

## Arsonist's Prayer

The horror – that we may not live  
We may not live  
To see the walls fall from between us  
Between us and the world for which these songs cry out

That the desire – which still lives – to contest, a mark of shame upon certain foreheads  
Will remain an offering unto the dead: illegible, irrelevant  
And we will be shaped into priestly statues in poses of defiance before our own  
To softly, safely sing the praises of a disarmed war, a lukewarm love  
So lest we fall out of lust for life, let us risk all we have to risk  
For only a fool – only a fool – would cling to this world as it is

If I could strike one blow to spite their force, though I might bear one hundred more,  
I would wear the welts like rubies, and the shackles for a crown  
And if I had one hundred hearts I would throw them all before their bullets  
Before I'd sell a single one to wield their power  
So lest we fall out of love with life, let us give all we have to give  
For only a fool would cling to this world:

Autumn – the leaves fell,  
Then the trees  
Became fences and factories  
Now winter is coming  
Let's put the heat on

...but no fire or ice, their absences suffice,

The nights now will be long and cold, with a silence like you've never known  
And you'll shake in it, cry out at it, but it will wrap you in its spider's thread  
Perhaps you'll stare into that blankness until it peers back into you  
And both of you see nothing – and it will wrap you in its spider's thread:  
That blessed are the wombs that are barren  
Blessed are the branches that bear no fruit  
Blessed are the rivers run dry  
For we have come to the end of the world  
To die

So die – die and become – perish, let go and be done  
With all the tangled threads that keep you tied to husks of false hopes, fossilized  
If these years still wait for those who will be more merciless than history  
To burn the chaff and make an end, to make the fields fertile once again  
Then break – break the skin  
Open – open and reach in  
And draw the nerves out taut to play a song upon those tight strings  
Such as this world has never heard  
Let it be dirge, hymn, or dance, vomit or tears, absolving snowfall or acid rain  
Summer that sets fire to the harvest, or ice age that, thawing, blossoms crimson  
Pleasure or death, splendor or rust, flash flood or drought that turns jungles to crust  
Those tender caresses for which the skin aches  
Or tear gas to breathe and plate glass to break  
The uproar of riot, the hush of nightfall, or sirens announcing the doom of us all  
The triumph of failures who fought at all costs, or despair of derelict dreamers who lost  
Silence and space – hungers to be – momentary eternities  
The furrows of ash left by passion and wrath  
The faithless fixed stars over our wandering paths  
As the moon moves the sea, we could move these mountains  
As comets drop to earth, so might empires end  
As old suns explode rather than fall to dust  
Let us steal fire and pay with our lives if we must  
For if all this world is God's, and man a mere plaything of laws and  
Then why not raze it all, and in destroying set sail on borrowed win  
Anything other than what we have known  
Strike the match, take a breath now – the hour has come  
To dance the resistance, teach tied tongues to sing:  
This is the end of the calendar, the Last Loosening!  
Around and inside you, the violence you fear – for or against it, it's already here  
It forged the cord that bound you to the ground – it built these walls

LET'S BURN THEM DOWN

INDUSTRIES P/L

BABYLON

ARSON

**ar·son** (är/'sən), *n.* *Law.* the malicious burning of another's house or property, or in some statutes, the burning of one's own house, as for revenge, to collect insurance, etc. [*< AF OF < LL ārsiōn-* (s. *ārsiō*) a burning = *ārs-* (L *ārd(ere)* to burn, + *-t(us)* ptp. suffix) + *-iōn-* *-iōn*] —**ar'son·ist**, *n.*



# Arson Zine



first communiqué: winter 2004

We have always known what it will take to truly change this world: *love*. But we've been singing songs and holding hands for decades, and our enemies have happily ignored us - somehow it seems our moral high-ground is of little use against a culture of murderers and thieves. Perhaps then, our love must take a different form. Perhaps we must love the Earth and our desire for freedom as we love our children, parents, friends, lovers... *Unconditionally*. *Fiercely*. Perhaps we must respond to the patriarchal conditioning that so damages us all and the near-annihilation of our land base as we would respond to the attempted rape and murder of a loved one... *Quickly*. *Decisively*. Perhaps love will finally conquer all when we let it guide our every action...

