



Bob Zaugh

June 6, 2018 by David Schnitzer

Bob Zaugh "An Impresario of Leftist Causes" and Gary Tyler's Freedom (The Full Story)

The Peace Press was born from the fact that people opposed to the war in Vietnam could not get their printing done so we had to learn to print and do it ourselves. Jerry Palmer set up the Peace Press and we quickly expanded on doing our own anti war statements to printing for hundreds and hundreds of political groups in Southern California. In late 1971 a group of students from Uni High came into the Peace press to print the first issue of the Red Tide and distribute it at Uni High (and other schools).

They were immediately expelled and Michael Letwin's father, Leon Letwin, a UCLA law professor represented the students and beat Uni High in court. We only printed that one issue because they needed to move on to newsprint, and in fact, we were burned to the ground on Jan 9,

1972. We had no press and no building but community support had us printing 48 hours later and we went on until 1987.

In 1974 Gary Tyler was arrested for "Disturbing the Peace", which they changed to Murder. At his trial he was convicted and sentenced to Death, the youngest ever to be sent to Death Row. Peace Press printed for Gary Tyler's defense. Meanwhile the red Tide had graduated from Uni High but they kept the paper going and moved to Detroit and Oakland to help organize labor. They also took in defending Gary Tyler and held rallies and marches for his support. In Detroit they recruited Rosa Parks to head their rallies. Young teenagers joined up with the Red Tide and they made it clear in Sunday that Gary Tyler had saved THEIR lives through engaging their concern about this injustice. The Red Tide is still together for over 50 years.

In 1989 I received a call from Mary Howell a civil rights lawyer in New Orleans. She asked if I knew of Gary Tyler. I said yes, we printed for Gary's support during his trial. She asked if I knew a Steve Orel. I said "YES, he was a student who had printed at Peace Press, and people in junior high or high school were rare at Peace press. She told me she had been given my name by Steve. Gary Tyler had enough votes to get out of prison, but if it was possible they wanted him to get out of Louisiana. As he had studied Graphic Arts and we did printing, could Peace Press offer Gary a job. I told Mary that the Peace Press was no longer running. We had sold the assets in 1987. But I told her I would see what I could do. I talked with the people who had bought the assets and a few days later Gary Shafner and I flew to New Orleans and Mary Howell drove us to Angola Prison about 100 miles away. On the way I taped a long interview in which she went over all the details of the case. We met with Gary Tyler and we were impressed. Gary Shafner offered him a job. As he was not scheduled to get out, and did not get out I worked at gathering other resources for Gary. As there was no guarantee that Gary Shafner's company would still be printing when Gary Tyler was released I looked for other jobs, and counseling, and medical care. No request was ever turned down. There was support from Liz Forer and Venice Family Clinic, Anna Deutsch from Program for Torture Victims, Bob Timmins, the incredibly connected private parole officer, Debra Constance from a Place called Home, and Chico Brown and Chantal Grayson from Reach Back LA. In fact, when Gary was released SHafner's business was no longer printing, but he was still willing to help Gary in whatever way he could. In 2007 Gov Kathleen Blanco committed to giving Gary a hearing for release. In the run up to that Julie Thompson and Brogan dePaor of Activist Video Archive did interviews of those people mentioned above and those were sent to Governor Blanco. The lawyer flew out to Los Angeles to meet with those of us helping Gary. I recruited Daniel Berrigan and Martin Sheen to send letters to Gov Blanco. She slipped out of office without honoring her commitment to Gary.

A few years later Gary produced and directed a play on the Life of Christ which ran for the public in the Angola Prison Rodeo Grounds. In addition, Oscar nominated doc maker Jonathan Stack heard what was happening at Angola and asked to film for a day or so. What he saw inspired him to make a full Documentary. "Cast the First Stone". I contacted him. He sent me s

link to watch the film and also told me that they were running the play again in November and that I should come see it.

AND NOW the story really takes off. I flew to Louisiana and drove to the prison to see the play. I got lost behind the rodeo grounds and a guard came to ask what I was doing in this restricted area. I gave him my name and said I was there to see the play. He said, "Oh, we were expecting you. Let me take you over to Gary". Wait, what?! Expecting me? I said I did not want to disturb Gary and just went and got my seat. He came over at intermission (the play is 3 hours). He told me there were a couple of lawyers at the play from Los Angeles and he wanted me to meet them. When the play ended he brought them over. One was such a long time supporter her son was named Tyler, after Gary, and he was 34 years old. These people had gone to visit Gary; lawyer Mary Howell. I think they were law school alumni or something. They assumed Gary was out of prison and asked her what he was up to. Mary told them he was still in prison and in fact was putting on a play on that weekend. They should go see it. So here they were being introduced to me. I asked where they practiced law. They told me they were retired. Although most people would not do this, I repeated, "Where did you practice law?" They told me, "Bar Sinister". I said, "You mean Litt, Livesy and Taylor? Their jaws dropped. How did I know that? I said "YOU were our lawyers at Peace Press. (This was 32 years previous). So I am in a prison 2000 miles from my home and I meet my own lawyers !!! Pam and Steve White asked me if there was anything going on for Gary, and I said yes and I am in charge (since the plan was to get him out of Louisiana. They asked what they could do. I said he would need a place to stay when he got out. "He can stay with us in Pasadena". Wow! Just like that Gary has a place to stay although he is not scheduled to get out. What I said next I do not even know where it came from. As Gary had been arrested at 16 he had no employment, therefore he would leave prison with no contributions into Social Security. One must have 40 quarters (10 years) of work to qualify. Most of us retire with 30 to 45 years of contributions to give us a decent (hopefully) Monthly check. In fact as Gary was not released until he was 58, he would not qualify until he was 69 years old. How many of us can even work that long? Thus, Sunday's Fundraising birthday party for Gary. I said that there should be a fund for Gary, that is tax deductible for the donor with the money then given to Gary to offset the fact he's have no savings and no social security. I said it should be through a foundation, like LIBERTY HILL !!! Steve White said, "I am on the board of Liberty Hill, and Paula Litt, of Litt Livesy and Taylor, is the president of the board!! When we all got back to Los Angeles we met and the Back to Lie Recovery Fund was set up. It has been of crucial support to Gary.

