

Letters to the Editor

**Letter to *The Eugene Weekly*
August 18, 2005**

Common Sense

If you're Jeffrey Luers, you get 22 years for setting fire to some SUVs. If you try to blow up LAX, you get 22 years. Makes sense to me.

Brian Wilson, Eugene

**Letter to *The Eugene Weekly*
August 11, 2005**

Rampant hypocrisy

Lance Jacobs' letter (6/21) states Jeff "Free" Luers was indoctrinated into anarchism, as if he was weak-minded, having no direction of his own. I've only seen evidence that Jeff is one of the most intelligent young people breathing on this earth, quite capable of coming to logical conclusions. Not only that, he's refreshingly honest about his motives and his prevailing pride in his intent when torching those SUVs.

In Jeff's letter (7/7), he points out that which should be obvious to us all in regard to property damage, asking, "what makes an individual act of sabotage more serious than crimes committed by governments and transnational corporations? Why is the destruction of an SUV more noteworthy than climate change and the accelerated rate of extinction worldwide?"

To a large degree, well-informed people know who the most egregious criminals are, how the wealthiest, most powerful international corporate terrorists threaten the life of the planet and its inhabitants, and what actions need to be done to bring about change.

Furthermore, I would like to say that I have grave doubts that Martin Luther King Jr. would be proud to have a street or a parkway named after him. I don't see any honor there. Perhaps MLK would feel

insulted by these hollow gestures in light of all the heinous hypocrisy running rampant.

I suggest Lance Jacobs become more knowledgeable about world events, look at the big picture, and express criticism where it's appropriate. There's plenty to do.

Sherry Franzen, Eugene

**Letter to *The Eugene Weekly*
July 28, 2005**

Free is not alone

Douglas Newton (7/14) attempts to discredit supporters of Jeff "Free" Luers by claiming they're young and stupid. It may come as a surprise to Newton that a diverse group of people — locally, nationally, and internationally — stand in solidarity with Jeff. One of many examples of proof is the "Sign-on Letter" of support for Jeff, which has been endorsed by hundreds of people including some famous authors, human rights activists, and academics (see it for yourself at www.freefreenow.org)

I share Newton's doubt that "any professional firefighter will tell you that torching vehicles ... is a harmless, nonviolent form of political protest." That said, by anyone's account the fire was small and easy to extinguish. Jeff and his co-defendant made sure to avoid human injury and caused none. It may anger some firefighters and concerned citizens to learn that arsonists who set fires with the actual intent of harming people usually receive miniscule punishment compared to Jeff.

Newton says Luers' supporters often fail to mention the attempted arson at Tyree of which Jeff was convicted. There's reasons for this: A) The majority of Jeff's sentence (approximately 16 years) comes from the Romania incident, and B) Jeff has denied any involvement in this action from the beginning. The fingerprints found at the scene of the crime were not his or his codefendant's, and the conviction was based entirely on circumstantial [non] evidence (for instance, bolt-cutters found at Jeff's residence were "similar" to the bolt-cutters used at Tyree!).

Jeff may not show remorse for the three vehicles that were slightly

burned (and eventually sold) at Romania. But he has said that, if released, he would avoid activities that could land him back in prison. The irony of Jeff's situation is that his action was only effective because he received a ridiculously unfair sentence that has made him an internationally respected "martyr" for the radical environmental and social justice movements.

Steven Gider
Eugene

**Letter to *The Register*
Guard
July 2, 2005**

Reduce Jeff Luers' sentence

Following is a selection of punishments for various criminal offenses:

Six years for pouring hot cooking oil on the face of sleeping boyfriend.

Six years for deliberately running over her boyfriend with her car.

Six years for strangling and beating a woman beyond all recognition after serving six years for a similar assault.

Four and one-half years for sexual abuse of at least 10 women by a Eugene police officer while on duty.

Fifteen days for attempted rape of and coerced oral sex with a children's nanny.

Twenty-four years for a serial killer who will be freed in 2006 (vicious random slayings of 13 targeted women he thought had evil eyes).

Twenty-two years for the execution-style murders of two U.S. Fish and Game Department officers, plus a jailbreak.

Eighteen years for the attempted murder of Pope John Paul II.

Eight years for raping and cutting off the forearms of a 15-year-old girl and leaving her to die.

No charges for Springfield vigilante-style restaurant murder in 1995.