*The people who profit from our pain have names and addresses. The institutions that hold this culture of death in place have buildings in every city, every town.*

**In an upside-down world of death and slavery, fighting it all to the last breath is the only way to live and be free: The only true creation is the destruction of that which destroys. Better to die defending what you love than live with having stood by and let the worst happen. Better to be ashes for eternity than a slave for one more fucking second.**

XXX

For A.

I wouldn't have made it without you.

XXX



## Stolen from / inspired by:

*Fight Back: Feminist Resistance to Male Violence* – various (I reprinted heavily from this, because it's so awesome and also so out of print and obscure.)  
*Woman and Nature* – Susan Griffin  
*A Language Older Than Words* – Derrick Jensen  
*The Culture of Make Believe* – Derrick Jensen  
*What Goes Up (draft)* – Derrick Jensen  
*Do or Die issue 10* – various  
*SAS Self-Defence* – Barry Davies  
*CrimethInc Anarchist Cookbook (draft)* - various  
*Underload zine*  
*Green Anarchy magazine*  
*Disorderly Conduct zine*  
*Slug & Lettuce zine*  
*Off The Map* – Chellis Glendinning  
*Hunter/Gather zine*  
*Willful Disobedience zine*  
*Blood on the Wattle* – Bruce Elder  
*SCUM Manifesto* – Valerie Solanas  
*Lipstick Traces* – Greil Marcus  
*Beneath the Paving Stones* – various  
*Shoot the Women First* – Eileen Macdonald  
*Silent Spring* – Rachel Carson

Some of which are available from the radical lovers at Beating Hearts Press: [www.beatingheartspress.com](http://www.beatingheartspress.com)

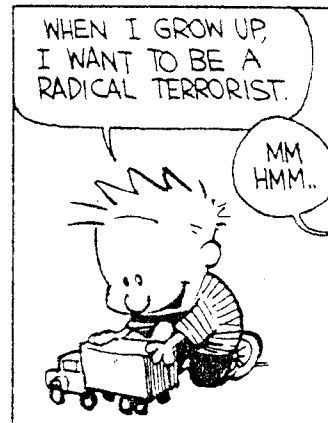
All un-credited authors  
 (and some of the credited ones too)  
 are contactable through:

[itsalreadyhere@wildmail.com](mailto:itsalreadyhere@wildmail.com)

Next up: *Reclamation* – a zine about the practice and politics of all kinds of theft.

