



TILTED SCALES ON “REPRESENTING RADICALS”

THE FINAL STRAW RADIO

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Resisting state repression and surveillance is one of the cornerstones of The Final Straw and has been since the beginning of this project. Over the years we've featured interviews with support committees, political prisoners, defendants in ongoing cases, incarcerated organizers, radical legal workers and lawyers and others to talk about how power strikes at those who it fears constitute a threat. For those of us caught up in cases, navigating self-defense through the courts, penal system and mainstream media can be treacherous, as we attempt to balance our political and personal goals with our lawyer's desire to have us do as little time and pay as little money as possible to the courts. Winning in these circumstances can sometimes seem to pit a well-meaning lawyer or legal worker against their own client. Enter the Tilted Scales' new book, *Representing Radicals*.

This week, you'll hear Jay from the Tilted Scales Collective talk about this book out from AK Press and the Institute for Anarchist Studies, about anti-repression work, and about this book's attempt to shift the culture of legal representation by intervening with arguments by radical lawyers, more intimately inviting clients and their supporters into the fray and new frameworks for approaching cases

You can find their guide for defendants and other resources, as well as contact, at **TiltedScalesCollective.Org**. You can hear our 2017 interview with another member of Tilted Scales about their defendants guide by visiting the Final Straw's website. And you can follow the group on instagram (@_tiltedscales) or twitter (@_tiltedscales).

Search for this interview title at **<https://thefinalstrawradio.noblogs.org/>** to find links to further resources on this topic, featured music, the audio version, and files for printing copies of this episode.

TFSR: Would you please introduce yourself with any names, pronouns, affiliations, or references that would help the listeners orient themselves?

Jay: Sure, my name is Jay, I use they/them pronouns. I'm a part of the Tilted Scales Collection since 2017, and have been involved in anti-repression organizing more broadly over the last decade or so.

TFSR: Would you talk a bit about Tilted Scales? Who constitutes its membership and what activities it gets up to?

J: Sure, we are a pretty small collective of anarchist legal support workers who have been supporting and fighting for political prisoners, prisoners of war, and politicized prisoners mostly in the so-called United States. Tilted Scales Collective was formed out of the North American Anarchist Black Cross Conference in 2011 and out of the need to build anti-repression infrastructure more broadly, but what folks were noticing was re-inventing of the wheel every time folks in the United States got hit with serious charges. There was a need to pull together or draw in resources and experience to rebuild some infrastructure for providing legal support. So our collective has written two books, the first book is called *A Tilted Guide to Being a Defendant*, which is published in 2017. And we recently published a follow-up book called *Representing Radicals*. And that's what I'm going to be talking about a little bit more today. We also have given training and workshops about anti-repression organizing, as well as participated in numerous committees and legal support efforts over the years.

TFSR: Cool. And for folks who are unfamiliar with anti-repression work, a lot of our listeners have heard various conversations on the show about it, and those who have been with us for a long time may even remember a chat with folks from your collective about the Defendant's Guide when it came out. But could you talk a little bit about the framework of anti-repression work or any of the cases that your collective has participated in, offered support for?

J: I guess the idea behind anti-repression work and organizing is that repression from the State is an inevitable part of making change, or building the new world or destroying this one, etc. Repression of some kind is going to be inevitable, people are gonna get hit with criminal charges. So

anti-repression organizing seeks to, at baseline, do some harm reduction around the negative outcome of criminal charges. But also use the fact that folks, maybe one person or group of individuals, are facing charges as kind of a vehicle for movement organizing or building bonds of solidarity and coming out on the other side stronger. Some examples that I've been a part of.. I was involved with the organizing around the J20 case back in 2017. I know other folks in the collective have participated as individuals, not necessarily as part of Tilted Scales, but I've participated in different legal support efforts for different mass mobilizations throughout the years, the Eric King Support Committee, etc.

