

# Phone Script

Answer the phone by saying “Legal Hotline, this line may not be secure.”

## Calls from Jail

All information taken from people calling from jail for the first time should be recorded onto the **personal info, arrest info, jail info, and medical info** sections on the Arrestee Intake Form and given to the Information Coordinator as soon as the call is over. This is extremely important for keeping track of arrestees, which we do by maintaining and updating our arrestee database. In the Notes section, you should include answers to the following questions:

- ◆ Is this your first call to the legal hotline? If yes, then continue. If no, skip to ☺ below
- ◆ Were you arrested in with others or by yourself? Is everyone ok? Does anyone need medical attention? Has anyone been separated from the group?
- ◆ How many people are with you? What are their names and booking numbers?
  
- ◆ Do you/Does anyone have a designated legal support person? If yes, who are they and have they contacted him or her? Write the answer and contact information under AGSP Contact in the Personal Info section.
- ◆ Have you asked to see the legal team/a lawyer? How many times? Who have you asked? What did they say? Do you know the name(s) and badge number(s) of the person(s) whom you asked?
- ◆ Have the cops tried to question anyone? Has everyone invoked their rights by saying the Magic Words — "I am going to remain silent. I want a lawyer."?
- ◆ Have you discussed with the others what you want to do? (Cite out, stay in jail until arraignments, etc.)
- ◆ Do you feel you have been mistreated in any way?
  
- ❖ If the person(s) wants to cite out and does not have a legal support person, you will need additional information, such as:
  - ◆ Do you know someone who might have bail money or might be able to help raise bail? If bail is really high, do you want to try to go through a bail bondsman, or do you feel like you can wait until arraignment, or at least until we can get a lawyer in to see you? (Bail might be reduced or increased)
  - ◆ Were you carrying your I.D.?
  - ◆ Do you feel like you are in special circumstances and need to cite out right away?
  
- ❖ Make a note in your log of the date, time, and caller.
- ❖ Relay information to legal team and, if needed, find someone to bottomline getting that person out of jail.

All calls from jail can be recorded and/or monitored. Certain things **should not** be discussed over the phone:

- Immigration status of a particular person
- Individual involvement in event that led to arrest
- Any admission of crime or intent to commit a crime

If someone begins to talk to you about these things, remind them again that the call is probably tapped. Suggest they wait until they see a lawyer to try to explain what's going on or certain problems they may have. Tell them that we will make extra effort to get lawyers in to see people who have special circumstances that may cause them to be targeted.

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😊 Make sure we have the person's name in our database. There are several reasons they could be calling:

➤ If they are calling for **emotional support**:

- Listen.
- Let them know we are doing what we can — sending legal pairs/lawyers to the jails, talking to the prosecutor's office, etc.
- Let them know about other support — people calling the jails, court, mayor, etc. to demand the arrestees' release; jail vigil outside (or jail vigil being organized); press conferences and high media interest.

➤ If they are calling to tell you about **mistreatment in jail**:

- Ask if they need or if they have requested medical attention.
- Ask about identification/badge numbers, names, physical descriptions of police or guards; ask them to pay close attention to these things in the future.
- Take detailed notes on what they're telling you in your log. Make a note next to the person's name on the list of arrestees of time, date and your name.
- Tell them that we will have Police Misconduct Reports available when they get out and that they should fill one out then.
- ❖ Highlight all notes on calls from jail with pink.
- ❖ Highlight police brutality in green.

➤ If they are calling with **general legal questions**, (about **legal strategy/solidarity**):

- *"I am not a lawyer, and therefore cannot give you legal advice. However, I do know about basic rights which you have and should seriously think about before making a choice."*
- Go to Solidarity Cheat Sheet

➤ If they are calling with **specific legal questions**:

- Remind them to frame their questions as a hypothetical.
- Remind them that you are not a lawyer, but that the legal team is working with lawyers. Write down the questions and tell them you will get the answer(s) as soon as possible or try to get a lawyer to come and answer the question directly.

➤ If they are calling with **messages for lawyers**:

- If they have **sensitive information** or messages that can only be given to or through lawyers:
  - Ask them what the message is regarding in general and how they would rank its urgency on a scale of 1-5, 5 being extremely urgent.
  - Write down the request for a lawyer, the request, and the urgency number.
  - ❖ Relay information to other members of Legal Team and have someone call lawyers.

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## Calls from the Street

Always include this information:

- ◆ Date and time
- ◆ Name or nickname of caller
- ◆ Exact location of caller
- ◆ Call back number or other contact info (cell phone as well as email, permanent phone number), especially if witnessing arrests or brutality
- ◆ The message