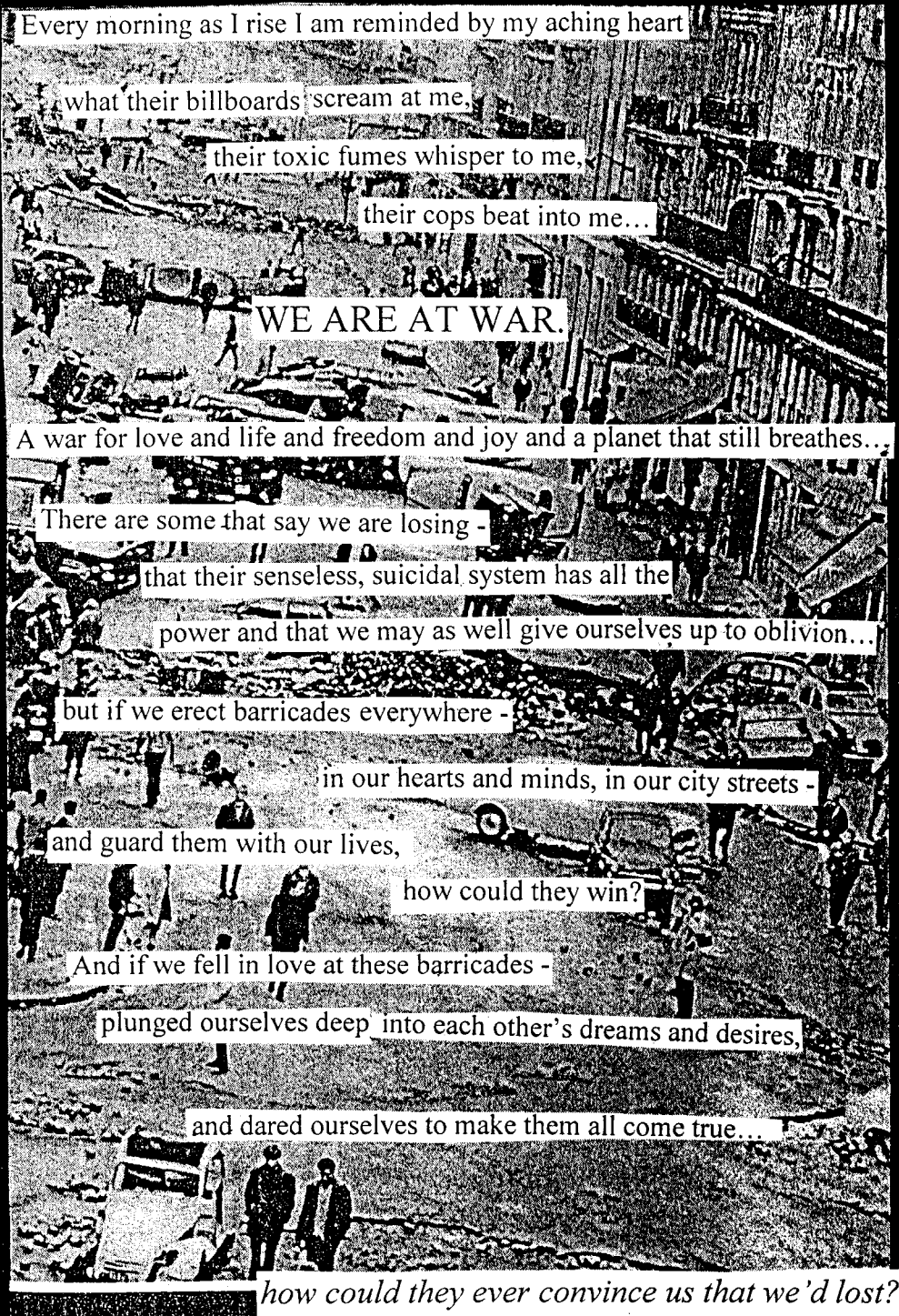
And another issue of *Arson* when I feel like it.

Thanks for reading. Now it's time for action.



[www.coalitionagainstcivilization.org](http://www.coalitionagainstcivilization.org)  
[www.infoshop.org](http://www.infoshop.org)  
[www.anarcha.org](http://www.anarcha.org)  
[www.crimethinc.com](http://www.crimethinc.com)





Every morning as I rise I am reminded by my aching heart

what their billboards scream at me.

their toxic fumes whisper to me,

their cops beat into me...

**WE ARE AT WAR.**

A war for love and life and freedom and joy and a planet that still breathes...

There are some that say we are losing -

that their senseless, suicidal system has all the  
power and that we may as well give ourselves up to oblivion...

but if we erect barricades everywhere -

in our hearts and minds, in our city streets -

and guard them with our lives,

how could they win?

And if we fell in love at these barricades -

plunged ourselves deep into each other's dreams and desires,

and dared ourselves to make them all come true...

*how could they ever convince us that we'd lost?*

The change of wind is coming.

Brace yourself for the big change - get ready.

The Fire Creator for Justice is awoken. The power of the fire is alive  
and moving and rekindling the fire of the spirit.

The time has come to cure the evil, right the wrongs.

The Whiteman came to Australia the wrong way.

When he entered our waters and our land he came the wrong way.

Coming the wrong way was like starting off on the wrong foot.

He brought with him the evil.