Fifteen years for 17 separate arsons of buildings and cars.

Four years for setting fire to a school.

Three years for a U.S. Forest Service fire safety specialist, whose motive was overtime, convicted of 35 counts of first-degree arson in forest.

Twenty-three years for Jeff Luers' arson of three SUVs.

While not condoning Luers' action, I urge responsible Lane County

justice system officials to support the reduction of his unjust, internationally denounced, politically motivated and absurdly long sentence.

JEROME GARGER
Yachats, OR

**Letter to *The Eugene Weekly*
June 30, 2005**

Luers' Impact

National SUV sales are down 13.5 percent in the first quarter of this year (according to research firm Ward's Automotive Reports) and sales of the biggest models have plummeted even further. The Ford Expedition down 25 percent and the Chevy Suburban, 28 percent. Meanwhile, hybrid car sales have doubled every year, and in 2004 jumped 81 percent (according to industry research firm, R.L. Polk & Co.), and carmakers plan to launch about a dozen new models during the next three years. In fact, the backorder wait on a new Toyota Prius can be up to 18 months.

Lance Jacobs (6/16) doesn't believe that Jeff Luers' action affected SUV sales, but the groundswell of popular opinion about these ostentatious behemoths, the fuel they consume and the poison they spew shows that Americans are rethinking this hateful SUV fad. Jeff's action, and the actions of many others, contribute to the legitimization of questioning our over-indulgent and wasteful lifestyles. By expanding the realm of debate, acts of planetary self-defense keep the conversation going, and for that, I am grateful.

Jacobs does have one thing correct: The Measure 11 sentence for murder is in fact 25 years. However, attempted aggravated murder is just 10, manslaughter I is 10, and rape I, just eight years, four months. Jeff was convicted of three arson I charges for a single crime. His sentence was inflated because of his political beliefs, therefore he is a political prisoner.

I want to thank Mr. Jacobs for keeping the debate alive.

Shelley Cater, Eugene

**Letter to *The Register Guard*
June 23, 2005**

Jeff Luers is a political prisoner
This month marks the fifth year of imprisonment of Jeff "Free"
Luers, a local environmental activist serving an unjust 23 years in
prison.

To mark the occasion, events were held recently in 27 different
cities, including several internationally. But articles about this, his
growing support and upcoming appeal were conspicuously absent
from the news pages of Eugene's local daily.

Luers is recognized worldwide as a political prisoner due to his
outrageous 23-year sentence for a small fire that burned the tires
of three gas-guzzling SUVs. His action hurt no one, nor was that
his intent.

Individuals convicted of rape, murder and serial arson in Oregon
are often given far more lenient sentences than the one Luers
received. Earlier this year, a Springfield man with an extensive
criminal record was given a seven-year sentence for setting 17
fires to local homes. Another man was given four years for setting
fire to a school.

Luers' 23-year sentence was clearly given because of his political
views. Because he did it out of frustration with our country's lack
of concern over global warming and the role that SUVs play in
that process, the judge chose to make an example out of him.
Even those who do not agree with his tactics can agree that his
sentence is ridiculously long.

Luers' case is an illustration of the criminalization of the type of
dissent that is meant to keep the government in check, and he
needs and deserves our support.

Information about his case is at www.freefreenow.org.

Leeanne Siart
Eugene

**Letter to *The Eugene Weekly*
June 23, 2005**

Respect for life
Lance Jacob's letter (6/16) has more falsehoods than I care to
note. He attempts to refute Chris Calef's claim ([Viewpoint 6/9](#))
that Jeff "Free" Luers received a sentence exceeding that of most

murderers, noting that "Since Measure 11 was passed, the minimum sentence for murder is 25 years, two years longer than Luer's arson sentence." The truth is (and this is apparent to anyone who's done the research) that most people who commit arson (and often worse) receive much less severe punishment than Jeff.

In 2003, some of Jeff's local supporters sponsored a project comparing sentences and found that many people convicted of arson, manslaughter, and even rape and child molestation, received sentences significantly lesser than Jeff's (sometimes ranging from two to five years). This project prompted the Eugene Human Rights Commission to write a [statement](#) supporting a sentence reduction for Jeff (details available at www.freefreenow.org).

