



Midnight Special Law Collective

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Midnight Special Law Collective Closing Letter

Dear Friends,

Midnight Special has been engaging in months of discussion and critical analysis about the role of law collectives, both amongst ourselves and with other members of the law collective movement. We have also been looking at our own internal process as an anti-authoritarian collective. We have reached various conclusions: that we have been unable to break out of the service provider model; that we are dissatisfied with jumping from action to action, and leaving little infrastructure behind; that we often emulate the oppressive structures we seek to change; and that these problems are much harder to solve than we had believed.

Our final conclusion is that, because of the state of the movement and ourselves, Midnight Special will not be able to overcome those challenges. So it is with sadness and hope that we write to you today. After 10 years of work, we, the members of the Midnight Special Law Collective, are closing our doors.

We have mixed feelings about ending the collective. On the one hand, we have achieved so much over the last decade. We trained hundreds of people how to legal observe and thousands more how to use their rights to (more) safely agitate for social change. We provided legal support for some of the most significant protests of the last 10 years, from the anti-globalization demonstrations at the end of the Clinton administration to the anti-war protests of the Bush years to the protests against the financial and political bullying of the G8/G20 today. We are proud of the work we have done the the relationships that we have formed with you all over the years.

Frequently, Midnight Special has been called upon to travel and help out with radical legal support. While we are honored that the work we do is appreciated, we have found that other collectives and people doing similar work are overlooked, and their opinions are not heard. We recognized back in the year 2000 that it was crucial

for us to spread our knowledge. Unfortunately, we were always better at supporting others than in organizing others to support themselves. Additionally, we have created an internal collective dynamic that validates macho behavior and has been unable to seriously address issues of gender and power within the collective. After many months of trying, we have not made meaningful progress in resolving these dynamics. That failure is what ultimately led to the demise of our collective. We state it here to encourage other political groups to take anti-oppression issues seriously.

While ending a 10 year project is never easy, this does create opportunities that did not exist before. We are now free to use what we've learned through Midnight Special in other work for social justice. We hope that the lessons we have learned about anti-oppression will be taken up by other projects and organizations, and into our future work. Each of us continues to believe that the movement still needs democratic and accountable legal support, for everyone who protests for social justice. Your support, as much as our work, has made that possible, and we are excited to see how legal support will grow from here. Thank you.

Yours in struggle,

The Midnight Special Law Collective

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