If he had come the right way, the massacres, the poisoned water,  
the stolen generations, the deaths in custody, the pain and misery,  
the land theft... would not have happened.

...The time has come to face reality - you cannot hide the truth anymore.

The Old Spirit and the old, old Ancient Country are about to unleash  
an awakening energy. You have your ancient responsibility and

obligation to right the wrongs of the events that took place since Invasion.

Do not feel threatened. All people should come and participate, share and  
experience the changes and end the jurisdiction of the occupying power  
which tries to dominate our lives.

We have the right to live, the right to life, the right to  
self-determination, the right to decolonization, the right to  
sovereignty for certainty. We encourage people to come forward...

Those with this churning feeling for change.

Since Invasion all we've seen is the Crown and paper and oppression.

But we have the key for survival in this land. Our ancient knowledge is  
like an untapped resource for survival. It can take us all home.

The Old Country is talking now. The Old Spirit is stirring,  
singing up the country, empowering the fire of the Spirit, curing the evil.

**The Fire will burn**

**until Justice prevails.**

The Fire is the thing that will make or break you.

The Fire is the healing that can take all lost souls home, that will fix you  
up and enable to share the responsibility to care for our Ancient Country.

If you are sincere you should support us.

• Stop running around in circles.

- Kevin Buzzacott,  
Arabunna Nation

# The Redfern Uprising

## Insurrection in the streets of Sydney

On the night of February the 15<sup>th</sup>, the Sydney inner-city suburb of Redfern experienced probably the most defiant and successful urban insurrection within recent Australian history. It was centred round an area know as 'The Block', the site of a thriving Aboriginal community. Around 150 Aboriginal youth engaged in a direct conflict with police, injuring around 40, and fighting back wave after wave of offensive by the cops. The result is a political crisis that could, hopefully, add to a slowly growing wave of unmediated resistance to Capital that has marked the start of 2004.

The insurrection was sparked by systematic racist brutality by the police against indigenous people in the area, in the death of 17-year-old TJ Hickey. TJ died after he was impaled on a fence pole. His friends argue that TJ was fleeing the police at the time, a charge that the cops deny. Since the insurrection there has been something of a political crisis that has gripped the country, and it is unclear how we can connect with and deepen the revolt throughout the social body.

The roots of the rebellion lie obviously in the inheritance of genocide. The invasion of the Australian continent by the British Empire, and the transformation of the land into basically a jail, mine, and military base (which in part remains the global function of Australia today), involved a protracted campaign of extermination against the indigenous population and a long series of "border wars". The indigenous population faced extreme attempts to shatter their social bonds and push them off the land. This took both the form of violence and exclusion, but also forcible integration into liberal and church institutions. Indeed children were stolen from their families and raised in foster homes and orphanages through most of the twentieth century.

However, countering this is a hidden history of Aboriginal resistance, in which indigenous people have struggled both against their oppression and have worked hard to reinforce and maintain social and cultural links. The Block in Redfern is such a spot and embodies the successes and difficulties of this process.

Aboriginal people have lived on the Block in Redfern for over 60 years (not counting the thousands of years prior to invasion). Since at least 1968, various state authorities have tried to relocate people out of the Block into other areas of Sydney. The early 1970s saw a wave of squatting in the area. At the time the Builders Labourers Federation, which was quickly becoming the most militant union in Australia, was going beyond the constraints of trade unionism and was engaging in "Green Bans". This meant that the BLFers refused to work on projects they thought were environmentally or socially destructive and tried to save cheap housing in the inner city. Going well beyond the terrain of legality they would often destroy the work done by scabs and made alliances with many in struggle. Indigenous people in the Block and the BLF and radical plumbers worked to transform the houses into a liveable condition, and the Aboriginal Housing Company become the official landlords. This of course happened in the context of the wave of social ferment that characterised the epoch. However, by the late 1970s, the BLF had been destroyed by union machinations and many social alliances amongst the multitude were broken by the strategies of incorporation and isolation the Labour Federal government used to implement neo-liberalism throughout the 1980s.