I'm not sure if Jeff "attempted a much larger arson than what occurred" but everyone familiar with the case knows that Jeff did not intend to hurt anyone, he actively tried to avoid hurting anyone and nobody got hurt. What is truly disturbing is that people who deliberately hurt others often get much better treatment than Jeff, whose actions were actually motivated by respect for life. Now that is what's "simply unacceptable to this peace-loving community" or at least it should be.

Steven Gider, Eugene

Letter to *The Eugene Weekly* May 12, 2005

Must be a snitch

Thanks for your short opinion piece (4/28) comparing the ridiculous 22-year prison sentence of local environmentalist Jeff "Free" Luers for burning three SUVs with the eight-year prison sentence of California's Billy Cottrell for burning more than 125 of them. There are literally countless examples of people committing more extreme acts than "Free" and getting much less severe punishment. Some local examples can be found at: www.freefreenow.org/sentences.html

My speculation is Billy Cottrell probably got a lesser sentence because he "snitched" on his codefendants during trial. If "Free" had renounced the environmental movement and placed the blame on his co-defendant, he probably would have been given more lenient punishment. Prosecutors reward snitches; they don't reward standing by your principles.

Thanks also for mentioning the June 10-12 Weekend of Resistance for "Free." More info on the activities can be found at www.freefreenow.org/june2005.html A great event is planned locally and people should contact breakthechains02@yahoo.com for details.

Steven Gider, Eugene

Letter to *The Eugene Weekly* January 2005

Biggest hate group

Props to Hope Marston for discussing important, but often ignored, problems at the Citizens State of the City Address (1/13). It's wonderful that so many in the Eugene community get (righteously) outraged by bigots distributing racist propaganda, or vandalism of a synagogue. But it's a shame more Eugeneans don't express outrage over institutionalized racism. The U.S. criminal justice system is in fact the biggest hate group in this country. It has implemented racial segregation in the prisons on a level that neo-Nazis can only dream of achieving.

Currently more African-Americans are in prison than in college, and we are one of the only countries in the world that still has people imprisoned for actions against the former apartheid regime in South Africa. Former members of the United Freedom Front — Richard Williams, Jaan Laaman, and Thomas Manning — have been imprisoned for more than two decades for clandestine attacks on financial institutions that did business with the brutal, racist regime. Most countries would have granted them amnesty years ago for doing what most people now consider justified.

Eugene residents who claim to be committed to social justice have a duty to oppose racial profiling, mass detentions, and other post-9/11 attacks on civil liberties. They should also work towards the release of the political prisoners of social justice movements, including Eugene's own environmental political prisoner Jeff "Free" Luers, who continues to sit in prison on a 22-plus years sentence for actions that harmed nobody. His co-defendant, Craig "Critter" Marshall, was released on Jan. 7. It's time for "Free" to come home too. Please support his appeal and learn more about his case at www.freefreenow.org

Steven Gider
Eugene

Letter to *The Eugene Weekly* June 10, 2004

Passionate Activist

June marks the fourth year that Jeff "Free" Luers has been imprisoned. Sentenced to 22 years and eight months for burning three sport utility vehicles (SUVs) to protest ecological destruction, Jeff has continued to be active in prison and fight oppression with his words and inspiration.

Jeff has been labeled an "eco-terrorist" but many consider him to be a committed "eco-defender" who acted in desperation. I don't think what he did was admirable, but I do think his punishment is excessive, especially when compared to the light sentences given to rapist cops, corrupt government agents and others who pose more of a threat to the public than a passionate activist like Jeff ever could.

Brendan Avakian, Eugene

Letter to *The Eugene Weekly* March 11, 2004

Lara vs. Luers

On February 26 former Eugene Police Officer Juan Francisco Lara was sentenced to less than 5 years for crimes relating to sexual abuse of women and other acts of misconduct while on duty. There were 11 victims that spoke at the hearing about how Lara's actions have irrevocably changed their lives for the worse. Many of the victims reported that they were so afraid of Lara that they had to move away from Eugene.

Lara never took responsibility for his crimes, and instead attempted the age-old defense that "the women wanted it." The hearing revealed Lara's own boastful admissions that he was "just thinking with his dick," and that his job was all about "getting a piece of ass." The plea deal was arranged in a shady after-hours proceeding where this rapist was even allowed to weasel out of being convicted as a sex offender!

