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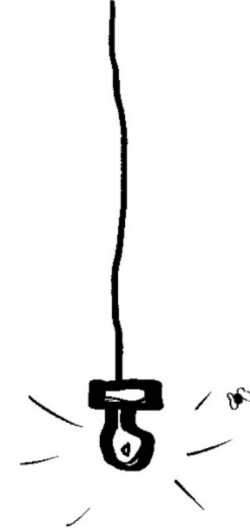


The goal is not: "How do I stay calm?"

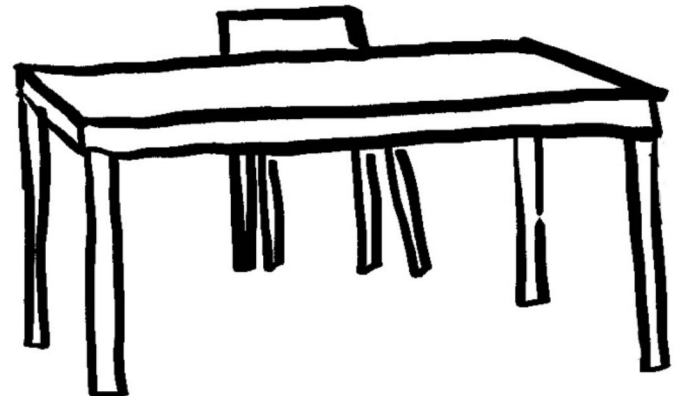
The goal is: "How can I create enough
space to respond safely and intentionally
—and how can we help each other do the
same?"



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Resisting Cooperation Under Pressure



Refusing to Cooperate Under Pressure

This zine was created after a discussion regarding cooperation in the Prairieland case. Those present had many different opinions, but one common thread was the need for more resources, support and preparation for resisting cooperation, beyond just propaganda and slogans. Choosing to prepare for noncooperation means admitting the existence of vulnerabilities to police pressure, which can be a huge taboo in many anarchist and leftist spaces. But as humans, we all have potential weak points, and acknowledging these and preparing to defend them will help us stick to our convictions when the heat gets turned up.

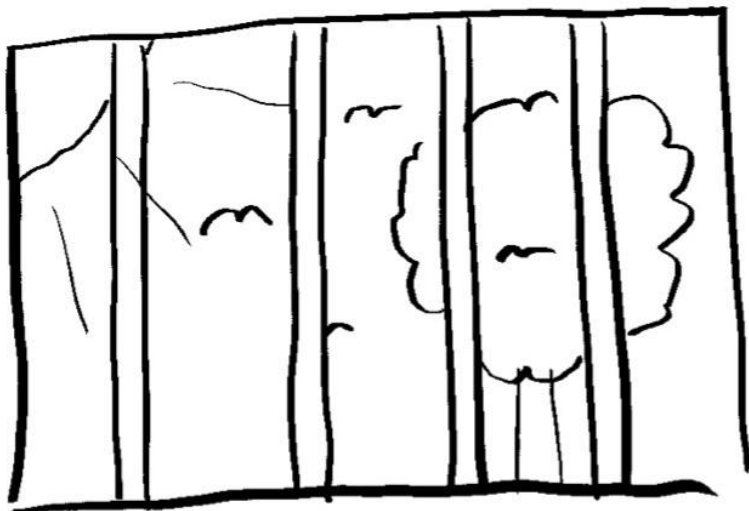
To this end, we offer several avenues for preparation. One way to prepare is to know what to expect when we are detained or arrested. Another component is to practice skills to stay calm in the moment and advocate for our rights. We can also reflect on where we may be vulnerable, so we can recognize and resist coercion. Considering our personal and collective strengths will help us call upon these in times of stress. Finally, we offer some resources for further study.

comrades committed to the same causes?

- What resources exist in my community? Bail funds, movement lawyers, mutual aid organizations?

