

The grand jury is a tool of the federal (and California) legal system. Ostensibly they are used to determine whether or not to issue an indictment in the case of a felony crime, and hear evidence presented by a prosecutor to make this determination. Unlike normal court proceedings, in the case of a grand jury the prosecutor runs the show.

The normal rules of evidence do not apply to grand jury proceedings; there are no standards of relevance, reliability, or for evidence to have been legally obtained, and there is no judge presiding and no defense lawyers are allowed to be present. They have broad powers to subpoena witnesses and documents, and operate largely in secrecy without any real scrutiny, accountability, or oversight.

Because of these broad powers and the secretive nature of grand juries they are often used as a tool of political repression. They have, and continue to be, used to investigate, harass, intimidate, and disrupt political movement and to sow fear and distrust within those movements. If we are subpoenaed by a grand jury it is our duty not to cooperate, as their goal is to dismantle our movements and gather information they cannot obtain through legal means.

It takes significant fortitude and moral courage to resist the coercive powers granted to a federal grand jury, and in this regard not allowing yourself to become isolated is key. Transparency about any contact with the State builds trust within our movements and exposes their machinations. Our comrades, communities, and movements are a source of great strength that will support us during such ordeals, and grand jury resistance is about fostering the mutual care and respect that will enable us to effectively challenge and resist the injustices of the State together.

While there is not one right way to respond to a grand jury subpoena, sharing information with the government is never acceptable. Even seemingly innocuous information can be used

against us. The most common forms of resistance have been refusing to enter the grand jury room and/or entering the grand jury proceeding and giving only your name. Whichever stance is taken must be accompanied by a path of transparency and accountability.

It is imperative to have a lawyer who will support your decision not to collaborate. Contact the Civil Liberties Defense Center for legal support!

Long-term political, material and emotional support for those subpoenaed must be swiftly organized. The path of non-cooperation can be difficult as the government aims to isolate and punish those who resist. Building movements of resistance requires that we support and stand alongside anyone who risks their personal freedom for the health and safety of the greater community.

When we resist grand juries, we choose to be part of a long legacy of resistance that strengthens our movements and in turn weakens the State. It is an act of deep love and solidarity. Stay brave and have each others backs, this fight isn't gonna be over anytime soon.

Resources:

Civil Liberties Defense Center Activist Helpline: (541) 603-6891

Eugene Jail Support: (541) 515-5721

<http://grandjuryresistance.org>