The bust of Lara, (and of Roger Magana, currently in jail awaiting trial), is just the tip of the iceberg. The EPD is filled with cops that abuse their power as police officers every day and severely violate the public's trust. I wonder if the new chief intends to really clean house (8 officers have been quietly suspended or fired since the EPD began its investigation into the sex crimes), or just make public scapegoats of these two cops. One thing is clear; they need to clean up their act before coming to the community for more tax money!

Let's clearly show this travesty of justice for what it really is. Perhaps you recall the case of Jeffrey Luers. On June 16, 2000, this 22-year-old man caught three SUVs on fire in the Romania car lot to make a political statement. The punishment for this minor property crime... 22.5 years in prison! There were no backroom deals in this case, as a matter of fact, there were no plea offers made to him at all. The only victim in this case was a car dealership who collected a hefty insurance check.

What did the women who were raped and victimized by Lara get? Nothing. They did not receive a dime in victim compensation (although the D.A. asked for it, the judge denied it) and were viciously cross-examined by Lara's defense attorney, Dan Koenig. They were humiliated by the slap on the wrist that Lara received in this plea bargain proceeding, and now must attempt to get on with their lives.

It is appalling and outrageous that a young man has been sentenced to 22.5 YEARS for a minor arson, and an officer sworn to uphold the law and protect the community has been sentenced to 54 MONTHS by THE EXACT SAME COURT OF LAW for sexually abusing WHILE IN UNIFORM at least 10 women in this community without even having to register as a sex offender < a title he has more than earned by his own deviant, dishonest, and evil actions. This situation makes a mockery of the courts, the criminal justice system, and equal protection of the law < the foundation of the U. S. Constitution.

Jim Flynn
Eugene, OR

Letter to [The Sun](#) March 2004

Jeffrey Luer's brave action here three years ago is well-known and appreciated by many who champion his effort. He is a political prisoner and the length of his sentence is outrageous, especially in comparison to others in our "justice system." Incarceration is huge business in the US; the punishment industry is nothing more than legalized slavery. Unfortunately, the level of dysfunction among Americans enables them to hide from the truth; too many still believe that prisons are a beneficial necessity in our "civilized society." If they were more self-educated and able to face reality straight on, people could embrace the type of direct action that Jeffrey used. They're willing to condemn property destruction, without seeing that despoiling the earth and

its inhabitants are the impetus for this type of direct action. Why don't they decry THAT destruction in any meaningful way?

I am impressed with the bumper sticker, "If you're not outraged, you're not paying attention." Now we need to act on that outrage, as Jeffrey did. Nothing less will make any difference. Since 9/11 we've been paralyzed by fear in the U.S., and that fear has only served to further immobilize us, only feeding into the global "government" plan to enslave us in one way or another. Thank you, Jeffrey, for living by your convictions.

Sherry Franzen
Eugene, Oregon

Letter to the *Eugene Weekly* October 16, 2003

Oregon eco-defense political prisoner Jeff "Free" Luers is serving an outrageous 22 year sentence for setting fire to three SUVs to protest the destruction of the environment. He is in desperate need of funds to pay for legal fees and to cover other expenses in order to sustain and build upon the campaign for his sentence reduction.

If you can afford to make a donation, please mail checks and money orders (made out to "Free Legal Defense") to Free's Defense Network, PO Box 3, Eugene 97440 or visit www.freefreenow.org to make an online credit card donation.

Free also has a very impressive publication, which includes writings by and about him, his artwork, and more, that is available from Break The Chains. Call 520-5401 or e-mail breakthechains02@yahoo.com

Recently, Free has been getting a lot of attention from slimy corporate newspapers. Many newspaper articles falsely refer to Free as a "terrorist" and member of the ELF, which he is not and has never claimed to be. Eugene's R-G has falsely claimed that the ELF has its roots in the Pacific Northwest, and is attributing practically every single act of property destruction — no matter how minor or random — to a conspiracy of "eco-terrorists." It's important for all people concerned about justice to refute these lies, because they are clearly being made to justify more repressive legislation, harsher punishment for activists, and to give the public the false impression that powerful corporations are the "real victims" in society.

Please write to newspapers in support of Free's appeal or to

highlight his case. And please do your part to expose the real criminals: those who believe power and profit is more important than a healthy environment and healthy human beings.

Steven Gider, Eugene

Letter to the *Eugene Weekly*-August 21, 2003

HOLE IN JUSTICE

On Friday, June 13, political prisoner Free (Jeffrey Luers) was transferred to disciplinary segregation, commonly known as "the Hole," at Oregon State Penitentiary (OSP).

