

# Protesters Speak Out at Hancock (Video)

Hancock is a Reaper Drone hub on the US mainland which is focused on training drone pilots and technicians, and flies deadly Reaper drone missions over Afghanistan and Pakistan. Hancock is scheduled to increase it's personnel by half over the coming year. Upstate Drone Action members have been engaging in civil resistance at Hancock since 2011.

On September 26th, activists delivered a People's Indictment to the base and stood in the inbound lane of the main entrance to Hancock with signs and images of the ongoing holocaust caused by drone killing. After about an hour the activists were arrested and charged with Trespass and Disorderly Conduct.

*Heriberto Rodriguez filmed the following series of interviews with activists at the base shortly before their arrests.*

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## Stop U.S. drone warfare now



An unmanned U.S. Predator

drone flies over Kandahar  
Air Field, southern  
Afghanistan, on a moon-  
lit night.(Photo: AP)

**I just spent** two months as a prisoner in Jamesville  
Penitentiary.

I was jailed for my involvement in an April 28, 2013, solemn  
funeral procession at Hancock Air Force drone base in  
Syracuse. I joined 30 others to carry the message to “stop the  
killing.” Hancock’s 174th Attack Wing of the New York State  
National Guard flies missiles and drops bombs via satellite  
from drones thousands of miles from Syracuse. The targets are  
suspected “terrorists” somewhere in the Middle East.

Stanford University Law School’s International Human Rights  
Conflict Resolution Clinic and New York University Law  
School’s Global Justice Clinic, working independently with The  
Bureau for Independent Journalism, spent years collecting data  
on U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan. The findings are grim. In  
their report titled “Living Under Drones,” only 2 percent of  
the killings have been confirmed “suspected terrorists” by the  
law schools’ study.

Thousands have been killed, thousands wounded – body parts  
scattered in cities and countryside by our killer drones.  
There are no estimates of psychological damage to millions who  
live under drones 24/7. The killings by American drone  
missiles may be the best recruitment tool for more Middle East  
terrorists.

My “crime” was being a nonviolent messenger outside the main  
gate to Hancock. I was convicted of trespass and obstructing  
government administration. I was handcuffed and sent to  
Jamesville Penitentiary in Syracuse. As the oldest prisoner at  
Jamesville at 79, I was also the only political prisoner – a  
prisoner of conscience.

Before my sentence, I was offered a plea bargain: Plead guilty and have all charges dropped, or go to trial and face a year and 15 days in Jamesville Penitentiary. As a former high school teacher of Participation in Government classes, I could not say I was guilty of a crime for practicing my First Amendment rights of assembly, speech, press and religion.

Thankfully, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio did not support arresting Wall Street demonstrators during the U.N. Climate Summit in September of this year. "I think the First Amendment is a little more important than traffic," de Blasio said when asked about disruptions caused by the Wall Street demonstration. "The right of people to make their voices heard, regardless of their views, is a fundamental American value, and we'll protect that value."

It should be noted that those of us arrested did not block traffic at Hancock Drone base on April 28, 2013.

The refusal of the DeWitt town court in East Syracuse to recognize First Amendment rights of assembly is akin to the medieval act of killing the messenger of bad news. The insistence of the DeWitt court to collaborate with the military to stop nonviolent protest near the Hancock Attack Wing is in violation of the U.S. Constitution. The DeWitt court order of protection to stay away from the assassination base begs the question: Is there collusion between the DeWitt court and the military to suppress constitutional rights?

Gilroy is a lifetime anti-war activist who has been working with the [Upstate Coalition to Ground the Drones and End the Wars](#). He is a resident of Endwell, NY.