On January 20, during massive protests at Trump’s inauguration, police cordoned off an entire city block and mass arrested over two hundred people, all of whom now face the same felony charges of inciting to riot, rioting, conspiracy to riot, and destruction of property. Essentially, over two hundred people swept up at random are being accused of breaking the same handful of windows. This is punitive charging: the intention is clearly to terrorize the defendants into taking plea deals so that these inflated charges will never come to trial. This is of concern not only for the hundreds targeted, but to the tens of thousands who might face similarly indiscriminate prosecution if we don’t oppose this travesty of justice.

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