The Aboriginal Housing Company is now largely estranged from the community of the Block (which has formed the Aboriginal Housing Coalition), and has participated in the demolishing of 70 out of the 90 total demolished houses in the area. This is symptomatic of the effectiveness of social democracy in recuperating a layer of official leadership of oppressed groups to help with harmonious social management. Indeed both "sides" of official politics, The Australian Labour Party state government, and the Coalition opposition champion the AHC "redevelopment" plan (that is, demolition) as an alternative.

All this also happens within the context of the changing political geography of Sydney. Sydney is quickly becoming the Capital of Capital within the region. Of course, since Capital is a social relationship it has no true "home", yet many concrete functions of both the financial workings and cultural production of and for Empire in the Pacific take place in Sydney. This means that many people flock to Sydney to find work (of a total Australian population of 20+ million, approx. 5 million live in the greater Sydney area). This has led to a process of de/reterritorialisation in Sydney as previously poor inner-city areas are transformed into far more expensive locales, and a surge in the construction of high-density housing powers much of the local economy. The Block then stands as a thorn in the development of potentially very expensive land. In the last few months economists

We have been thrown out of state parliament house and 'banned for life' while our comrades played spin the bottle on the footpath outside.

We have covered roads leading to a police roadblock with rocks and whatever else we could lift.

We have kicked over fences together.

We have played our favourite records at free parties and watched faces light up.

We have rescued food from being thrown out and had feasts of gourmet bread and designer dips.

We have climbed trees instead of watching TV and decided to seize the day back from the brink.

We have sat for hours and hours hunched over our tools of writing, trying to get the words just right so we can publish our own stuff.

We refuse their value systems of style, vanity, selfish empty ideals of sweet fucking nothing.

We talk about our plans for the future and they actually mean something that we can see shimmering in the distance.

We have ~~xx~~ hugged on the streets, in warehouses, in parks and let each other know that they are not forgotten.

We have taken, appropriated or just stolen what we need to, when we need to:

day by day we are taking our lives back.

turned violent.

Text taken/appropriated/stolen from Underload zine.

Thousands of protesters hit the streets in the most militant demonstration in a decade

We have stood together in the offices of Immigration with duct tape on our mouths holding pictures of people in detention in Nauru.

We have stopped the city with sound systems and our bodies, drawn on the roads with chalk and barricaded the streets to let us live there for a few hours, where before there were cars.

We have confronted homophobes on the street and watched their faces crumble as we call them on their shit.

We have thrown our tiny little care packages at buildings, cars and people, our offerings of watery paint sealed up in eggshells exploding with a splatter.

We have stood in the desert together and pulled cops off our friends, new and old.

We have sat up until dawn together drinking tea, talking, crying, laughing, cutting out stencils, scrawling on pads the stories of our days.

We have ventured out with hundreds of posters and miles of tape, returning home with empty bags and happily aching arms.

We have altered or damaged billboards as they stand there silently screaming their marketing messages at our communities.

We inhaled the scent of the moment together. The smell of anticipation, hope, fear... then the security showed up.

We have occupied empty buildings and turned them into barricaded castles full of creativity and possibility.

We have stared federal cops in the face as they drag us off the road outside the Pine Gap spy base in the Northern Territory.

We have traveled far and wide with little funds, meeting friends by accident far, far away.

have started to predict that the building economy will (to use their term) "overheat" and go into recession. Access to this land therefore becomes increasingly important for Capital.

Since the night of the insurrection the aftermath has been telling concerning the condition of Australian politics. Whilst there has been some support of the revolt, it has been unable to go beyond simple protest and symbolism and match the insurgent ferocity of the revolt itself. We should not be too pessimistic. Indeed the willingness of people to publicly support and sympathise with direct confrontation with the police is quite advanced for Australia. What it does show though is two things: the containment of revolt within the world of the *political* and the very real divisions of power and identity that chain the multitude in Australia.

