



Des Moines Mutual Aid Monthly

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Renee Good, Alex Pretti: Martyrs

BY COMRADE PATRICK

Renee Good was not especially political. She had only recently moved to Minneapolis with her wife when federal agents decided to invade the city and was focused on her job and raising her son. Good was returning from dropping him off at school when she found that the street she lived on was swarming with ICE agents. She and her wife did what any decent person would do: they tried to make these pigs’ jobs harder by taking up space on the road, being loud, and filming. When ICE escalated, she tried to drive away from them and was shot three times in front of her wife.

Renee was 37 years old when she died. She was a poet and a writer and leaves behind three children, her wife, and a devastated family. Her life was more valuable than that of every single ICE agent. Rest in Power, Renee Good.

Alex Pretti was an outdoorsman and mountain biker who cared deeply about the land he hiked and rode on. He had lived in Minneapolis for over a decade, where he worked for years as an ICU nurse and a medical researcher. He went out, as thousands of Minnesotans must now do every day, to document and impede federal agents’ house-to-house searches for

people to kidnap. When CPB swine pepper-sprayed and knocked over a woman feet away from him, Alex stepped between the woman and her attacker. Pigs then maced, tackled, pinned down, and beat him, took Alex’s holstered, legally-carried firearm, and shot him 12 times while he was being held face-down on the ground.

Alex was 37 when he died. He was described by friends and coworkers as “a helpful, smiling, joking guy” with a “great heart”. He is survived by his parents, friends and neighbors. He demonstrated more humanity in his final moments than his murderers will know in a lifetime. Rest in Power, Alex Pretti. ■

You’re Next

BY COMRADE QUARTZ

You may as well assume that your city, wherever you are, will be the next one to be invaded by the violent occupying force known as ICE, or whatever comes after that. All of the same pretense and excuses will be used against your community, to attack your neighbors and anyone who looks at these monsters the wrong way. If somewhere in that course of events you fuck up seriously enough - by breathing wrong, squinting too much, being on the wrong side of the street at the wrong time, or not moving out of the way fast enough, you will be shot in the face. Then, you’ll be humiliated and degraded publicly by the media and elected officials. You will be treated no better than these animals have treated countless mothers, friends, and children.

If you play your cards right, you could find the next new thing, a new way to resist the occupation—a lesson for everyone, a good lesson taken up by others. Each of us has only one life, nothing else comes after it, and we are each entitled to spend it how we choose—no matter what any government, pastor, family member, boss, or anyone else has to say about the matter. We have grounds to be afraid, to be terrified, to stay on the right side of the law. Indeed, you should remain in the bounds of the law since no regime has ever been more legitimate than this one! That aside, John Brown’s raid on Harper’s Ferry was *not* an attempt to commit righteous suicide. John Brown had a plan—to free slaves, and he enacted it precisely because he (and those like Harriet Tubman who morally and materially supported him) had sound reason to believe

it could *work*, i.e., would succeed, and that he might himself survive. He was ruthless with an enemy who was ruthless with everyone—and it was his moral right to be so. That he failed is no matter in the end. As Victor Serge said, “it is a worse error merely to live for oneself, caught within traditions which are soiled by inhumanity.”

I am advocating against suicide. Many of our constitutionally protected rights are not presently recognized by the government: you’d better not breathe in the direction of an ICE agent or risk Stephen Miller accusing you of domestic terrorism. What matters, and what many of us forget, is that our schemes, plots, and activities, although legal, should be ones we’re given a lot of thought to—and not about how to exchange one life (our own) for another, as some martyr and savior. Tragically, we will have more martyrs no matter what. What we ought to consider is how to *win*, how to utterly rout them and send them packing with their tails between their legs, how to completely frustrate their aims and grind them to a halt, to earn our celebration as a community capable of defending itself *successfully*. Bizarre as it sounds, we are in a time when one must think about *getting away with already legal, constitutionally protected activity, even protected speech*. We should aspire to do it without a single casualty more—don’t aim for less, and don’t give your dear life over to them for nothing. Nobody will come to you with a plan. You have to find one of your own, take the time to think it through carefully in every imaginable detail, and find people you trust to enact it, to succeed, to get away free without the slightest suspicion, and aspire to survive and to defeat the enemy. We are on your side to the end. ■