- If caller is witnessing or experiencing **police brutality** or **harassment**, ask as many of these questions as you can:
    - Can you see any legal observers or media in the area witnessing the brutality as well? If not, can you direct their attention to it?
    - Are there any medics? Do you need the number for the Medical Team?
    - Can you determine whether or not the person(s) being brutalized/harassed is in police custody? (For example, are they behind police lines, handcuffed, being held down by multiple cops?)
    - What's happening? Describe in as much detail as possible.
    - How close are you to the scene or occurrence?
    - How many police are present? Count or estimate numbers
    - Can you see the names or badge numbers of police? Have you recorded or can you record this information?
    - Do you think it'd be helpful to dispatch more Legal Observers? How many are there now?
    - Can you get the names and contact info of Legal Observers, media, medics, and other witnesses? If you can't write them down, can you dictate them to me over the phone?
  - ❖ Tell the caller they can pick up a Police Misconduct Report (PMR) at the legal office or the Information Center. They can also download a PMR from [www.midnightspecial.net](http://www.midnightspecial.net). They can drop PMRs off at \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ❖ Make a note as to your perceptions of the witness — did they sound upset? scared? angry?
  - ❖ Highlight all entries regarding police misconduct or brutality in green; you can do this right after you've taken the report or can wait until the end of your shift
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- If **arrests** are occurring, ask as many of these questions as you can:
    - How many people are being arrested? Count or estimate numbers.
    - Can you find out which affinity groups are represented, if any? Ask those around you or ask the arrestees themselves.
    - Can you find out if those being arrested know the legal hotline number? Do you see it written on their arms or legs? Can you get close enough to tell them the number?
    - Also, can you hear if they are invoking their rights by saying "I am going to remain silent, I want to see a lawyer"? Can you get close enough to suggest that they do this?
    - Are any of those being arrested using non-compliance (going limp, etc)?
    - Can you see any legal observers or media in the area? How many of each? Can you get the names and contact info of LOs, media, medics, and other witnesses? If you can't write them down, can you dictate them to me over the phone?
    - Are there any medics? Do you need the number for the medics?
    - Does the situation seem to be escalating? Do you think it would be helpful to dispatch legal observers, if there are none?
    - Are there buses, vans, or other police vehicles nearby?
  - ❖ Highlight arrest reports in yellow.

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## Calls from the Media

All calls from the media should be referred to the designated flak or a member of the Boycott Taco Bell Legal Team. If no one is available take a message.

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## Calls from Family and Friends

### Early in the action:

- The caller wants to know what the legal hotline is or who you are.
  - *The legal hotline is staffed by volunteers for the Boycott Taco Bell Legal Team, whose mission is to provide emotional and legal support to activists participating in the demonstrations. Our priority right now is taking calls from people reporting brutality and arrests happening on the streets and for people calling from jail who have been arrested.*
- The person wants to know if their friend/relative has been arrested.

*If you believe your relative has been arrested, you might want to call back later when we have heard from more arrestees and have better information. It takes a while for police to process people, arrested activists are sometimes denied their right to a phone call, not everyone knows the legal hotline number, and we expect the police will continue to make arrests, so no matter when you call, there is a good chance that our list will not be complete. However, you are welcome to call back, and if we aren't too busy, we would be happy to try to answer your questions.*

**Middle or later in the action** (after you have some arrestee information compiled, and if the phones aren't ringing off the hook with calls from jail):

- The caller wants to know if their friend/relative has been arrested.
  - *What is the name of the person you are looking for?*
    - ❖ Check the list of confirmed arrestees for the name
      - If you find the name: *Yes, \_\_\_\_\_ is in jail. The legal team is working on getting lawyers into the jail as soon as possible. Reassure the caller that the person is ok, that they are with other activists, and that they are taking care of each other (if you know this to be true)*
      - If you do not find the name: *Though we don't have this person on our list, this does not mean that he/she was not arrested. There are many reasons our list is not complete - it takes a while for police to process people, arrested activists are sometimes denied their right to a phone call, and not everyone knows the legal hotline number. You can call the jail and see if \_\_\_\_\_ has been booked. The number for the jail is: (xxx)XXX-XXXX.*
    - ❖ If you have time, and/or the person is dissatisfied, angry, or upset:
      - *I hear your concern(s), and we are doing all we can to help those who have been/are being arrested. There is something else you can do – you can call the mayor, the sheriff, the police chief/commissioner, the jails and the media and tell them you are outraged at the blatant disregard for and repression of constitutional rights and the unlawful arrests of people expressing those First Amendment rights. Let them know you're outraged, and that the way they deal with the situation will affect how the public views them, and how you and others will vote/give money/talk about them, etc.*
      - *I know this is a stressful time for all of us. We're doing all we can to help those being persecuted for their political activity. Stay strong.*

# Coordinating and Relaying Information

## What is an Information Coordinator?

The job of the IC is one of the most challenging. It involves:

- having a good overall sense of what's happening both in the streets and in the office;
- knowing how the office systems are set up, how they are working or not working, and changing them in order to make them more effective;
- determining what info has been sufficiently corroborated and should be put on the Street Updates wall chart;
- coordinating volunteers; and
- handling difficult situations such as irate callers, person shortages, reticent lawyers, needy arrestees, and poorly trained, confused, sleep-deprived, or slacking volunteers.

One of the hardest things to do efficiently is to get important information from the phones to the update charts. Whatever the system in place, the most important thing is that she communicates with the volunteers about what they should be doing to help facilitate the flow of information.

## Relaying information to the Info Coordinator

### 1. What information should be reported to the Information Coordinator?

- A. All Intake forms (calls from jail)
- B. All reports of arrests
- C. All reports of police brutality and use of chemical weapons
- D. All reports of escalating situations or confrontations with police
- E. Requests for Legal Observers
- F. Jail updates, which will consist of group requests (e.g. for lawyers, for information), information which needs to be shared with all arrestees (e.g. use of solidarity, updates on negotiations, jail vigil, etc.), legal support person info
  - If an arrestee has an important personal or legal question, request, or message, write it down and contact the IC

### 2. While relaying info to the I.C.:

- Bring your notebook. (Every person should have their own notebook)
- Know which chart the info should go on (was the caller a legal team member, or someone from the streets? Remember, detailed arrest info should be written on an update sheet that can be handed directly to the IC without a verbal report).
- Report the time, the caller's location, and a brief description of the incident or message.
- Numbers should be included in report, as well as general headings of police brutality and maiming and chemical weapons.
- If there are lots of calls, give the IC a *brief* description of what's happening. The details are important for follow-up action, and you should write them down. But it isn't necessary to give every detail to the IC when things are busy.

Don't hound the IC. But in a busy office, you may have to tell her more than once that you need to speak with her, especially if she's extremely busy. It might sound difficult to find that balance, but the longer you're in the office the more natural all these procedures become.