Free was sent to the Hole for an article he wrote that encouraged people who are involved in direct action to be more thoughtful in their actions. This would be the second time this year that authorities at OSP have responded to political expression with write-ups and time in the Hole. (Anarchist prisoners Rob "los Ricos" Thaxton and Brian McCarvill were both sent to the Hole for 120 days earlier this year, after allies on the outside sent them postcards as part of an anti-censorship campaign.)

Free is widely considered a political prisoner due to the 23-year sentence he received for an act of sabotage that injured nobody. The same week as his transfer to the Hole, the Eugene Human Rights Commission released a letter in support of a reduced sentence for Free, and suggesting that the original may have been based on his political beliefs. Now, Free is again being punished for his politics.

We encourage all individuals and groups to stand by Free during this time, and to demand his immediate reentry into general population at OSP. For more info, please visit www.freefreenow.org

Steven Gider
Eugene, OR

Letter to the *Eugene Weekly*-July 10, 2003

IMPEACH THE BIGOTS

This is a letter of progressive perspectivism on the current justice system of the U.S. Jeff Luers burned three anti-environmental vehicles resulting in no injury, no death and some opened eyes and received 22-1/2 years in prison. Ken Lay defrauded

thousands of people of billions of dollars and got zero jail time. His buddy, George W. Bush, committed war crimes resulting in thousands of deaths and thousands of injuries and received no punishment whatsoever.

Federal "justice" is an Ashcroftian nightmare of anti-constitutional bigotry and state justice is only slightly better. Two million prisoners rot in U.S. jails, most of them guilty only of nonviolent crimes with exorbitant and unjust sentencing. Thousands of these prisoners are innocent of the crimes for which they were sentenced.

Police routinely beat and otherwise harass nonviolent political demonstrators and minorities on the street and get promoted instead of fired. The rich are pampered, the poor are oppressed and the environment is trashed. There may be justice somewhere in the world but certainly not in the U.S. We need to dump Bush, Ashcroft and all the other Crazy Killers of Kindness. Impeach Bush, not Martha.

Bob Saxton
Eugene

Letter to the *Eugene Weekly*-6/19/03

POLITICAL IMPRISONMENT

Even the Bush administration can no longer debate the fact that our planet is becoming steadily warmer as a result of carbon accumulation in the atmosphere, and that this is the direct result of human use of fossil fuels combined with massive global deforestation. We are only beginning to experience the effects of this phenomenon, with increasingly severe tropical storms, melting polar ice caps, and northward migrations of such detrimental organisms as the West Nile virus. Combined with the ever-increasing human population and dwindling natural resource base, it is becoming very difficult to predict a long-term future for the human species.

In June 2000, two sincere, dedicated and frustrated young men took an action against sport utility vehicles (SUVs), a particularly blatant agent of global warming. Jeffrey Luers and Craig Marshall planted incendiary devices under two SUVs in the Romania Chevrolet lot on Franklin Boulevard. They took all possible measures to ensure that no human being would be harmed by their action, and no one was.

Given the dire global forecast, this loss of property by a company that actively profits from the sale of low-fuel-efficiency vehicles would seem to be a relatively minor incident. Judge Lyle Velure, however, did not see it that way. Although he made a point to tell Jeff Luers that it had nothing to do with his politics, he proceeded to hand down a sentence of nearly 23 years. This sentence, as punishment for an act that caused no harm to human life, in a judicial system that frequently releases rapists and murderers in a fraction of that time, classifies Mr. Luers as a political prisoner.

Chris Calef
Cottage Grove

Editorial submitted to the *Eugene Weekly* February 2003

STOP THE REAL ECO-TERRORISM: Global Warming: A Weapon of Mass Destruction

Jeff "Free" Luers has just filed his appeal in hopes of reducing his 23 year sentence. As Americans fill their gas tanks with the blood of Iraqi children, consider the urgency of the message Free and Critter were sending when they torched 3 SUV's at a deserted car dealership. Global warming is a weapon of mass destruction because of the indiscriminate impact it will have on billions of human and non-human lives. One need not endorse arson to recognize that the threat to our stability and health must be confronted, both in terms of massive human rights disasters and the irreversible and accelerating damage to the earth's life support systems. Though Free and Critter, both former tree sitters, acted to expose these greater harms, Free is not allowed to claim the necessity defense in court. His 23-year sentence is the result of a politically motivated prosecution that grossly inflated the risk factor, in all likelihood to further justify a bloated counter-terrorism budget.