A Guy Who Never Dies

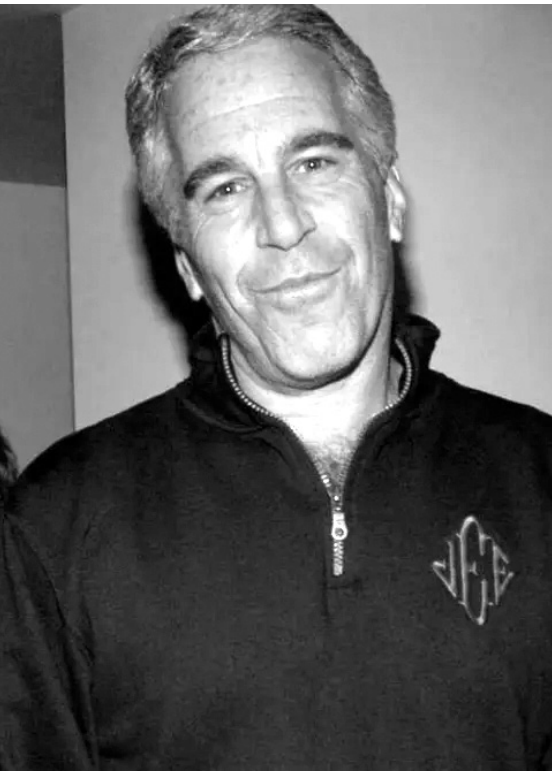
BY COMRADE PATRICK

Obfuscated by the capitalist press in its ‘coverage’ of “The Epstein Files” is that Jeffery Epstein’s operation was not really about money or pedophilia but about that most precious of political currencies, blackmail. Every room in the New York penthouse, the Lolita Express, and Little St. James compound was wired up with hidden cameras which surreptitiously recorded unspeakable crimes. The blackmail thus collected is presumably used the same way which all other blackmail is used: to force action on the part of its subject by threat of exposure. The fact that current and former presidents are subject to this sort of blackmail influence is disturbing enough. The sheer breadth of the operation of which Epstein was one nexus and the number of political elites implicated suggests that the collection of blackmail and participation in foul acts is not only used for political influence but constitutes a part of the formation of elite solidarity.

How should the left integrate these facts into its theory and practice? It is critical to maintain our class analysis and understand that these inter-elite influence/solidarity

operations take place on a foundation built by the logic of capital, that people like Epstein drive the how but not the why of capitalist politics. But we must absorb the lesson, ignored by the electoral left, that real decisions are not made by voters or in the halls of congress, but in darkness. You cannot elect enough DSA candidates to break the sort of elite solidarity that Jeffery Epsteins cement. That sort of power must be broken by force, not bargained with at the ballot box.

We may also be able to use the elite’s crimes as ammunition against them. Generally, the left has squeamishly abandoned the conversation around Epstein to the radical right. Why? The likes of Marjorie Taylor Greene have (often accurately) described their political enemies as pedophilic elites, to her own electoral success and significant cultural purchase. It is literally true that many of our class enemies are pedophiles, and that this fact is critical to how they retain power! The charge of elite pedophilia has proven rhetorically effective, and we cannot afford to leave such weapons laying on the ground. Our enemies are monsters. We lose nothing by broadcasting that fact. ■



ASK

DES MOINES
MUTUAL
★ AID ★

Dear Des Moines Mutual Aid,

Are you a revolutionary organization?