TFSR: It makes sense to be coming out of the ABC conference, because, as you say, most of the work that Anarchist Black Cross does and has done historically is to give post-conviction support to people that have already been given a sentence, are already behind bars in a lot of cases. And so it makes sense to do the forward-thinking of how we A) decrease the number of people that are ending up behind bars, B) decrease the amount of time that people are going to be serving if they are going to do any time behind bars? Like you say, with the mobilization and popular education element... What is better to stop people from interacting with Grand Juries than to have regular discussions where Grand Juries are a part of people's vernacular? And what people are talking about, and you may not be able to totally demystify them, but at least making people aware makes them readier to be able to... Just like how talking about CopWatch, know-your-rights type education stuff is going to hopefully get ingrained in people's brains that they can refuse to speak to law enforcement, or they can make those interactions as safe as possible or whatever. I think that's super helpful.

J: Yeah, and I think that the Defendant's Guide definitely hits on a lot of that. I know much of the guide talks about the different aspects that are involved in various stages of the criminal legal process, like what happens pretrial, what happens if you take your case to trial, what happens if you plead out, what happens if you are convicted, what are your options for sentencing and how to think about that? That's one aspect of anti-repression work - that demystifying piece, the other aspect of it is helping the folks who are facing charges and their comrades move through that process while still advancing or moving forward with their political goals at the same time. Sometimes that looks like bringing those politics into the

courtroom or into the way that legal support happens around a case. And sometimes it looks like resolving the case as quickly as possible so that folks can get back to the other organizing that they're doing.

TFSR: The approach that was in the Defendant's Guide, and which also shows up in *Representing Radicals*, it's like a bookmark, a "This is the thing that you should pay attention to". Obviously, it's a lot more filled out in the Defendant's Guide, but a Venn diagram of personal goals, political goals, and legal goals, and setting that out and working through the process of what that looks like for you as a defendant, what do you want to get out of this? What damage can you legally inflict, hopefully, on the process of repression to make it not profitable for them to ever try that again, or at least decrease the amount of damage it's going to do in the meantime? That's a really cool model that you present. I like the visuality of it.

J: Yeah, I like that model as well. I'm glad to hear that it reads well in the Defendant's Guide. I think it's been really useful in conversation with folks who are facing charges. One thing that our collective does is occasionally have calls with groups of friends or support crews who are coming together, sometimes after a big action (this happened a lot last summer) to help them think through the next steps in terms of navigating the criminal legal process. Thinking about options kind of as containing discrete but overlapping goal areas, or overlapping but discrete areas of impact is, at least for me. and seemingly other people, a useful way of being able to visualize what options exist within the context of the system that is fully designed to make you feel like you have no options or the only option is to be out immediately.

TFSR: That's really well put.

So as you mentioned in 2017, you published a very timely *Tilted Guide to Being a Defendant*, just as over 200 people were arrested during the January 20, or J20 inauguration of Donald Trump had started building their legal defenses. The defendants from that case were over 200 people. This is not in a vacuum, obviously, following months of resistance at Standing Rock against the Dakota Access Pipeline in which I believe thousands of people participated. And a lot of people caught charges, although it's notable that the federal felony charges all fell on indige-

nous people. You and the AK Press bumped up the publication date in early 2017 and got a lot of copies into J20 and I'm imagining NoDAPL defendants' hands. I guess it's always a good time for books defending radicals to come out, which is a depressing thing also. But would you speak about the general goals of this new book *Representing Radicals*? Who your audience is? Is this primarily aimed at radicals approaching legal work such as yourselves or legal workers who are shifting towards radical approaches at defense? Law professors? Should we be sneaking copies into public defenders' briefcases?

J: I was not involved with the Tilted Scale Collective back in 2011 when the idea for the Defendant's Guide was first dreamt up. But as far as I understand it, the idea to write this companion book has always been there. As you said, the Defendant's Guide is written to anarchists radicals who are facing criminal charges and to their comrades and supporters and close people who might be wondering how to help them through that process. And, by contrast, *Representing Radicals* is mostly written to the attorneys who are representing them. So we tried to balance throughout the book the fact that some attorneys are going to be already quite sympathetic, maybe share a lot of politics with their radical defendants. For example, people at the People's Law Office in Chicago or the CLDC or movement lawyers who've been devoting decades, their whole career to defending activists, anarchists, radicals, etc, Balancing the fact that there might be some people's lawyers, but other people's lawyers may not understand at all where their anarchist, radical clients are coming from, are less familiar with anarchists and radicals and concepts like movement perspective, non-cooperating pleas, etc.