Meanwhile, the public is asleep at the wheel (of their Hummers and SUV's) fails to grasp the implications of our addiction to fossil fuels. As Phil Berrigan, who burned draft files with napalm once observed, "The bystanders,... who stay home,... can't be charged with taking part in any evil act; they watch as evil proceeds. They create the norm, define what is common. When a whole population takes on the status of bystander, the victims are without allies. ...Indifference grows lethal.... where is the outcry?"

Taking his marching orders from Exxon, Bush ignores the global climate change treaty, subsidizes SUV's, installs a pipeline in Afghanistan after bombing several thousand civilians, and supports ethnic cleansing in Palestine; yet no court has called

Bush an "eco-terrorist" or "domestic terrorist." Never mind the 1.5 million dead Iraqis. (The only numbers "good Americans" seem interested in is the cheap rates at the gas pumps.)

As politicians offer hollow speeches on the Titanic, Free and Critter sacrificed their freedom to turn the ship around. In this case the icebergs are actually melting as a result of the hottest temperatures in recorded history. Goodbye baby seals, polar bears and penguins. While Free has been labeled as "eco-terrorist," (a term originating in timber industry p.r agencies) and sentenced to more years than he has been alive, what court will dare hold to Bush accountable for self-serving acts of extreme violence to the planet and the people on it? Is the law not supposed to protect public safety?

Big corporations and the Bush regime have armies of lawyers to protect them from accountability, but Free does not. Please remind State Attorney General Hardy Myers that Free placed no one at risk, and request that Jeff Luer's sentence be reduced to 5 years including time served. See FREEFREENOW.ORG to support Free's costly appeal.

In Solidarity,
Warcry
warcry@riseup.net

Editorial submitted to the *Eugene Weekly* February 2003

The public (asleep at the wheel of their Hummers and SUV's) must confront the implications of our addiction to fossil fuels. As Americans fill their gas tanks with the blood of Iraqi children, consider the urgency of the message Jeff "Free" Luers and Critter were sending when they torched 3 SUV's at a deserted car dealership.

Global warming is a weapon of mass destruction because of the indiscriminate impact it will have on billions of lives. One need not endorse arson to recognize where the threat to our stability and health is coming from, both in terms of massive human rights disasters and the irreversible and accelerating damage to the earth's life support systems. Though the former tree sitters acted to expose these greater harms, Free is not allowed to claim the necessity defense in court. His 23-year sentence is the result of a politically motivated prosecution that grossly inflated the risk factor, in all likelihood to further justify a bloated counter-terrorism budget.

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As politicians polish the doorknobs on the Titanic, Free and Critter sacrificed their freedom to turn the ship around. In this case the icebergs are actually melting as a result of the hottest temperatures in recorded history. Goodbye baby seals, polar bears and penguins. While Free has been labeled as "eco-terrorist," (a term invented by timber industry p.r agencies) and sentenced to more years than he has been alive, what court will dare hold Bush accountable for self-serving acts of extreme violence to the planet and the people on it?

Big corporations and the Bush regime have armies of lawyers to protect them from accountability, but Free does not. Please remind attorney general Hardy Myers that Free placed no one at risk, and request that Jeff Luer's (Appellate case #A115208) sentence be reduced to 5 years including time served.

Letter to the *Eugene Weekly*

7/5/01

I was one of hundreds of wildland firefighters deployed in the Umpqua National Forest in August of 1998, chasing the work of a serial arsonist around Tiller. After a tracking device was attached to her vehicle and she was observed in the act, Forest Service fire safety specialist Tamara Meridith of Canyonville was arrested on 35 counts of first degree arson. The motivation was "overtime." Meredith was only convicted on two counts; the evidence was "circumstantial", which apparently doesn't carry the weight in Roseburg that it does in Circuit Court in Eugene.

After putting 600 of us at risk of injury and death, and costing tax payers a few hundred thousand dollars a day (not including the damages to the forest), Ms. Meredith was sentenced to three years. She'll be out next year (if she isn't already). I'd like to hear Judge Velure tell us once again that politics had nothing to do with Jeffery Luers's 23-year sentence for crimes that did less damage and risked fewer lives. Too bad, Mr. Luers; you should have said you did it for money.

