

## **COMMUNITY RNC ARRESTEE SUPPORT STRUCTURE (CRASS)**

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Thursday, May 21, 2009

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### **Sentencing David McKay and Spinning the Media**

*Politicized & Ambitious Law Enforcement Downplays Nationwide RNC Informant Program*

Minneapolis, May 21st, 2009 — After his first federal trial ended in a hung jury[1], Texan David McKay pled guilty in a second trial rather than letting his friend from Austin and co-defendant, Bradley Crowder, be manipulated into testifying against him.

The FBI and local prosecutors have been counting on the press and public's RNC fatigue to be able to continue to present a clearly exaggerated, domestic security threat—a facade which nearly collapsed at McKay's first trial. At the conclusion of the first trial, a jury of McKay's peers could not agree to convict him—because it had become clear to several jurors that the scene they were being asked to watch had been staged for months by law enforcement.

Federal authorities and paid Ramsey County informants across the country have been involved in creating a series of RNC-linked, media security spectacles for the general public. New stories about the paid RNC informant network keep coming out.

On May 17th, the *Des Moines Register* reported that a paid informant infiltrated mainstream antiwar groups, including the Campus Antiwar Network. In May 2008, four months before the Convention, *City Pages* reported that a University of Minnesota student was offered money for—as he explained—“generating arrests” at “vegan potlucks”. [2]

This week, the FBI's lead paid RNC informant in Minneapolis, Andrew Darst[3], was sentenced to 16 days of labor on charges of violent assault and property damage. Hennepin County prosecutor John Halla did not even bother to show up for sentencing.[4]

Yet, to Iowa and to Austin, Texas, the FBI and other security agencies sent informants and cash, paying unemployed and unscrupulous individuals—like the attention-craving Brandon Darby[5]—to fabricate trouble, create conflict, and “generate arrests”.

In all three Molotov cases involving activists from outside the Twin Cities, government informants actively participated in entrapping the three young activists at various levels—driving them to buy materials to manufacture the devices, helping them test them in remote Twin Cities wasteland areas, and doing “everything short of telling them that I was working with the FBI” to discourage them from using Molotovs.[6]

Open court proceedings tell us that this ‘discouragement’ apparently includes sending an activist a text message stating, “I support you making whatever choice you are comfortable with. Be proud of yourself for your work”.

The overall security goal has been to create the impression of a vast, nonexistent, underground militant conspiracy that threatened public safety. This has been a huge project, consuming hundreds of thousands of tax dollars and months of effort. Without this theater, local police, city consultants, and the other agencies lining up to suckle on

the \$50 million Republican National Convention (RNC) security budget would be unable to justify the sheer amounts of cash changing hands in a time of serious recession.

In a dramatic blow to the credibility of RNC law enforcement, St. Paul City Attorney John Choi's sole RNC misdemeanor conviction at trial was against a street medic, Sean McCoy. In mid-May, it was overturned.[7] The previous month, Ramsey County Attorney Susan Gaertner dropped the ludicrous "terrorism" charges against the RNC 8.[8]

The city, it would seem, has had to manufacture trouble to justify the 818 Twin Cities arrests during the Convention, 75 percent during mass arrest situations.[9]

Both actors have launched political campaigns for higher offices—Gaertner for Minnesota Governor[10] and Choi for Ramsey County Attorney[11]—by posturing as defenders of public safety by spending hundreds of thousands of tax dollars on failed RNC prosecutions.

Raising more questions about law enforcement conduct, gross mismanagement of the Metro Gang Strike Force was revealed by the Minnesota Legislature's Office of the Legislative Auditor, led by Jim Nobles. The revelations included the charge that the to-be-suspended Force included an improperly run, confidential informant slush fund. [12]

After informant Brandon Darby's divisive, shadowy role in post-Katrina relief work was revealed during the McKay trial, the FBI has pushed back with media spin of its own to push a narrative of the AK-47-toting[13] Darby as an 'alarmed activist' rushing to volunteer to defend 'public safety'. NPR's "This American Life" is slated to run a story on Darby—called "Turncoat"—this Saturday and Sunday. We will see if public radio gets in line with other media outlets, to sell Darby's story while overlooking the nationwide informant program and the threat it represents to political and philosophical freedom.

Sadly, the railroading of David McKay and Bradley Crowder represents just one more chapter to be added to the ongoing history book telling of dubious government tactics used to discredit dissent. CRASS, the Community RNC Arrestee Support Structure[14], and its community allies, will continue to expose the government's spin agenda against all RNC defendants, and support lawsuits seeking justice in the aftermath of the mass abuse of Constitutional rights at the Republican National Convention.

## FOOTNOTES

1. <http://rnc08report.org/archive/746.shtml>
2. <http://rnc08report.org/archive/444.shtml>
3. <http://tinyurl.com/andrewdarst>
4. <http://rnc08report.org/archive/977.shtml>
5. <http://tinyurl.com/brandondarby>
6. <http://rnc08report.org/archive/738.shtml>
7. <http://rnc08report.org/archive/976.shtml>
8. <http://rnc08report.org/archive/930.shtml>
9. <http://rnc08report.org/archive/712.shtml>
10. <http://www.susangaertner.com/>
11. <http://www.votejohnchoi.com/>
12. <http://www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us/FAD/2009/fad09-18.htm>
13. <http://rnc08report.org/archive/832.shtml>
14. <http://RNCaftermath.org>