Dissent in Australia (with a few exceptions) remains largely stuck in the world of the political – protests, petitions, the Left – and rarely matures into a real social clash. We could contribute this generally to the effects of neo-liberalism that have largely decomposed the more combative sections of the class war. It also arises from the inability to develop new methods to articulate and actualise our antagonism to Capital. We remain largely stuck in out-dated conceptions of social revolt. The very real moments of revolt and micro-networks of solidarity that do form are largely isolated from each other. This is in part due to the divisions of power and segmentations within the class. Capital has restructured the multitude within Australia in a way that accentuates divisions of power. The most obvious tool is race. The machinery of the system has worked hard to accentuate feelings of racial division, through the championing of a white racist ideology, institutional privilege and by ghettoising people through multi-culturalism.

The insurrection in Redfern showed both our potential strength and our weaknesses. It highlighted the lack of practical solidarity amongst the multitude – something we most work to deal with; the question remains how? How can we avoid the pitfalls of the Left or a fetish for building organizations, yet still weave real social bonds? There is no clear answer. My suggestion would be that we start from the perspective of *circulating struggle*. We work hard to spread the experiences and ideas of individual revolts throughout the class more broadly, and maybe in the networks we create, we will create a more practical resonance for revolts against the global order of Capital.

- Dave Antagonism

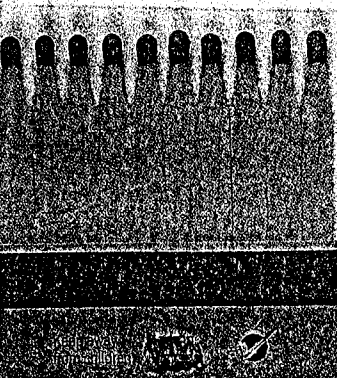


Late that night a train pulled into the station by the squat. First he heard the screech of straining metal, then a great, deep, thunderous rumbling, as if some disturbed ancient evil was rousing itself in hell: it was the sound of forests being hewed down, leaving muddy morasses, the felled trees pushed into a consuming fiery mouth—of Earth being split open and coal and oil sucked from the core of the rock and lit aflame. It was the sound of the heavens, once a starry sea that crowned all beings by night, filling slowly with black and cancerous smoke. With a shiver, he realized that this train was a mere dinosaur, a prehistoric beast that had terrorized its time but was now almost an anachronism, if not yet extinct; its offspring, on the other hand—very current and reproducing in swarms—were far more terrible.

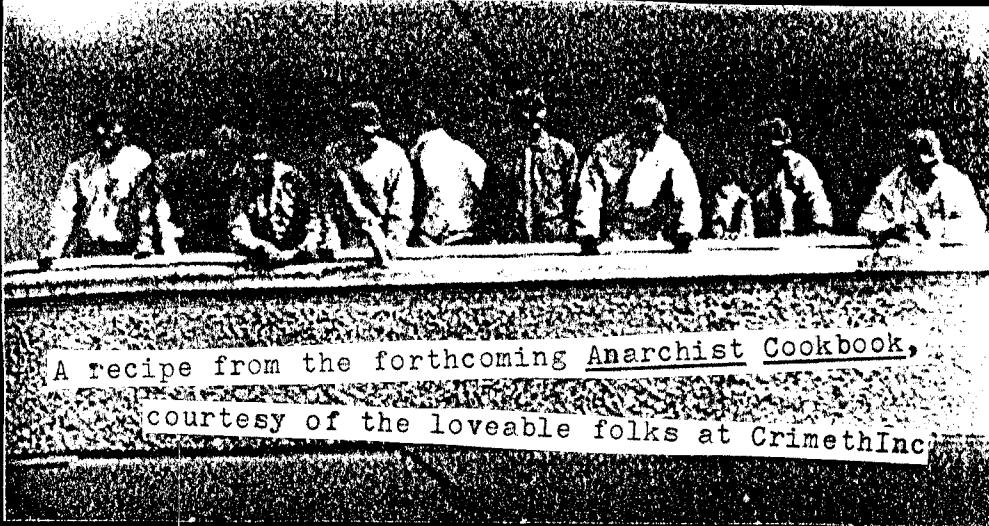
And the inferno that powered these monsters, from whence did it come? He imagined the first encounters between his species and fire: for millennia, before they had learned to spark it themselves, early humans had been forced to run through lightning storms into forest fires to obtain the imperious element, had carried it ever-burning with them lest they lose it again for generations, had borne blazing branches of it over mountain chains to present to distant neighbors as the most priceless of gifts. It was a currency that reproduced itself, abundance in action; it was a master that would serve willingly, but only to do its own bidding. For them, those flames were the very heart of the universe, the sun manifested on earth.