The other audience that we're hoping might have interest in this book would be law students who are still figuring out who they might represent, or how to bring in some of their ideals about the world into their legal practice. We really wrote this book coming from the idea that it could be something that defendants or a support committee could give to attorneys and say, "Here's what you need to read to understand how to provide the best representation for me." Or similarly, for supporters of defendants who are locked up pretrial, just to have a tangible resource that you can send to an attorney and say, "Here's what you need to read to understand how to provide the best representation for my friend, partner, comrade, etc."

One thing that in my own experience being a part of different anti-repression groups over the years that I run to is that oftentimes, defendants, as well as their supporters, run up against a variety of tensions, even in trying to communicate with and work alongside the most sympathetic attorneys, just because the role of an attorney is quite different than the role of a defense committee or a group of supporters. So, like our first book, *Representing Radicals* isn't intended to necessarily be a protocol, a "how-to guide" telling lawyers how to do their jobs, but rather a guide to help people think through what they might want to achieve when facing charges, and how their attorneys can focus on those legal goals specifically, while still helping their client balance other goal areas. Personal and political, and whatever other goals a defendant and their comrades might have.

TFSR: It makes a lot of sense, something that I've seen in terms of conflicts come up between lawyers and radical defendants / their defense committees, or support committees is this ingrained - I think you've touched on this - this ingrained training in the US legal system: A) the concept of innocence and guilt is a strange one, B) also the idea that individual culpability, for a process when there's way more dynamics in that and it leaves out the social context in so many cases, and people are often stymied from actually presenting social context to flesh out what was going on. I think that that process of thinking through - like no incident is going to be exactly the same as the next - but like teasing the lawyer who's reading it into, instead of just advocating or speaking on behalf of their defendant, to get them the best deal, which might include some sort of plea deal where they're asked to name other people or whatever to get their charge down. If the lawyer's thought is "My goal is to get my person as little time as possible and to end this in a timely manner", especially if I'm a public defender and have like a stack of people to handle. And the challenges that the book poses and the quotes, also, which I want to get to in a bit, but trying to open up this whole world of conversations to lawyers who may be very good at doing their job in the way that they've been trained to do it. This might get them to think about the myriad of other ways of looking at the outcomes of a trial besides just what charges, what fees, whatever this individual defendant has to pay. I think that's really important.

J: Totally. You really hit the nail on the head. Throughout the book, we

talk a lot about what “the best possible representation” could mean to radicals, and oftentimes, the training that lawyers get in law school, really hammers home this idea that they have an ethical obligation and a professional obligation to provide their clients with the best possible representation that they can, which in criminal cases often equates to ensuring that they come out the other side relatively quickly and with minimal legal consequences, usually plea deals that are going to minimize prison time, minimize probation, etc. One of the shifts that we try to make in the book, a bit of a paradigm shift, is to help lawyers understand that, as anarchists and radicals who are thinking about facing criminal charges from a movement perspective, we’re gonna want outcomes from a legal case that are aligned with our political goals and principles, even if it comes up at personal expense, or even if that means unsuccessful legal outcomes or negative legal outcome. Also helping lawyers see that those outcomes in cases are in line with lawyers’ ethical obligation to their clients, so as long as their clients fully consent to the terms and have an active role in shaping what their legal defense looks like.

One thing that the book does hopefully pretty well is it includes not just our own perspectives, as of folks who’ve got quite a bit of experience doing legal support work over the years, but also includes the voices of a lot of movement attorneys, who’ve been doing movement lawyering for decades, who really restate that point over and over again - That actually it’s your clients and your client’s supporters and the projects and movements that they’re a part of that really should be driving the bus, and that the lawyer’s job is to listen to their clients and help them meet their legal goals, while still balancing their other priorities.

