

No Badjacketing

The State Wants to Kill Us; Let's Not Cooperate

Twin Cities General Defense Committee

November 29, 2015

Contents

Case 1: Infiltrators, Jacketing, and Assassination: the Assassination of Black Panthers Fred Hampton and Mark Clark.	4
Case 2: Infiltrators, Jacketing, and Murder: the Murder of Anna Mae Aquash from the American Indian Movement.	5

*We prepared this short piece after several comrades were badjacketed in public and with pictures on social media at the 4th Precinct Shutdown. We believe those individual cases have been dealt with, and don't wish to cause unnecessary division by complaining, or publicly calling any group or individual out. Instead, **this is intended to provoke reflection**, and conversation, amongst all of us, as to how to deal with the suspicions we may have of people we don't know in our growing movements, without creating the sorts of divisions among ourselves that does the work of the State and the police for them. We intend to act in solidarity with those who know how to act in solidarity.*

*We ask that all organizations and groups working for a better world in which we have killed White Supremacy, Capitalism, and all other forms of oppression, consider that (1) none of us represent the mandate of all the people, (2) that we may have instead genuine and important strategic and tactical differences between ourselves about the best ways to accomplish that world, (3) that **we will not win by pretending these differences do not exist, or dictating against difference, but instead by engaging on these differences in the most democratic and least hierarchical ways possible.***

Therefore, we ask that groups and individuals read this document against the practice of badjacketing, discuss it, and consider publicly endorsing here that we will refrain from the practices of badjacketing. This is not a call to be lax about security; indeed, many of us have been very involved in the provision of security at the Fourth Precinct. Instead, it is a call to be democratic and accountable about our security practices.

Every time people organize for liberation, autonomy, and a better world, the state and the bosses try to crush our movements. They don't particularly care how they do it, but they don't want to work hard. It's easier for them, if we do it for them.

- They can do this by misportraying us in the media, and they do.
- They do this by sowing distrust and division within or between movements, and they do.
- They can do this by harassing our people and preventing them from getting jobs, or demoralizing them with constant police contact, and they do.
- They do this by sending infiltrators into our groups, and they do.
- They do this by encouraging fascist groups to attack us, and they do.
- They do this by directly and openly attacking us with police, and they do.

But perhaps the easiest and most effective thing they can do to neutralize and destroy our movements for liberation is to encourage us to act paranoid and to refuse each other's solidarity. One of the most effective techniques for this is called **jacketing** (aka 'snitchjacketing,' 'badjacketing,' or 'bad-rapping'), and it's when one of our own (or a paid infiltrator) accuses others without cause or evidence of being a infiltrator, threat, or security risk.

BADJACKETING: creating suspicion, by spreading rumors or unsubstantiated accusations, that people are undercovers, infiltrators, snitches, or cooperators. Sometimes this is done out of fear and paranoia. But normally, those who 'lay jackets' on

others want to consolidate their control over a movement and feel threatened in their authority. It's a favorite tactic of the State in destroying movements of liberation.

These tactics of the state and the police go together, and jacketing often leads to direct violence and the destruction of movements. If you're still reading, let's take a look at two well known regional cases: the State assassination of Illinois Black Panther Party Chairman Fred Hampton and Mark Clark (1969), and the murder of American Indian Movement militant and Anna Mae Aquash (Mi'kmaq) (1975).

Case 1: Infiltrators, Jacketing, and Assassination: the Assassination of Black Panthers Fred Hampton and Mark Clark.

The Black Panther Party's Illinois chapter was lead by stellar young militant Fred Hampton. Their major projects included the self-defense and community support programs for which the Panthers became justifiably famous. A major next step was to ally with the Blackstone Rangers, an alliance that terrified the Chicago police and politicians and the FBI alike. The FBI dealt with it easily, by turning a Panther into an infiltrator.

William O'Neal turned snitch in exchange at first for bail money, and then increasingly for a great deal of money. O'Neal rose to trusted positions within the BPP, becoming Hampton's head of security. It was O'Neal who drugged Hampton's food in preparation for the assassination.

O'Neal routinely consolidated his power within the BPP by accusing others of being snitches, informants, or state cooperators, creating an atmosphere of suspicion and distrust within the BPP. It was partly his use of jacketing accusations that led to his rise in leadership.

O'Neal also played a creating division between the BPP and other groups, most notably the Blackstone Rangers, on behalf of the FBI. In addition to talking shit about the Rangers with his BPP comrades, O'Neal composed forged letters between the Rangers and the BPP, insulting and threatening each other. O'Neal was successful in this regard; the two groups never achieved strategic or tactical cooperation.

The infiltration of movements and movement spaces is real, and dangerous, as the assassination of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark demonstrate. But jacketing is another tool used to destroy movements, and is used most frequently by infiltrators themselves.

1. At the least, it pushes away people who have, or are willing, to do work and make sacrifices for the movements.
2. Worse, it silences entire groups by sowing mistrust within them and making discussion of strategy and tactics difficult.
3. Very commonly, those accused of acting as informants become so alienated from their accusers that they actually *become snitches*.
4. Worst-case scenario, people die. That worst-case scenario is all too common and real, and there is a famous regional history to it as well, in the case of Anna Mae Aquash, a Native American woman from Canada who had worked and sacrificed tirelessly for the American Indian Movement, or AIM.

Case 2: Infiltrators, Jacketing, and Murder: the Murder of Anna Mae Aquash from the American Indian Movement.

In February 1976, the body of Anna Mae Aquash was found exposed in South Dakota. She'd been shot in the head execution style, apparently because someone thought she was an infiltrator. In what should be seen as a pattern at this point, there was indeed an infiltrator within AIM, but it wasn't Anna Mae. Instead it was an infiltrator named Douglass Durham, a White man claiming Native Heritage, who had gained the trust of key AIM leaders. As with O'Neal, it was partly through lying about others – jacketing – that he had gained his position of leadership and trust within AIM.

Durham accused Anna Mae of working for the Feds. Anna Mae ended up murdered. There remains a lot of controversy and anger over who killed her. No serious person believes she was a Fed. Very few believe the Feds killed her. But they might as well have done so: given the violence and repression they were inflicting on AIM, as they had done with the BPP, it was natural that people within AIM would be suspicious and armed for self-defense. By creating more suspicion and paying Douglass Durham to accuse Anna Mae, the FBI is directly involved in the murder of Anna Mae Aquash. **But whoever pulled the trigger on her allowed themselves to become accomplices of the State, and enemies of Native People/First Nations.** AIM lost one of its most dedicated and skilled organizers and the blame for her murder remains a source of division within the movement.

After being attacked by the police, dismissed and lied about by the media, shot at by white supremacists, and insulted by many in the 'public,' it is natural to be on edge and find it difficult to work together or to trust those we don't already know and trust. This is why racism and sexism and oppression of all sorts exist: to divide groups from each other, in order to more effectively take advantage of them.

We will win when our solidarity trespasses the boundaries they set for us. Against all oppression. For the solidarity of the people.

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