Mick Garvin

Eugene

Letter to the Eugene Weekly

Jeff "Free" Luers has just been sent away for 22 years. His primary motivation for damaging three petro-chemical internal-combustion engines seems to have been that the oil those trucks were prepared to burn is a keystone cause of global warming, air pollution and colonialism threatening us here in Eugene and people all over the world.

During the same week that Luers was shipped to his new home, the local corporate paper reported that he would be replaced with a proper U.S. citizen, the Enron Energy Corporation. Enron intends to produce energy in Eugene to power machines throughout California.

Besides the destruction caused by air conditioners, refrigerators and TVs that Enron's plant here will facilitate, the \$53 billion corporation helps fund police beatings of environmental protesters in India, illegal death squads in South America and everything that George W. Bush does. Enron was the number one campaign contributor to the son of the former head of the CIA and presumably was not displeased when he bombed innocent starving people in Iraq in his first day in office.

Who then, between Luers and Enron, would you prefer to live here with? Were Enron to treat Eugene as it does the rest of the world, the answer to that question would be clear. It surely knows, however, that its public legitimacy in the first world relies on it being no more carcinogenic a neighbor than Hyundai, Monaco Coach and Symantec. Regardless, given the pollution, exploitation and alienation that Enron will inevitably bring to Eugene -- the corporation may be called an eco-terrorist.

Luers damaged three trucks. Enron gets rich off of the oil that makes them run. Which one gets the red carpet?

Robert Giordano
Eugene

Letter to the *Santa Cruz Sentinel*

August 21, 2001

Eco-crime not equal to hate crime On Thursday, August 16, Christopher Slaven was found guilty of attempted murder of two Mexican day laborers. The incident was labeled as a "hate crime."

Mr. Slaven is considered a white supremacist and showed up in court with an American flag tie and a long-sleeved shirt covering his swastika tattoos. The victims were attacked with a shovel, post-hole digger and a knife. Israel Perez almost bled to death from a slashed artery on his arm. Slaven will receive a maximum sentence of 25 years in prison for each attempted murder charge.

On June 11, Jeff Luers, a "radical environmentalist" who goes by the name of Free, was sentenced to almost 23 years in prison for arson which destroyed three pickup trucks at a Chevrolet dealership in Eugene, Oregon.

I fail to comprehend how prison time for arson of three vehicles (eco-sabotage) can come anywhere near the prison time for attempted murder (hate crime). Is standing up for environmental justice as threatening as a skinhead racist with a knife? Is a \$30,000 piece of metal as valuable as human life? Hmmm, I guess that is what the good people of the law want us to think! What a strange world we live in.

Bonnie Watkins
Felton

Letter to the *Eugene Weekly* June 28, 2001

Free was convicted and sentenced to more than 22 years in prison for what might have happened, and partly for what he didn't do. The confessions of a former attorney at the DA's office gives lie to the supposed unbiased nature of the "criminal justice" system. Many of us have known all along that the police, prosecutors, and judges are not arbiters of justice and that they will lie when it is expedient in order to further their ideological repression. They have claimed time and again that they don't go after people because of political beliefs, but they have lied. The reality is that the majority of people generally support the police, the prosecutors and the judges, and probably have no problem with their attacks on anarchists. If this is true, that the pigs have support from the majority of the public, why do they feel the need to lie about what they are doing when they go after anarchists more harshly than others? If they will lie about this when they don't have to, what else are they lying about?

Ryan Foote
Eugene

Letter to the *Eugene Weekly* June 28, 2001

I read with some dismay the events leading up to the cruel and unusual punishment handed down through the Oregon legal system for the anarchist, Free.

What is missing in the news analysis of these events are the underlying issues surrounding Measure 11. Was he guilty? You bet. Did he deserve to serve time? Possibly. Was the sentence fair? Not a chance.

The state Legislature added arson as a Measure 11 offense, altering the original law approved by voters in 1995. It was never an original Measure 11 crime but was added without putting it out to the voters who approved the Measure. The result is now crimes against property can warrant mandatory minimum sentencing. As this case revealed, Measure 11 sentences can be handed down by a judge even if the defendant is not being charged under a Measure 11 crime.