TFSR: The whole experience of going to court is a terrible thing. It’s meant to be alienating and terrifying and make you bow before the majesty of the representation of legal power and the sovereignty of the State to ruin your life. All that like standing and sitting and all the weird churchy stuff, leftover from the time of kings and queens. It feels really important to find this space to intercede and say, “Hey, you’re supposed to be this person’s... you got their back. So let’s talk about how do you understand what they’re saying?”

Also, I really appreciate the glossary that you provide, and some of the key concepts that you’re trying to introduce or shore up in the legal

work. Could you talk a little bit about the glossary and what you put in there and what you're hoping to achieve?

J: We decided to make the glossary pretty early on in outlining the book. And our decision to do so was partly to include terminology that, unfortunately, may not be familiar to every person who might be reading our books, like different identity terms are included in the glossary. And also, we wanted to break down what we meant by anarchist and other radical tendencies. We wanted to be clear about that. But we also use the glossary to explain a little bit these broader concepts: movement lawyering, collective perspective, politicized prisoners, prisoners of war. In the anarchist subculture, it might be unnecessary to define a glossary, but when communicating with a lawyer who doesn't have experience working with anarchists, radicals, that particular population, it might be a new territory, very unfamiliar.

TFSR: **There are also the quotes that you mentioned, which are interspersed throughout. You mentioned already a few, the People's Law Office in Chicago and the CLDC. Can you speak to what the hope was by including direct quotes from people who do legal work as professionals and who work in movement and the idea of movement lawyering?**

J: I know that we wanted to include the voices of movement lawyers primarily because we have experience doing certain kinds of anti-repression and legal support work, but none of us are lawyers, and so we felt as though there are some things that lawyers would just be more knowledgeable about and to speak to with more experience. We also thought that by including the voices of many attorneys who are movement attorneys and represent radicals every day in their professional lives, we could shift the conversation a bit. So that an attorney who is reading the book, who maybe is not in that world, would feel as though it's more of a peer-to-peer conversation, as well as the added bonus of hearing from folks with a ton of experience doing legal support. By movement lawyering I really mean... I mentioned PLO and the CLDC. But movement-centered lawyering really happens when a defendant and their legal team take into consideration the defendant's legal, personal and political goals in relation to the political movement of which the defendant is a part. One definition I read recently says that "movement lawyering increased the power and capacity

of people involved in social struggle, rather than the power and capacity of the state and legal system.” I like that. So, movement lawyering, in my mind, is an approach that means not only meeting the ethical obligations of an attorney but understanding a radical client’s legal, personal and political goals fully when creating legal strategies and an overall defense strategy. And it means having some mental context for the case itself and understanding how that case situates in a broader movement and then using that understanding to build a legal representation that is going to align with the client’s goals and principles and interests, and possibly, hopefully, the goals and principles and interests of their supporters and comrades.

The other thing I wanted to say was that movement lawyering, even in cases where there aren’t multiple defendants and even when we’re not talking about collective defense necessarily, movement lawyering really does take into consideration other people who might be affected by the outcome of a particular case. That collective perspective considers the short and long-term political consequences of criminal charges and takes into consideration co-defendants’ affiliated groups and broader movement when making decisions about legal strategy.

TFSR: One of these quotes really stood out and I’m gonna read it at length. The ethical obligation to the greater good by Dennis Cunningham, Esquire. It’s on page 91. “As lawyers, we have it drilled into us that we owe a duty of representation to each client, the rest of the world be damned. If something would make us hesitate before attacking someone else’s interests, our loyalties are said to be divided, and we’re supposed to avoid taking the case or withdraw. But wait, our political clients want and deserve to be represented on a political basis. If a client to whom we owe such unflinching duty demands it, we owe a broader duty to the client’s community or activist group to receive input from and account to their community, show solicitude for the welfare of others in it, act in ways that promote the esprit and effectiveness of the community, and take care not to undermine its values or the goals of the client’s activism. Call it intersectional lawyering, no adversary has ever tried to pierce the attorney-client privilege, because I met in solidarity with fellow plaintiffs, defendants, or legal supporters. My amazing activist clients have always been my teachers and my comrades and helping me hone this practice. And for it, we have all been the wiser, happier, and freer.” I like that quote.