Now fire was a slave to the machines, like everything else: it was the genie in the bottle, heating legions of apartment complexes, waiting in missile silos to be unleashed upon enemy nations. And despite this, or perhaps because of it, no one ever saw fire anymore—it wasn't even legal to walk down the street on Halloween holding a torch! Might it be that fire, itself a slave, could join in a slave revolt? He turned this over in his mind late into the night, until the first beams of the sun shined off the tracks outside, and then he formed a plan.

PROMETHEUS  
HOLY FIRE  
IS IN MY  
HANDS



# AFFINITY GROUP



## Materials:

- A circle of friends
- Trust
- Consensus
- Secrecy
- A good idea
- Plans for different scenarios
- Structures to respond to unexpected scenarios
- A little courage (may be optional, but should be on hand just in case)
- Action!
- Subsequent discussion

## How many people should comprise an affinity group?

Size can range from two to, say, fifteen individuals, depending on the action in question; but no group should be so numerous that an informal conversation about pressing matters is impossible. You can always split up into two or more groups, if there are enough of you.

## Is the affinity group a permanent arrangement?

No, an affinity group is a structure of convenience, ever mutable, assembled from the pool of interested and trusted people for the duration of a given project. Once assembled, this group may choose to be "closed," if security dictates: that is, whatever goes on within the group is never spoken of outside it, even after all its other activities are long completed. A particular team can act together over and over as an affinity group, but the members can also participate in other affinity groups, break up into smaller affinity groups, and act outside the affinity group structure.

stopped on my street anymore and hassled by the police. But all that shit is still going down right now, in a lot of places. My circumstances were not special or an aberration. They were inherent features of a culture built on oppression, persecution, objectification and punishment. It is fundamental to remember, if we are serious about changing these conditions, that the mechanisms that maintain these conditions are not abstract ideologies, nor are they only present within the institutionalised bodies of power that are the governing manifestations of these ideologies, but that they are also present within our perceptions, behavioural practices, our differentiation and the articulation of our own experiences. I am not trying to cultivate guilt, I am not talking about guilt but rather neglect. I think insulation is a dangerous thing. I think it results in particular forms of hierarchy and prejudice. I'm not talking about attempting to change the behaviour of the police through lobbying and meeting with their upper strata's, nor am I saying we should do this with governments, as if these ruling bodies deserve compassion for the awful job they must do, largely because I see that as a waste of time and because I find those hierarchical relationships inherently problematic and alienating. Rather I am talking about attempting to find ways of confronting and eradicating the classism, sexism and racism that are within our own communities and moving beyond those boundaries. One aspect of this change must take place on the personal level: our perceptions of, and relationships with those people and things around us, immediately and peripherally. I may not live in a community that is leashed by a heavy drug addiction anymore, you may never have, but you and me and the junkie all have stakes in finding a way out of this culture; and a political and class analysis that still results in an abstracted and objectified junkie, indigenous person or woman is not a sufficient way out. This is not to say that particular communities that have formed around a specific common interest are illegitimate and should disband, but rather that these communities, if they are to contribute to the changing of conditions for other people as well as themselves, need to communicate and act with others who may not have the same immediate goals and interests, but are nevertheless interested in change. Likewise it is not to say that political analysis is not of value, but rather that it loses value if it is not simultaneously informed by, and resulting in dialogue with those it presumes to be analysing.