Measure 11 is inherently flawed and is being abused by the state Legislature, the police and prosecutors to punish people who have different ethnicities, beliefs, lifestyles, or political views than those pressing charges or handing down sentences. The constitutionality of this law should be challenged in the U.S. Supreme Court. It violates both the U.N. and U.S. Bill of Rights.

A flawed legal system and widespread government corruption are the true causes of the growing anarchist movement in the U.S. Laws such as Measure 11 punish unjustly, and excessively and only contribute to the issues underlying the anarchist movement: government corruption, corruption of the legal system, globalization, free trade, and exploitation of resources by the elite of our society.

Until the voters repeal this law, we are ALL targets for this type of cruel and unusual punishment and political retaliation for challenging the system.

Kate Sloan
Corvallis

Letter to the Eugene Weekly July 7, 2001

Sometime in the last month, the issue of Jeffrey Luers being sent to prison for 22 1/2 years has taken a back seat in reference to what Mr. Luers is actually being punished for: burning automobiles as an act of resistance.

While I regard his sentence as excessively punitive (despite the

judge's many assertions that this case was not political) I cannot help but notice how the issue of cars and their horrific impact on the planet has been lost in the discussions over the sentence. It is hard to refute the claims made by many scientists, indigenous elders and thinking individuals that our planet and culture are on a downward spiral. Locally, this is apparent by the way we treat the old growth forests and their inhabitants; just 45 minutes from Eugene. I implore anyone to stand on 6th Avenue (or Highways 5 or 58) for an hour and observe the numerous log trucks scream by. Truck after truck of massive old-growth trees whiz by yet industry zealots (and their friends at the corporate media chains) tell me that our national forests are "locked up 100 percent." If that is true, than where are these trees coming from? How come my every trip to a national forest is filled with images of trees flagged to be cut, log trucks and new roads and stumps? When our grandchildren ask us what we did to stop such madness, will we be at a loss for words; embarrassed by our inaction and condemnation of people like Mr. Luers? Or is it not too late for people to take action in their lives every day to confront head-on this destructive culture and mindset. I only hope its not too late.

Ken LaFarge
Eugene

Letter to the Eugene Weekly

August 9, 2001

I have known Jeff Luers for almost 10years now. We have chosen different paths in life, but I still and always will consider him a dear friend to me. I need not convince you that he has always been a person who believed strongly in the activities he was and is involved in.

Jeff needs help now and I am sure that you will help him. Although I can't fully agree with what he did, I can completely disagree with the sentence cast upon him. I know him, he is not an evil person nor was he ever. I have not spoken to him in more than a year or so, but I know that if he said to that judge that he never meant to hurt anyone, that is the truth. I am sure that you feel the same, but I wanted you to hear it from someone who has helped him and has been helped by him. If nothing else, write the Oregon governor and tell him that his sentence is ridiculous. I have spoken to his parents and they have told me that there are sex offenders with less time than Jeff. Should Jeff serve time? Well, that is matter of opinion. Should he serve 22.5-plus years? Well, that is ridiculous.

I am not an activist or revolutionary, I am a longtime friend who would like to see his buddy sometime before he is 40. This is just my 2 cents worth.

Marcus Tyson
Eugene

Letter to the Eugene Weekly

August 16, 2001

Recent events in Eugene and Portland make all too clear the true nature of the criminal justice system.

The Register Guard reported on Aug. 2 that 26-year old Ruben Patterson, a basketball player with the Portland Trailblazers, recently received a suspended sentence of one year in prison for attempted rape on his children's 24-year-old nanny. Patterson ended up serving 15 days in jail -- for coercing a young woman to perform oral sex on him.

Yet, Jeffrey Free Luers, a 22-year old anarchist activist, receives 22 years in prison for setting three SUVs on fire at Joe Romania in June of 2000. What kind of message does this send to Oregonians? The message it sent me is that inanimate objects like SUVs are more important to the state than the physical and mental well-being of women. Attack property and spend the next two decades of your life in a cage. Rape and abuse women and maybe do a year. That's how absurd our judicial system really is.

Jeff Luers took action against the industries he feels are systematically destroying the natural world. When the ozone is about to rip open and kill all life on this planet, I imagine he will be looked at a sort of folk hero. Ruben Patterson, on the other hand, is a truly sick human being. But, he's not an anarchist and he's got a lot of cash, so he's off the hook.

Jen Farey
Eugene

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