J: I like that one, too. I think I've said it already, but one thing that that sidebar that you read from Dennis Cunningham really hones in on and one thing that we try to repeat throughout the book is, again, this paradigm shift from an individual defendant's best legal outcome to more of a collective perspective that reimagines what it means to provide someone with "the best possible representation." And within that thinking beyond the best plea deal, the best legal outcome. Yeah, and Dennis really says it well in that quote, thinking through actually, from our perspective, that is what a lawyer should do. And that is the job that they're ethically obligated to do for their clients. Many movement attorneys do share at least some or many of the principles and goals of their clients. But even when they don't, I really do feel as though it is the job of any attorney to be able to meet their clients on that place, and be able to provide your clients representation that takes into account co-defendants, takes into account broader social struggles. And that is their job, and that is doing it well.

TFSR: **Could you talk a little bit about the introduction of concepts and realities of support committees into this? Because it feels normal for me and for a lot of us, I'm sure, to be like, "Yeah, of course, all your buddies are going to show up to court with you." What sort of conversation are you hoping will come out of this? What sort of understandings are you trying to bring to lawyers around defense committees? I think it's really useful that you talk about some of the complications that can come up.**

J: In the Defendant's Guide, we do talk a little bit about defense committees, aka support committees. By that, we mean the folks who show up to provide the political, personal and legal support for defendants as they move through the process. And that can look a lot of ways. And there's a lot of different names for efforts like this, but all are rooted in community care and support in the face of systemic oppression or state repression. Some examples that come to my mind would be the RNC8, the organizing that was done post J20s, Water Protector Legal Collective, and all the other various support efforts that arose around Standing Rock, various efforts for a wide range of anti-occupation, anti-imperialist freedom fighters over the last several decades. We could refer to a lot of different formations or groups as different support committees, and most referred to them as something along those same lines. Sometimes it's a formal organization that takes the reins with providing support, but often times, it's like our

buddies or friends, and it's an informal group of friends, comrades, loved ones, tend to cover a lot of the bases when folks are facing charges.

So in the Defendant's Guide, we talk about what is a defense committee how to form one, what might it do, what are some areas of tension that might come up? But in *Representing Radicals*, we really wanted attorneys to view the defense committee, or supporters more broadly, as potential assets for them to do their job well. From the mindset that attorneys and supporters can work together, they have separate goal areas or separate lanes that they're driving on (to use this sad analogy) but to separate track. But really work collaboratively to provide defendants with a solid way of meeting their political and personal legal goals. Because too often, in my experience of doing anti-repression work, lawyers can view, groups especially, groups of supporters as threatening or feel concerned about attorney-client privilege, feel as though political organizing around a case might detract from the legal representation that they're wanting to provide, might harm a client case, might do more harm for them, politically and legally, than good. And there are certainly legitimate concerns there sometimes, but we really do think that if we could demystify some of what a defense committee does for attorneys, many of them might hopefully be more inclined to work collaboratively or at least communicate about their boundaries and accept that a support committee might take other actions and that's okay, so long as it's okay with the folks who are facing charges. Because ultimately, those are the people who are going to be most impacted by how the lawyer participates and helps the support committee.

TFSR: Similarly, the book talks about the strengths and pitfalls of different kinds of media and breaks down different conceptions. I'm really proud that we could be mentioned among movement media in the book, that just delighted me so much. Can you talk about the things that you touch on and some of the suggested frameworks of approaching media that you make in the book towards lawyers?

