

FREE THE PRAIRIELAND DEFENDANTS!
FREE THEM ALL!



Our loved ones did nothing wrong, and they are being thrown away for the rest of their lives. Not only does the evidence prove their innocence, but the actions of ICE and the federal government over the past year have proven the righteousness of their actions...

We will continue to fight to bring our loved ones home.

prairielanddefendants.com

STATEMENT

by Benjamin “Champagne” Song



Champagne was sentenced to 100 years in prison for their role in a noise demonstration at the Prairieland ICE Detention Center. Judge Reed O'Connor stated from the bench that he is giving maximum sentences to the Prairieland defendants because “*the state wants to send a message to anyone who shares a similar ideology.*”

*The stone shows a crack.
where rough play and banging about
caused scratches and chips and polished smooth.
A crack, thin and jagged, all the way thru
from one side to the other, moves
many fissures and fractures, hidden from view*

poem by Champagne

woodcut by <https://a3bcollective.org/>

with whatever weapons at hand



*How will
you help
yourselves?*

I don't hate. I don't hate anyone. I don't hate cops. I don't hate Trump. I don't hate Nazis. My beliefs are composed thus:

First, that we should help each other.

And second, that we should protect one another.

I never want to see anyone get hurt. I never want to see good people, standing up for what they believe in, gunned down in the street. What we all saw happen to Renee Good and Alex Pretti is my worst nightmare.

It was the kind of thing I had feared for a long time, after dealing with officers who could be reckless, who could be bullies, who could be violent. But fear is not hate. Sadness is not hate. Wanting people to live is not hate.

So, when I was standing in the street on July 4th, 2025, in plain view with reflective safety strips and high visibility clothing, what I saw right in front of my eyes was my worst nightmare.

When I saw Lieutenant Thomas Gross stop pursuing and point his gun at the back of a running, unarmed protester, like he testified, I was terrified. As a firearms instructor and a United States Marine Corps veteran, I understood what I was seeing. I knew what it meant for someone to lean forward into a gun, like he testified, to prepare for recoil.

As the evidence shows, I did not want to hurt anyone. I never had the intent to hurt anyone. I tried my best to avoid hurting anyone. It is impossible to say that I was trying to ambush anyone or planning any violence. I was shocked, and surprised, and saddened. I am so grateful for what didn't happen. I am so grateful that we are not here mourning another death and tragedy.

Another Alex Pretti.

Another Renee Good.

Another Botham Jean.

Another Manuel Teran.

Another Atatiana Jefferson.

Another Philando Castile.

Now, 22 people have been arrested, have been persecuted, have been tortured, for what?

For nothing.

None of these people really did anything.

And none of these people have anything to do with what happened with me

How will
you help
each other?

When they killed Renee Good and Alex Pretti, they went on TV and they called them domestic terrorists, the same day, within the hour.

When will that happen to you?

When I was staying in my home city of Dallas for 11 days, I did fear then I might die at any moment from a government that I think is hateful and vindictive. I did not run because I wanted to escape responsibility. I stayed because I wanted to survive long enough to do the right thing.

I don't fear for myself.

I fear for all of you.

What will you do in this time of great failures & great injustices?

What will you do?

This is wrong. This is mass punishment. This is collective punishment. This is guilt by association. This is injustice.

Back in 1895, the white supremacist and U.S. Senator, Pitchfork Ben Tillman, gave a speech to the Constitutional Convention of South Carolina on how to use injustice to take power. He said, "how did we recover our liberty? By fraud and violence." We tried to overcome the 30,000 majority by honest means which was a mathematical impossibility. After burying these indignities for eight years, life became worthless."

This is how men take power over others. By injustice, by fraud and violence.

That history matters because injustice has always been dangerous. It does not only harm the person standing in court. It spreads. It teaches people to be afraid. It teaches people that the government can decide who is guilty first and look for reasons afterward.

First, they covered up and hid evidence.

Second, they banned every Black juror so that no one would question the police.

Third, they told me I had no right to protect myself or anyone else and they told me I wasn't even allowed to say the word: self-defense.

As you heard at the trial, they tortured their own witnesses. American citizens were tortured and terrorized and medically neglected. Three men died in jail last week, by the way. And now, a 24-year old has had a heart attack. A 58-year-old woman said she would die in this case. Mothers, fathers, teachers, students, package workers, programmers and engineers persecuted and tortured in this case.

People are being treated as if their lives do not matter. All of this is bigger than me. I know I am the person standing here. I know I am the person being judged. But I also know that a case like this can become a warning to everyone else: that if you speak, if you protest, if you try to protect someone, if you are associated with the wrong idea, you can be turned into a symbol instead of treated like a human being.

Nothing saddens me more than when I think about all of these different people and their different families and communities, and how they have suffered, and how unfairly they have been treated, just like me.

*Whatever is taken from
me is taken from you.*

*It may be these 22 strangers now,
but it will be you tomorrow.*

On June 9th of this year, the President of the Southern Poverty Law Center testified that hate has migrated into the government. Into the government. The hate is right here.

The government, in it's secret motion to give me a life sentence, calls me the embodiment of Antifa. What does that even mean? I am not a member of a group called Antifa. I am not part of any terrorist organization. There is no group called Antifa. Everyone knows that, but this government is so blinded by hate, they've arrested 22 good people for nothing. They want to bury me with an idea. This idea that they hate is the very idea of being against fascism.

What kind of people are not against fascism?

What kind of people are not against the hate and war and genocide and concentration camps that the Nazi's brought upon the world?

What kind of people would not agree to "no kings" and "no Fuhrers?"

The hate has migrated into the government. Now that hate is taking power over me. It is taking power over you, over your words and your ideas.

When will you be called a domestic terrorist, too?