Resources

- *Facing Repression: What to Expect During and After Arrest.*
- *A Tilted Guide to Being a Defendant* - The Tilted Scales Collective - <https://tiltedscalescollective.org>
- *The Criminal Legal System for Radicals* - The Tilted Scales Collective - <https://tiltedscalescollective.org>
- *Repress This! Ways to Be Your Own Anti-Repression Committee* - oakland anti-repression committee - oaklandantirepressioncommittee.wordpress.com
- *Know Your Rights! What You Need to Know* - JustUs NYC Know Your Rights Series - info@justusnyc.org
- *Survival Guide for Understanding Gestapo Swine Interrogation Mind Games* - Harold H. Thompson & Boston ABC - BostonABC@riseup.net
- *Know Your Rights* - ACLU - <https://www.aclu.org/know-yourrights/immigrants-rights/>



Personal Reflection

Consider these questions privately or with trusted associates, and use them as inspiration for further investigation and preparation. Approach these questions as an invitation for curiosity, not judgment. We all have triggers, experiences of harm, and positionalities that shape how we respond to stress. Knowing our patterns does not eliminate them, but it can help us interrupt reactions that may put ourselves or our comrades at risk.

How do I typically respond to stress?

- People-pleasing?
- Confrontational with authority?
- Shutting down, freezing, withdrawing?
- Taking on too much responsibility?
- Difficulty asking for help?

What am I most afraid of? What might police use against me to coerce my cooperation?

- Public shame or humiliation?
- Losing employment or a professional license?
- Impacts on family, finances, custody, or ability to provide?
- Isolation, rejection, or abandonment?

What has caused me difficulty in the past?

- What situations or interactions have been particularly challenging?
- What triggers my anxiety or dysregulation?
- What physical, emotional, or behavioral signs tell me I am becoming overwhelmed?

What resources can I call on in times of stress?

- What helps me return to a grounded state?
- Are there times I have stuck to my values or remained calm when it was hard to do so? What helped me to do this?
- Who can I count on to help me when I need it? Friends, family,

What to Expect After Arrest

This section was adapted from the zine, Facing Repression: What to Expect During and After Arrest, which is not currently available online. The links and references at the end were drawn from this zine.

Detainment, Arrest, and Transport

Once you are in the presence of police (in custody, they knocked at your door, in the back of the police car) **the single most important thing you can do right now is not talk to the police.** It does not matter what you did or didn't do. It does not matter what you think they already know. This is what you can say:

"I'm going to remain silent. I would like to speak with my attorney."

Nothing else. I can't possibly stress this enough. If you only retain one thing from this text it should be this:

"I'm going to remain silent. I would like to speak with my attorney."

We will cover more about police and law enforcement tactics.

Being detained is scary. You lose bodily autonomy and are often treated very roughly. They can and will demean you and if you are non-white, or non cis-hetero appearing you may receive even worse treatment. It is important right now just to remain silent. Unfortunately, this can extend to advocating for yourself or for another person who is in custody. (I would certainly not tell anyone to not do this outright, but doing so can make you a target in their eyes. Do a risk assessment to decide whether or not you want to do this. This piece of info comes from personal experience of being arrested and advocating for someone else, which tacked on time to the booking process and also added time being zip-tied).

Cops may not read you your Miranda rights. Do not let your guard down because they haven't. Make a mental note if or when they do so, but continue to remain silent.

Expect hours of waiting in police vans or buses, handcuffed and

without access to a bathroom, food, or water.

On Immigration Status: Please note that if you are not a United States citizen, your rights may be substantially different. A single arrest or a plea to a misdemeanor may affect your ability to leave and reenter the United States or bar you from becoming a citizen. Please consult an immigration attorney with your specific situation and do not rely on your criminal defense attorney's knowledge of immigration law when discussing possible deals. You can also go to the ACLU's website and search "Immigrant's Rights" for an article on this issue.

Information for Minors: Anyone who is under 18, or who looks under 18 and doesn't provide identification or age at the time of arrest, may be processed as a juvenile. The authorities will attempt to contact a parent or guardian. Providing the parents' or guardian's contact info upon arrest to the legal team or to a trusted lawyer can help accelerate the release process, when accelerated release is desired. Please be advised that minors are not usually released except into the custody of an adult. If the parent or guardian is arrested at the same time and there is no other legal guardian able to get Child Services may come to take temporary custody.