J: I want to say that the Defendant's Guide also talks about media and talks about it more from a perspective of if you and your comrades are wanting to produce media around a case, here's some ideas for doing and some tensions that have occurred in the past in our experience, here are some awesome folks who are doing media already to reach out to, etc. I think about media as one area where often times, an attorney might bristle

at the idea that a defendant, even indirectly through a support committee, might put anything out there about a case before a legal outcome is reached on it. And in Chapter 5 of *Representing Radicals*, we talk about how media engagement might help or hinder legal goals and some tensions that we've encountered in our experience, and also some considerations for attorneys who are advising their clients and their support committees on a media strategy. But the point that we've really tried to make is that, ultimately, it's going to be up to a defendant (and potentially to their supporters) about what gets said to the media or what sort of media is produced. And that's fine, so long as it's aligned with a defendant's legal goal and strategy and that a defendant is aware of and consenting to the impact that certain media might have on the legal case.

In fact, in my own experience, for example, I was involved with the support committee for CeCe McDonald, who is a transwoman in Minneapolis, who survived an attack by a white supremacist man at a bar and was charged with murder after he died. In that particular case, we thought media would be tremendously helpful in shifting the public narrative about CeCe, and also, in my opinion, had a tremendous impact on the legal outcome of that case, she was offered a plea that she felt she could live with, ultimately, and one that was, in terms of legal outcomes, substantially better than, in my opinion, what would have happened, had we not taken a media strategy in that approach, in that particular case.

For attorneys who are advising their clients about media, and many attorneys are going to say, "Don't say anything at all". And that is a fine way of approaching media if the client's goal is to resolve the legal aspect of the case as quickly as possible, with very little fanfare. Engaging with unsympathetic media might not be necessary or effective or desirable, depending on the facts or the circumstances surrounding the case. But, however, like I just said, if the client's goal is to shift public opinion about the political circumstances surrounding their case or, even more broadly, to shift a public opinion around the political circumstances of the case, so that it may have an impact on the legal outcome of the case, engaging with mainstream media or putting out your own media might be strategically necessary, even if it complicates the legal strategy or make the lawyer add stress to the defense preparation. And so we really want attorneys to understand that there are separate spheres that the support committees and attorneys are operating in. Attorneys don't have to talk to the media, but

other people might and that's okay, so long as defendants consent to it.

TFSR: It's cool to hear the experience around CeCe McDonald's case because she was fighting such an uphill battle with that.

J: For real. And the early media that came out around her case was horrible. And she was facing at first one and then two murder charges in Hennepin County. So I do strongly feel that the political campaign and specifically the media strategy part of it really did directly influence the legal outcome of that case. And then more broadly, influence the community, public narrative around self-defense, around the intersections of anti-Black racism and transmisogyny, and the criminal legal system. I really do feel that media work was very successful in terms of meeting its goals. We were lucky in that case to have a very sympathetic attorney who was not involved in the creation of the media but consented to let the CeCe McDonald Support Committee do what we did.

TFSR: In 2013, one of my co-hosts, William, got to interview Katie Burgess from the Trans Youth Support Network about CeCe's case. That felt really important for us to be able to participate in that. When you were talking about, before you named CeCe, I was thinking about Luke O'Donovan's situation in Atlanta where he defended himself against young men who were attempting to queer-bash him. Being around for the court hearing, the actual trial, part of the trial, at least... but just seeing the impact.

Folks in his support committee did a really good job of framing some public narrative around the circumstances. Because I can totally understand a lawyer or legal crew deciding, "We just don't want to engage, we do want to just keep our heads down, get through this and not become a target for either reactionaries or for the prosecutors. For the prosecutors often times try to frame these narratives around prosecutions anyway, because their literal job is to prosecute, not to resolve a situation towards justice. So if they're gonna frame a narrative anyway, you might as well try to steer it in a different direction.

J: Totally. And I do think where it gets a little sticky, often it is difficult to talk about the context of a case and the politics of it and the ways that power operates within it, without getting into the facts of the case. And so

it makes sense that lawyers would bristle about talking to the media before they're able to do their job, which is to bring up the facts in court or negotiating a good plea deal based on the facts of the case. But I do think it's possible. And I also think if someone, especially when we're talking about situations where the charges might be not very serious, maybe it was a pre-planned mass arrest where folks willingly participated in it and are now facing not-very-serious-consequences, it totally makes sense to talk about the fact. It can, it doesn't always have to, it could totally make sense to talk about the case publicly before a legal outcome is reached. As long as that fits within the defendants' broader political and legal goals and strategy.

