

BACKGROUND

In the early hours of May 19th, 2023, heavily-armed agents raided the home of two Pittsburgh community members, Brian “Peppy” DiPippa and Krystal DiPippa. Nearly a month and a half later, they were both federally indicted, and on June 30th, 2023, they surrendered to the court.

The case against Peppy and Krystal (USA v. DiPippa et al, (W.D. Pa. 2024) arose out of an April 18, 2023, demonstration against a University of Pittsburgh-sanctioned event that promoted hatred toward transgender people and communities. The speaking event features notorious transphobes Brad Polumbo and Michael Knowles, and posed the question, “should transgenderism be regulated by law?”

The government alleges that in the protests outside the event, a “civil disorder” occurred, when one commercially available firework and two homemade “smoke bombs” were discharged. This “civil disorder” forms the context in which Krystal and Peppy were charged.

CHARGES

Krystal, who was released on pre-trial probation, was charged with (1) conspiracy and (2) obstruction of law enforcement during civil disorder.

Peppy was detained when he surrendered to the court on June 30, 2023 and has been imprisoned since. He was charged with (1) conspiracy, (2) obstruction of law enforcement during civil disorder, and (3) use of explosive to commit a federal felony. Both entered not guilty pleas.

PLEAS AND SENTENCING

Because they were charged with conspiracy as co-defendants, they were facing equal amounts of prison time, in a range that could have exceeded

10 years. Considering all the personal risks of going to trial, and factoring in the larger political context of the case, Peppy and Krystal accepted a non-cooperating deal and changed their plea. At that hearing, Peppy pled guilty to counts 1 (conspiracy) and 2 (obstruction of law enforcement during a civil disorder); the third count, which carried with it a 10-year mandatory minimum, was dropped. Krystal pled guilty to count 2.

Krystal’s plea carries 3 years of probation, but she will not serve any prison time. By statute, Peppy’s plea carries a 60-month sentence. On January 6th, 2025, at a sentencing hearing, they were sentenced by a judge in accordance with the statute.

In addition to jail time and probation, they were also ordered to jointly pay restitution to the University of Pittsburgh in the amount of \$1,400, along with \$47,284 to a University of Pittsburgh police officer for alleged financial damages.

ANALYSIS

The federal government’s targeting of Krystal and Peppy is overtly political.

Even before the April 18th protest, FBI agents secretly followed our friends and used tactics straight out of the Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) playbook to manufacture justification for the May 19th, 2023 raid. Amongst other stalking schemes, federal agents performed a warrantless search of Peppy and Krystal’s garbage, in which they allegedly found a discarded pamphlet about the movement to Stop Cop City. Direct from the government’s search warrant affidavit: “the “Defend the Atlanta Forest” movement has been active since approximately April 2021 and involves protesters unlawfully occupying a wooded area of land where the city plans to build a police training facility.” In the unwarranted trash search, federal agencies allegedly found “a printed zine... discussing anarchist ideology.” It is important to note that in the affidavit for a search warrant, the FBI described their following of Peppy and Krystal

beginning a week before the April 18th protest – that is, a week before any allegation of any law being broken. The FBI’s use of a Stop Cop City pamphlet to justify an aggressive raid on alleged Pittsburgh political activists draws a direct line from the federal crackdown on Atlanta-area organizers to the government’s national strategy of repression and intimidation.

In its prosecution, the feds continued trying to criminalize alleged political beliefs, retaliate for alleged participation in the April 18th protest, and intimidate others from protesting and/or supporting the rights and existence of transgender people. During court proceedings, the prosecution continued to dramatize the political dimension of this case.

SENTENCING DETAILS

Pep was sentenced to serve 60 months in BOP. As he’s served 18 months already, he anticipates being eligible to transition to a halfway house around March 2026 (between 15 and 22 months). After that, he will be on supervised release for 3 years. Krystal was sentenced to 3 years of supervised release and 80 hours of community service.

Pep and Krystal were jointly sentenced to pay \$50,225.03, mostly to University Of Pittsburgh Officer TH, with a smaller sum to the University of Pittsburgh. They also were given special assessments of \$200 and \$100, respectively, and sentenced to repayment of some costs of prosecution and their own punishment. Critically, however, there was no further fine.

Pep and Krystal issued a joint statement: “We hold in our gravity a deep reverence for love beyond the limited words we have. We know the devoted embrace of solidarity – people leaning in to one another against involuntary servitude and for a world of mutual aid.

If we are convicted, it is of love for each other, and for our community, to which all brave hearts beat devotion to the impossible task of liberation.

We are grateful for those who care take, for without you, freedom would be even more distant.”

DONATIONS

Peppy and Krystal need your support! Among other things, there are commissary and the ongoing costs of prison support for the remainder of Peppy’s sentence. Please donate today and spread the word: freepeppyandkrystal.noblogs.org/donate

“When I read your letters, my soul escapes this place to walk alongside you, to commune; and with a big inhale I share our smiles with others experiencing incarceration. Thank you for reaching through these windowless walls. Respect and solidarity to all the bravehearts!” –Peppy

WRITE PEPPY

Peppy* #66590-510

FCI Elkton

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Lisbon, Ohio 44432

**Address envelope to Brian DiPippa ; cards/letters to Peppy*

freepeppy.org

twitter @freepandk

instagram @free.peppy.and.krystal

Local group supporting Peppy and Krystal:

NYC Anarchist Black Cross

NYC Anarchist Black Cross is a collective focused on supporting US-held political prisoners and prisoners of war and opposing state repression against revolutionary social justice movements.

NYC ABC

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Peppy and Krystal



Two anarchists who have been the subject of government repression and need your support.