Going to Jail

The experiences involved in being arrested can be, and usually are, heavily impacted by positions which are marginalized by white supremacy or the cis-hetero patriarchy (i.e., being trans or a person of color.) Expect to be treated differently in ways that reinforce oppressive Hierarchies.

Anxiety and disorientation is *normal*, and the whole system is meant to work that way. Mostly it's going to be boring with periods of activity or interaction. Check in with yourself in whatever ways work for you: body scans, grounding exercises, mindfulness, zoning out. Try not to let anxiety inform your actions.

Expect anything that you say to anyone (police, cellmates, other people who may seem sympathetic) may be used against you, so

The Interrogation

Work with one or two friends, and take turns in each role. Decide on a basic scenario, such as a demonstrator arrested at a protest.

You are being detained and interrogated, and your goal is to resist giving any information at all besides basic demographics (your name, birthdate, and address).

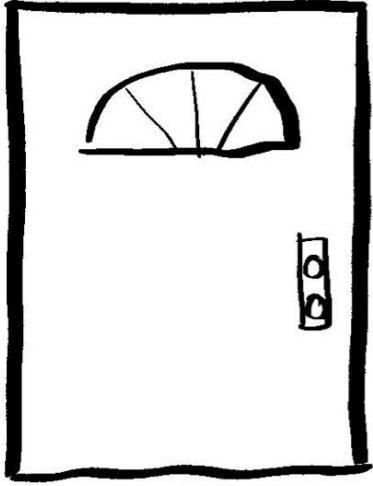
The Interrogator(s) will try to trick or persuade you into giving up information, or responding at all, and thus revoking any prior invocation of your right to remain silent and be questioned with an attorney present.

Key Phrase: "I am going to remain silent, and I want to speak to a lawyer."

Tips for the Detainee: Practice grounding or mindfulness exercises, focus on your values/motivations for non-cooperation, remind yourself of any resources in your community to support non-cooperation and remember that cops can and will lie to you. Re-invoke your right to remain silent and speak with an attorney if you do slip up and say anything else.

Tips for the Interrogator: Try to think of what might stress out or motivate your target to cooperate – such as threats to their employment or family relationships, promises to drop their charges or those of their comrades, or saying that others have already cooperated and sold them out.

Role-play Exercises



The Door Knock

Plan ahead with a friend or small crew, and take turns in each role. You will agree to a range of times they will be home and ready to respond. (Don't forget to warn anyone else you live with!)

The Cops will come to your door at an unannounced time within that range, knock loudly and identify themselves as the police.

Your goal is to resist providing any information (or lying!) to The Cops, while keeping the interaction to a minimum and

possibly obtaining some basic information yourself. It may be helpful to learn what agency they are from, how your lawyer can contact them, what is their stated reason for the visit (remember they can lie), and if they have a warrant.

The Cops will try to keep you talking and gain any information or cooperation they can, or trap you in a lie (for example, saying you don't know if so-and-so lives at your address, or lying about who you are), by threats, cajoling, promises, etc.

Even simple things that you think are innocuous, such as what you were doing when they arrived or who is present in the home, can be used to catch you (or someone else) in a lie or be used as evidence later. The fewer facts you state, the lower your risk.

Key Phrases: "I will not answer your questions, please leave." "I don't consent to a search", "Show me your warrant", "What agency do you represent, and how can my lawyer contact you?", "Please leave my home."

Tip: Speak to The Cops through your closed door, or step outside to talk to them – an open door gives more room for the pretense of "probable cause" such as claiming they smelled weed or saw a weapon.

remember to stay silent. Remaining silent protects you, your comrades, and your community. Do not talk about what happened or what you saw to anyone. Assume the cops have been listening to everything you have said. They will certainly listen to and record everything you say from the moment you are arrested until you are released from custody and away from the jail. That includes inside their vehicles as well as inside the jails (whether or not you're in a cell), and especially can include any conversation that seems "informal" or "trivial". It cannot be overemphasized how manipulative and coercive the police are, they go to special cop school in order to learn these tactics.