—Buttery Biscuits

Dearest Biscuits,

In left-wing terminology, a revolution refers to a social revolution, which is a transformation of the human relationships that determine how goods are produced and distributed (through the market for money? as gifts?). Contrast this to a political revolution, which is a transformation of the mode of government. I think we all want the former, because we all think things could be better for humankind, and that’s probably true. But none of us agree on how to get it, or where it would end up, or what the process is like, or who the actors are. That has its downsides. But there are also downsides to the groups that can muster agreement among their members—dogmatism, rigidity, and the same non-starting confusion as everyone else on the left. All that said, being revolutionary is also a cool look—much like chuffing back a dart and blowing smoke rings. We advise it - as having no hope in the future of humankind has even more damaging psychological effects than optimism does.



This edition of Ask Des Moines Mutual Aid’s Answer was written by Comrade Quartz. Keep sending your questions to desmoinesmutualaid@protonmail.com ■

THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING AND
SELLING OUT OUR “BRING THE HEAT”
BENEFIT SHOW
WE WERE ABLE TO RAISE OVER \$3,000
FOR OUR UNHOUSED NEIGHBORS!

Brace Yourself

BY COMRADE RICKY P

“We must accept the eventuality of bringing the USA to its knees; accept the closing off of critical sections of the city with barbed wire, armored pig carriers crisscrossing the streets, soldiers everywhere, tommy guns pointed at stomach level, smoke curling black against the daylight sky, the smell of cordite, house to house searches, doors being kicked in, the commonness of death”
-George Jackson, Blood in My Eye

Federal agents murdered two people in a city four hours north of us, in broad daylight. The government is not even maintaining a pretense that the federal agents who committed these murders will face any justice whatsoever. DHS has assured its goons that they are immune from prosecution, and the Democrats who control Minneapolis’ justice system have tacitly agreed.

Killings like this will continue. Federal pigs will use the same tactics that they’re trying out in Minneapolis in other cities, including Des Moines. Thousands of swine, clouds of tear gas, illegal arrests of anyone brown and anyone who stands in their way. Any decent person who opposes ICE is now in the crosshairs of an unrestrained neo-Confederate police apparatus.

Police have always murdered colonized people with impunity in this country; US and Israeli soldiers murder foreign civilians at scale. Last month’s killings, though, demonstrate that methods of control formerly reserved for the colonial subject (the black man, the migrant, the foreign arab) will now be applied to the entire US population.

Des Moines Mutual Aid Points of Unity:

- o. We believe in working shoulder to shoulder and standing in solidarity with all oppressed communities. We ourselves are oppressed, and our mutual aid work is a fight for our collective liberation. We do not believe in a top-down model of charity. Instead, we contrast our efforts at horizontal mutual aid, the fostering of mutually beneficial relationships and communities, to dehumanizing and colonizing charity.

1. We believe in community autonomy. We believe that the communities we live and organize in have been largely excluded from state social services, but intensely surveilled and policed by the state repressive apparatus. Capitalism is fundamentally unable to meet people’s needs. We want to build self-sustaining communities that are independent of the capitalist state, both materially and ideologically, and can resist its repression.

2. We are police and prison abolitionists. Abolition and the mutual aid that we practice are inextricably linked. We don’t rely on capitalist institutions or the police to do our work. We believe in building strong and resilient communities which make police obsolete, including community systems of accountability and crisis intervention.
3. We work to raise the political consciousness of our communities. Part of political education is connecting people’s lived experiences to a broader political perspective. Another component is working to ensure that people can meet their basic needs. It is difficult to organize for future liberation when someone is entrenched in day-to-day struggle.

4. We have open disagreements with each other about ideas and practices. We believe there is no formula for resolving our ideological differences other than working towards our common aims, engaging with each other in a comradely manner, and respecting one another, whether or not we can hash out disagreements in the process.

5. We are a revolutionary organization. We are united in a basic agreement that the ultimate goal of revolution is the abolition of the state and of social classes, and that the state’s institutions are not a means to achieving that end. We are against participation in electoral politics, because we are for the development of mutual aid as an alternative and widespread institution. ■