

The Relevance of the Prairieland Conviction to Printers and Zine Distributors

**A collaborative draft statement regarding the relevance of the prairieland
conviction to printers and zine distributors**

the distroist international

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If you haven't been following the Prairieland "antifa terrorist enterprise" case, it ended pretty fucking bad. Comrades were convicted on federal felony charges based on activities such as owning a printer and moving a box of zines into a car.

The most relevant convictions for distroists: Elizabeth Soto and Ines Soto, who own a print shop, and Des (Daniel Sanchez Estrada), a tattoo artist and zine distributor Corruptly Concealing a Document or Record (18 U.S.C. § 1519). Some early indictments mentioned conspiracy, but the March 13 verdict was specifically on the §1519 obstruction charge. Des was found guilty for moving a box of zines to a friend's house after he heard that his wife Maricela Rueda had been arrested at a protest.

The Sotos were found guilty of rioting for being at the protest, providing material support to terrorists (such as printing), conspiracy to use and carry an explosive, use and carry of an explosive. All non-cooperating defendants are awaiting sentencing and are facing decades in prison.

What does this mean?

- the physical act of moving literature (transporting a box from one house to another, or potentially from a print shop to a post office) can be charged as "concealing evidence" if the government claims you knew an investigation was underway or imminent.
- Normal distribution activities (shipping, relocating stock) could be reinterpreted as "flight of evidence" if law enforcement decides the materials are linked to a crime.
- "Protected Speech" Can Be Reclassified as "Contraband":
- The zines in the box included crimethinc, anarchist library, little black cart, and titles from many more distributors. is there a complete list?
- Prosecutors successfully argued that because the zines contained the same ideas as the "Antifa terrorist enterprise" (per the government's theory), the zines themselves became "instrumentalities of a crime" This bypasses First Amendment protections by treating the published anarchist texts as "tools" of terrorism rather than speech. Would like to see citations but word

Guilt by Association

- Sanchez Estrada was not present at the July 4th protest. He was not accused of planning it. His only link was his marriage to a defendant (? is this accurate) and his possession of similar literature.
- Distributors who are friends with, related to, or networked with activists who engage in direct action could be swept into conspiracy charges simply for handling their literature or storing their materials.
- Prosecutors did not need to prove the zines were illegal. They only needed to prove Sanchez Estrada "moved them with the intent to hide them" from investigators.

- Main takeaway: If you move your stock for any reason (e.g., a raid, a subpoena, a police inquiry, or even just paranoia after a news event), the government can argue your motive was obstruction, regardless of whether you actually destroyed anything *if there is an investigation. dont want to be alarmist. Des was convicted because the FBI photographed him loading boxes of zines into his truck. If anyone ever needs a shredder... Without a timestamp, shredded paper is shredded paper.

As a green card holder, Sanchez Estrada faces deportation following his conviction, even if his prison sentence is light.

Digital and Physical Security are Now Legal Necessities:

- The prosecution used text messages, cloud backups, and physical seizures to build the “conspiracy” narrative.
- Distributors must assume that all communications about shipping, inventory, and client lists are discoverable. The case highlights the need for rigorous operational security (OpSec), encrypted communications, and potentially legal protocols for how to respond to subpoenas before they arrive. would be cool to elaborate two paths on this one- above and under ground. i think no trace has good writing on the topic, could plagiarize for this

The “Terrorist” Label Lowers the Bar for Evidence:

- Because the Trump administration designated “Antifa” as a terrorist organization (via Executive Order in this timeline), prosecutors could use “Material Support for Terrorism” statutes.
- Providing “expert advice,” “resources,” or even “personnel” (which can include distributing literature that “recruits” for the cause) to a designated group is a felony. Distributors carrying “insurrectionary” titles could be seen as providing “resources” to a terrorist enterprise.

No “Violence” Required for Conviction:

- Des was convicted without any allegation that he touched a weapon, threw a projectile, or encouraged violence.

The print shop was operated by Elizabeth Soto and Ines Soto, two of the nine defendants in the Prairieland case.

Key Details About the Print Shop:

- Equipment Seized: The FBI confiscated commercial printing equipment during the raid. Prosecutors framed this as evidence of a “propaganda production” operation for the alleged “Antifa cell.”
- According to trial testimony and reporting (specifically Truthout and the Fort Worth Star-Telegram), the Sotos had established a small, independent print shop and literature distribution to support:

- Local book clubs
- Anarchist and socialist reading groups
- Tabling at regional book fairs and zine fests
- Prosecution’s Theory: Prosecutors suggested the Sotos used their printer to mass-produce “insurrectionary” materials for the group. However, under cross-examination, FBI agents admitted they had no direct evidence that the specific zines seized were actually printed on the Sotos’ machine.
- Defense Argument: Attorneys argued that owning a printing press is protected by the First Amendment and that printing political literature is not a crime, regardless of its content.

