of procedure, and the life and death power given to a few elite men is only another example of white, patriarchal ruling class intimidation. I consider this court to be a disgusting and sick mockery of justice. Guilt is commonly defined as feeling remorseful for having done something wrong. I feel no regret at having entered the US Nat'l Bank in Wilsonville, Oregon on 2/7/77, handing the teller a note and leaving with \$7,753. I do not consider it wrong to participate in the act of expropriating the real robbers/criminals. Nor do I consider it wrong for the people, felons or not, to possess a weapon. The people must be armed and that is why i carried a firearm during the bank robbery.

For more information write; DYKE ANARCHISTS  
c/o Lesbians Rising  
Hunter College Student Act.  
Office Box 181  
695 Park Ave,  
New York, N.Y. 10021

LOVE & RAGE  
FIRE & SMOKE--  
RITA

information write; DYKE ANARCHISTS, c/o Lesbians Rising  
Hunter College Student Activities Office,  
Box 181  
695 Park Ave. New York, NY 10021  
A SHORT AUTOBIOGRAPHY  
by Rita Brown

I turned 30 on October 14th and have discovered my first grey hairs in recent weeks. I grew up in Klamath Falls, a redneck Weyerhaeuser town in rural Oregon; my parents fled the poverty of the South a couple of years before I was born. I have one sibling who lives in that same town, raises a family and works for that same mill. My mom was a passive, nagging, battered wife and my dad an uneducated, insecure alcoholic most of my life. They have both made huge changes in their lives in more recent years. I started working outside the home about age 14; my first encounter with the police was age 16 about a stolen car. Luckily, the owner dropped the charges--his daughter (my lover) was also joy riding. As far as I knew we were the only queers in the world and I had never heard of a clitoris. My parents took out a small loan and sent me to a small local business college. They did this because I was good in school and it was all they could do. I transferred to the Salem branch where I graduated with accounting and IBM skills. Almost got kicked out of the dorm for a hot romance with a wonderful womyn; we never made it to bed and she had to stay there so I called them all a bunch of liars and squeaked by.

I moved to Seattle in '68 where a lifetime/school/neighborhood male friend lived. He helped me learn the city and eat--no strings attached and certainly no sex. Got a job in a bank balancing the savings department to a computer, that lasted nine months and then I got hired by the Post Office. I discovered the gay bars and went through changes with my bi-sexual lover (the same one from high school) until she finally split, then I became a working class bar butch dyke. I drank a lot, got even tougher and went to work every day for over a year.

Eventually there was another lover; we lived closer to the hippie-dopers and tripped out frequently, I "came out" verbally at the job. There were other queers there and we were pretty strong and took care of one another even though we never organized as such. All through this period I had several more encounters with the police mostly around traffic violations and once for shoplifting. I'd always hear stories in the bars and see bruises on the people who'd been in various police hassles--mostly because they were queer. The police were still kicking in and tearing up gay bars on a fairly regular basis. In '71 I got busted for stealing from my boss who was still the U.S.P.O. Did 7 months of a one year and one day sentence in Terminal Island Federal Penitentiary, Calif. Learned a whole lot about racism, queer hating, mean police, junkies and other such facts of life; I learned a lot from sisters there, like that self hate, disgust and feelings of helplessness experienced throughout my youth could have easily led me (if I'd been raised in a city where it was readily available) to dope and getting strung out. George Jackson was murdered--shot in the back--and the Attica massacre happened while I was locked up.

Came back to Seattle to find no lover, no home, only a couple of friends and no job. So I went through a couple of government programs and a few lovers and finally learned from another dyke that womyn are not chicks. The first womyn's event I went to was at the U of W-- an IWD conference--there was a prison workshop going on, run by some social workers who had all their experience on the outside of the bars. Well I told them they didn't know what they were talking about and I became a public speaker and the token ex-con that very day.

Shortly after this, I was at SCCC where they paid (work study jobs) people to do prison work. After a bullshit trip with an ego manical man there, a womyn's prison project was formed with a fine strong sister/lover. I was part of the politico lesbian community. I worked on lots of different projects with children, womyn, men and 3rd World peoples but prison work was always the most important in my life. In a couple of years, I heard a lot of folks in a lot of places talk about the revolution, but nobody did anything except talk. The BLA and Assata were working their asses off but nobody in Seattle did a thing. Then the SLA stormed over the ruling classes toes and met a fiery death; still nobody did anything. Then the GJB started happening right under our very noses-- it made sense to me that you just can't talk rockefeller et al into giving up what they have stolen from the people. I knew it was time for me to put my words into action