TFSR: To pop back to the quotes that you interspersed throughout the book, I could see it being pretty useful if a lawyer reads this, and they're just they're radical-curious, or if they're going through law school and they're trying to find a way to become a movement lawyer. It's cool to think they suddenly have a list of names, a list of organizations that they can either intern with or contact and reach out and say, "Hey, I read this thing. I'm having these thoughts. Can I bounce some ideas off of you?" There are already organizations, for better or worse, that do varying qualities of jobs from ACLU to the National Lawyers Guild and other groups, other networks. There're already networks that include movement lawyers, but it seems like a good tool for networking movement lawyers.

J: Right, we hope so.

TFSR: Are there any topics that I didn't ask about that you want to share on?

J: Well, I already hit on how this book includes not just our voices, but lots of input from movement lawyers, comrades, and also we wouldn't have been able to write this book without conversations with other legal support workers who've been in it with us over the years. And just like our first book, this book is intended to be an experiment. It's the wisdom collected from people and their networks for decades and in many of them for far longer than any of us entered the field have been doing this work. We hope that the experiment will help people fight back more effectively and better survive the brutality of the legal system. But we don't intend it

to be a definitive, only way to think about these things, but we do hope that it is useful, and we would love it to be a resource that gets used and built upon all the time.

TFSR: Just out of curiosity, though, the idea for this feels very novel, but obviously there have been periods when the struggle has been heightened, and at least in the US, I can think of certain decades or certain periods of time and movement eras when there has been more activity and more agitation and more arrests, whether it be the late 1800s, during massive labor strikes around the country, or the suffrage movement, or movements to end Jim Crow or the civil rights era, the 1920s communist and anarchist and socialist agitation, the “long 60’s”, obviously, or the Clamshell Movement. Are there any other private experiments in this vein that you’ve heard of where radicals with anti-repression experience were trying to formally reach out to change the culture of lawyering, to bring more lawyer comrades into the fold?

J: This is a big on-me, but I can’t remember them. To my knowledge, there have been other publications that are similar to the Defendant’s Guide, but I’m not aware of anything like Representing Radicals that speaks to the way of representing radicals directly. But it doesn’t mean that it doesn’t exist.

TFSR: I didn’t know there was an inspiration where you’re like “Well, this is sixty years old at this point, so not really that applicable, but it is a cool idea”.

J: I would defer to other members of Tilted Scales Collective who are more involved in lawyering.

TFSR: So you are pleading the Fifth?

J: Yeah, I don’t know.

TFSR: How can folks get a hold of the book and keep up on the work of Tilted Scales?

J: The book is available through AK Press, it offers a discount on books sent to prisoners and bulk orders if you contact them about it. We really

appreciate that folks from the AK Press and The Institute for Anarchist Studies are putting effort into this book to be more accessible. About the Tilted Scales Collective, you can learn by checking our website, Instagram, and Twitter with the caveat that we are not super active on any electronic platform, mostly because none of us really likes them, but we do try to make it easy to find out resources and we hope it will help people in their struggles. Our website, for example, does have a link to chapter 2 of the Defendant's Guide, and direct links to other media we produced in the past, as well as templates that may be useful in you getting to work with a lawyer and specifically around navigating collective defense.

TFSR: Thank you so much for having this conversation and thanks for all the hard work and amazing stuff that you do.

J: Thank you, it's really nice to talk with you and we are excited to see how this book impacts our movements more broadly.



The Final Straw is a weekly anarchist and anti-authoritarian radio show bringing you voices and ideas from struggle around the world. Since 2010, we've been broadcasting from occupied Tsalagi land in Southern Appalachia (Asheville, NC).

We also frequently feature commentary (serious and humorous) by anarchist prisoner, Sean Swain.

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