The targeting of the Sotos’ print shop demonstrates that the government is not just going after “distributors” (like Des) but also the means of production. The logic of the prosecution implies that:

1. Owning printing equipment can be framed as “infrastructure” for a terrorist conspiracy.
2. Printing for others (even just for book clubs or reading groups) can be construed as “material support.”
3. The act of printing itself is being scrutinized as a potential felony if the content is deemed “insurrectionary.”

Both Elizabeth and Ines Soto were convicted on March 13, 2026, along with the other defendants, on charges including material support for terrorism and conspiracy. Their ownership of the printer was a central piece of the government’s evidence against them.

This makes the Prairieland case a dual precedent: it criminalizes both the logistics (moving boxes) and the production (owning a printer) of radical literature.

Appendix

Books & Zines Mentioned in the Trial

Not a comprehensive list but mentioned in trial and based on photos of zines in gov docs. Maybe someone can compile a more complete list and post after reviewing the court notes.

- Against Prisons by Catherine Baker
- Anarchism and its Aspirations by Cindy Milstein
- Another Critique of Insurrectionalism by Anonymous
- Counterinsurgency And The Occupy Movement by George Ciccariello-Maher
- Cruel Fiction by Wendy Trevino
- De-Arrest Primer by Anonymous
- For the Love of Winning: An Open Letter to Extinction Rebellion by John Jordan
- Gaza Ghetto Uprising by Adi Callai
- If We Go, We Go On Fire by Ignatius
- Insurgency a Journal of Anarchist destruction by Various Authors
- It's Vacant, Take It! A Homes Not Jails Squatting Zine
- Now by The Invisible Committe
- Organizing for Attack! Insurrectionary Anarchy by Anonymous (“despite its hyperbolic title, reads like a think piece, not a how-to manual”)
- Our Enemies in Yellow by Ramon Byrne
- The Process That Leaves Me With A Dead Sister by Kristen Waters
- The Satanic Death Cult is Real by Sophie Lewis (“They want to show you satanic Death Cult ... looks bad but its about movie reviews”)
- To Change Everything by Crimethinc
- Toward the Queerest Insurrection by Mary Nardini Gang
- War in the Streets: Tactical Lessons from the Global Civil War by Various Authors
- Visualize Industrial Collapse (this is an old Earth First! slogan and it's used in lots of anticiv memes, but I can't find a specific zine by this name)

Anarchist Reading Resources

Distros

- Scrapy Capy
- No Trace Project
- Sprout
- MTBA
- 1312 Press
- A Zine Library
- Durian
- Sherwood Forest Zine Library
- South Chicago ABC
- Filler
- Haters Cafe
- Prole.info
- Power To The People
- C4SS
- LittleMouse.fun
- Muntjac
- Invisible Molotov
- It's Going Down Library
- Final Straw Radio
- Tolerated Individuality
- Crimethinc
- BandiLang Itim
- Ill Will
- Brown Recluse
- True Apple Press

- Anarcho-Transhuman
- Butch Anarchy
- Oplopanax
- Space City Anarchist Org
- Warzone
- Zabalaza

Publishing Houses

- AK Press
- PM Press
- Black Rose Books
- Black Mosquito
- Freedom Press
- C4SS
- Crimethinc
- Dog Section Press
- Active Distribution
- Detritus
- Eberhardt
- See Sharp

Online Archives

- Zine Library
- The Anarchist Library
- Edist.ro
- Anarhija Library
- Elephant Editions' Archive
- Fifth Estate mirror
- Steal This Wiki

- Anarchistická knihovna (Czech)
- Det Anarkistiske Bibliotek (Danish)
- Anarchista könyvtár (Hungarian)
- 乱党图书馆 (Japanese)
- Anarşist Kütüphane (Turkish)
- Esperanto Anarchist Library (Esperanto)
- Biblioteca anarquista (Spanish)
- Η Αναρχική Βιβλιοθήκη (Greek)

The Anarchist Library (Mirror)
Anti-Copyright



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Posted without editing and without talking to anyone who might know more about the case
than we do. We would rather open the dialogue & polish in the comments.

usa.anarchistlibraries.net