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**#FreeAnt: On the 2nd Anniversary of the Murder of George Floyd,
Activists are Still Being Targeted with Federal Prosecution**

(Wednesday May 25, 2022) Today marks the two year anniversary of the murder of George Floyd. The video showing Derek Chauvin with his knee on Floyd's neck was shared around the world and helped launch a series of global uprisings and a moral reckoning regarding how this country deals with race and police violence. Two years later, [hundreds of activists who participated in demonstrations during the summer of 2020 have been arrested and charged Federally](#). In Philadelphia, the rallying cry of "Free Ant!" has been a call to action to support Ant Smith, an educator at YouthBuild High School who is being Federally prosecuted for participating in demonstrations in May of 2020. Ant Smith's case is set to begin this summer, after nearly 2 years of court supervision. In October of 2020, his home was raided by federal authorities in the wee hours of the morning, only one day after an officer with the Philadelphia Police Department murdered Walter Wallace in West Philadelphia. Smith was arrested and held for weeks in the Lehigh County Jail before being released under court supervision. Since then, the Ant Smith Defense Committee and dedicated community members have worked to support his legal defense and raise awareness about his case.

"Federal prosecution of individuals who were participating in protests during the summer of 2020 is an attempt to deliberately disrupt the momentum of the movement for Black Lives," says Gabriel Bryant of the Ant Smith Defense Committee, "Federal prosecutors under both the Trump and Biden administrations have continued to pursue political prosecutions of activists, especially Black and Brown organizers, like our friend Ant Smith. These charges carry mandatory minimum Federal prison sentences for offenses that would normally be considered misdemeanors under the purview of local District Attorneys. This is straight up political repression."

A [report](#) from the Movement from Black Lives shows how the Justice Department "deliberately targeted" supporters of the Black Lives Matter movement with harsh prosecutions at the "express direction" of former President Donald Trump and former Attorney General Bill Barr. Many protestors - especially visible Black and Brown community organizers like Ant Smith - were arrested and given charges that many are still dealing with to this day. These defendants and their families and supporters have had to figure out ways to raise funds in order to fight for their freedom. Although some cases have been dropped in the last year, the Biden Administration's Justice Department has continued to pursue many of these Federal

prosecutions, even going as far as attempting to label protestors as “[terrorists](#)”. In many cases across the country, people have received years-long Federal prison sentences for their right to have their voice heard.

“For organizers who understand how the courts, prisons and police operate in this country, this is nothing new,” says Deandra Jefferson of the Ant Smith Defense Committee “We knew that the police murders of 2020 were not the start, but the continuation of how white supremacy manifests itself in the institutions and very fabric of how this country runs. Now, as the Justice Department unleashes Federal prosecutors on our community leaders, we have to respond and defend our communities from political repression.

The Ant Smith Defense Committee has been fundraising for Ant Smith’s legal defense and growing a [social media](#) and [online](#) campaign. The Ant Smith Defense Committee has held [press conferences](#), community events, and multiple [IG Live conversations](#), featuring a number of expert panelists sharing insightful information on topics ranging from intersectionality to mutual aid and liberatory education. This campaign looks forward to the inevitability of Ant beating all of his Federal charges and will continue to defend the rights of people to express their political opinions and stand up for what they believe in.

“Anthony Smith is a dear friend and beloved community activist and teacher,” says Alyssa King from the Ant Smith Defense Committee. “It’s ridiculous that he is still being prosecuted Federally on politically motivated charges. For nearly 2 years, he has been on court supervised release, held under a curfew, and he’s scheduled to stand trial this June. These political prosecutions only serve to intimidate people and organizations who dare to stand up to racialized police violence in this country.”

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