The next year the Miller case came down which stated that Youths could not be sentenced to LWOP. There must be a possibility of getting out. They had to re consider each of about 2500 cases that fit this new rule. Of course Louisiana's position was that it was not retroactive and should not apply to Gary and others. There were some more shenanigans the next couple of years but Gary finally came up for release in 2016. His lawyers could see the light at the end of the tunnel but they could not tell me anything. It was STILL a hot button case with Klan types. I was finally notified on April 29 that Gary was out. I arranged to fly to New Orleans and brought

him to Los Angeles. He got to wade into the Pacific Ocean. He got to surprise Debra Constance at her home. I had told no one and we just showed up at her door. She burst into tears. As Debra has said many times, I would take a bullet for Gary, and Debra is the kind of person who will take a bullet. On May 11 we went to Death Penalty Focus and Gary met Mike Farrell, Jackson Browne, Joan Baez and others.

I started looking for work for Gary as A Place Called Home, where we hoped he could work did not have the budget. I set up public talks for Gary starting with Keynote Speaker at LMU for Susan Burton's Justice Not Jails Film Festival. He spoke in Bob Scheer's Media Class 8 times, and also at UCLA, Cal Tech, LMU, Loyola Law, CSUN with Rev James Lawson, CSULB to their Rising Stars ex incarcerated program, twice at the Long Beach Opera for their production of Central Park Five. He spoke many other places. He began working at Safe Place for Youth. In addition I introduced him to my college lady Tekla, the first woman to become warden of a Men's Medium/Max men's prison. He went to work part time for Tekla's sister tax service.

I began hearing for Karen Pomer and Michael Letwin from the Red Tide and two and a half years ago they asked if I could get Gary to come to their Red Tide 50 year celebration on Zoom. Although Gary's case was known around the world I told Gary his biggest supporters were from Uni High and the Red Tide. Some had been arrested on his behalf. They had rounded up Rosa Parks to support him. Gary attended and they really connected.

As the Zoom event came to a close I said I would be putting on a birthday Party fundraiser for Gary's 65th in two years and I suggested that they make it a kind of Red Tide reunion, As I said elsewhere, I think social change works better when people are working together across the decades and the linking of Peace Press and the Red Tide across the decades has reaped great results and support for Gary Tyler. There is also the link with the work of Jan Goodman and the late Jerry Manpearl who turned their home into a Ground Zero area for social change for the last twenty years. They brought in many progressive office seekers and progressive efforts on political issues.

They allowed me to set up three events for The Resistance and The Boys Who Said NO! film, and Sunday's party was the third event for Gary Tyler. What made this work so well was that the Red Tide did show up for this with about 16 Red Tiders coming in from around the country. Their presence was electric and really united many people who had never met. I got to attend their private reunion Saturday night where they met Gary live for the first time. The Red Tide was also the source of probably 75% of the donations received. The fourth element for me was Liberty Hill which was a Peace Press customer from when it first formed and they have provided great support to Gary Tyler.

To help bring these people together in goodwill and service made this one of the greatest weekends of my life.

[Here's a link to the 8/16/23 Los Angeles Times story by Doug Smith about the Red Tide and Gary Tyler.](#)

Los Angeles Times

The radical L.A. student newspaper that inspired a generation of activists



Photo: Wally Skalij / Los Angeles Times

Bob Zaugh Archive Interview

[See this content in the original post](#)

Bob Zaugh was born and grew up in Los Angeles. As a young teenager, he was swept up in the rabid Anti - Communism of the 1950's and only shifted his views in junior college when he took a Political Science class from a brilliant and charismatic teacher who saw the divisions and power balances in national and world politics from the standpoint of the disenfranchised.

After the Watts riots, Bob volunteered in South Central LA, teaching young kids to read, and attended sessions of Operation Bootstrap.

Concerned about the Vietnam War and his impending draft, he went to a speech against the war by David Harris and in doing so, set the course for much of the rest of his life. Bob decided to turn in his draft card and refuse induction into the U.S. Army. He joined with and helped to form a key group of young people opposed to the war which became known as the "LA Resistance." They not only opposed the war, but opposed the draft and set out to organize others to oppose induction, stand trial, and if found guilty, go to jail as a form of civil disobedience. They also defended themselves at their trials.

During this tumultuous period, Bob, along with Jerry Palmer, helped to start a worker-owned collective called Peace Press. Peace Press printed posters, leaflets, bumper strips and books for progressive organizations for over 20 years, offering low price or free printing and quick turnaround to a generation of organizers in Los Angeles.

While still at Peace Press, he booked a KNBC interview show, "At One With," which gave Bob access to many of the fascinating counter-cultural and progressive political personalities of our time. Even after the job ended, Bob continued to be a conduit for bringing people together over a book project, or an organizing effort. To this day, putting people together remains a passion and strength.

Late in the history of Peace Press Bob printed and promoted the work of a young cartoonist named Matt Groening, helping to set up key connections for Matt's career. For the last 13 years Bob has been Operations manager for Matt Groening's publishing company, Bongo Comics which publishes the comics, calendars and books for The Simpsons and Futurama.

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