Expect even more hours of waiting in small, crowded cells sometimes without room to sit or lie down.

Expect intimidation and harassment by the police. They are not your friends, and will not treat you with dignity or respect. The cops may continue to harass you until you are released from custody. This includes separating you from others during booking, calling you names and making fun of you. They can and often do act in racist, sexist, homophobic and/or transphobic manners.

Police lie. They will lie to you to scare you, to have fun at your expense, they will try to be your friend, or offer you privileges or and especially to extract information that they can later use to prosecute you and your comrades.

The police will offer leniency, early release, or special consideration if you cooperate with them. They might frame their interrogations as an "opportunity" for you to tell your side of the story. Don't fall for it. They might even threaten harsh penalties for not talking. *Do not* be intimidated. They don't actually have the authority to do this. Remain silent; you are doing the right thing.

If you are arrested with others the police may isolate and interrogate you separately. If any of you talk to the police they will use that against you or others. Say nothing!

Officers may lie to turn you against each other. They may use information they already have to make you think a comrade has snitched on you. Don't be baited!

Why Practice?

For many of us, it's easy to think about dealing with the state in absolute terms, in the abstract. "I'd never snitch." "I know my rights." "I'd stay strong and never take a plea deal." And it's important to be strong in our convictions. But if you're going to commit to refusing cooperation, you should understand that it is a skill and a practice, just as much as it is a promise to uphold our values. We practice first aid techniques and self-defense drills so we can call upon that training when it is truly needed. The more we practice, the easier it is to call upon that skill when stressful circumstances make clear thinking difficult.

Resisting interrogation is also a skill we can hone with knowledge, planning, and practice. The following are various exercises designed to aid you in this, with the help of your friends and accomplices. We also encourage you to develop your own strategies for preparation and share them!

Grounding Skills

Safe Space Imagery

This can be completed individually or in pairs. In a pair, one person can facilitate while the other develops their own image. This skill essentially allows us to use dissociation as a tool. It is most effective to practice this skill ahead of time, so that it becomes something you can use in the moment of activation or fear.

Identify the Safe Space: Imagine a place or sensory experience that feels safe and calming. It can be a real or imaginary place, a place from the past, present, or even the future. Notice what you see, hear, smell, feel, and experience in your body.

Cue Word: Choose a cue word or phrase that represents this feeling of safety.

Enhancement: Spend time developing the image. Notice additional sights, sounds, smells, textures, temperatures, or other sensations that make the image feel more complete.

Practice state-shifting: While calm, imagine a stressful situation, and then use your cue word. Notice: Can I shift even slightly from fear or

overwhelm toward greater calm or awareness?

Practice: Try using it in stressful real life situations. The more this skill is practiced, the easier it will be to access during moments of heightened anxiety and fear.

In the Moment: Bring your cue word to mind and reconnect briefly with the sensory experience of your safe-space image.

In the Moment Toolbox

Practice these skills when you are relatively calm so they are easier to access under stress.

Take a moment: Pausing for a few seconds to breathe, orient, or use a grounding skill is okay, no matter the situation. The goal is to create space between the stressor and your response.

Breathing - Physiological sigh: Two short inhales through the nose + one long exhale through the mouth. This mechanically offloads carbon dioxide and calms the nervous system quickly.

Breathing - Extended exhale: Inhale ~4 seconds; exhale ~6–8 seconds. The long exhale signals safety to the brain.

Body scan: Notice your jaw, shoulders, breath, hands, feet, and other areas of tension. Simply notice rather than forcing yourself to relax.

5-4-3-2-1 grounding: Get in touch with the five senses to ground in the present. Name five things you see, four things you feel (e.g., the sensation of your feet in your shoes, sensation of rubbing two fingers together, etc.), three things you hear, two things you can smell, and one thing you can taste.

Remember

Grounding skills cannot eliminate the harm of the state, or abolish prisons. However, they are tools for helping us stay present and remember our values when our nervous systems are activated and the safety of our community, movements, and comrades are on the line.

The goal is not: "How do I stay calm?"

The goal is: "How can I create enough space to respond safely and intentionally—and how can we help each other do the same?"