There is, I think, in spite of the inheritors of History, a small hope that remains. That privilege was not my only means of escape, that it was also the love and support of a community of many, is something. That I cared enough about myself and those around me, and that those around me cared enough about themselves and me to move beyond the perpetuation of a lifestyle that would kill us is something. That we still care is something. That there are so many more people, living and acting from within conditions that I couldn't fathom, and doing it with passion and determination is even more.

Love,

Mark



In my estimation there would have been at least 30 police in bulletproof vests and helmets with some fancy looking machine guns surrounding the house, more normal looking police and a street filled with their cars. On this occasion when they came in, instead of herding us into the lounge room whilst they searched the house, they made us put our hands on our heads and walk out the front, to about 10 police aiming directly at us, all of us down to my 10 year old brother, and down to the street on the edge of the block two houses away from ours, whilst they 'secured' our house. This I found incredibly humiliating, standing on the street after being woken up and guarded by a handful of police, and incredibly ridiculous and unnecessary given the long history of the local police's relationship with our family. I was 16 by now, and had developed a more controlled reaction to these sort of situations, and dealt with the police not with screaming and tears, but rather just as I saw them and the situation, entirely ridiculous, pathetic and contemptible, my hatred and condemnation of the police at this point of my life was almost beyond my own control.

The lead up to this, and the time during the court case of my mum's robbery charges were extremely intense. Our phone was tapped, and the police would set up roadblocks at either end of our street, and sometimes at either end of our block, and stop and interrogate *everyone* that walked through. My friends received fines for defective cars, my stepfather was strip searched in the back of a cop car out the front of our house. This happened everyday, for weeks at a time over the course of a number of months. It was unbelievable. My brother rang up sick from school and had to be picked up. I walked up to meet him and on the way home we were stopped by a detective and a regular pig and interrogated. They contacted the school to make sure we weren't lying. My brother dealt with this much the same as I had a few years earlier, screaming and cursing at them before breaking down into tears. I tried to just get us home before they got my brother to tears, where I got angrier and more righteous. Eventually they had to let us go, after about 15 minutes of school checks and police checks.

These conditions lasted a long while. My mother was sentenced to two years gaol this time, very good for robbery really, and we continued to live in what was a microcosmic police state for a short while after. Whilst mum was in prison the dealing eventually stopped.

Not long ago tonight I returned home from a Pages to Prisoners meeting. This is the first thing I have done that has had any real positive relevance to prisoners. Tonight, the night before this will be published, after more than half my life has been lived with prisoners, within a neighbourhood where prison is not strange for a lot of people there, and it is only now that I have done anything directly related to prison, and not much at that. I think this says a lot about me, the way I've dealt with my past and also our broader social functioning, including within punk and radical communities. In a lot of ways I have class jumped. Now I am a white male university student. If you had asked me four years ago if I would be at university at any time in the future I would have said no way. But I am, as I have been afforded the opportunity and took it. This isn't wrong, nor do I think hypocritical, but it does say something about privilege. I don't have a heroin addiction, I'm not a woman, I'm white and I no longer walk into the house known as the dealers' house by the public and the police. My place in the community of heroin users is gone, I still see some of them around but they don't remember me. I'm not

Chances are, even if you have never been involved in direct action before, even if this is the first radical text you have ever encountered, that you are already part of an affinity group—the structure proven most effective for guerrilla activities of all kinds. An affinity group is simply a circle of friends who, knowing each other's strengths, weaknesses, and life histories, and having already established a common language and healthy internal dynamics, sets out to accomplish a goal or series of goals.

Affinity groups can be practically invincible. They cannot be infiltrated, because all members share history and intimacy with each other, and no one outside the group need be informed of their plans or activities. They are more efficient than the most professional military force: they are free to adapt to any situation; they need not pass their decisions through any complicated process of ratification; all individuals can act and react instantly without waiting for orders, yet with a clear idea of what to expect from one another. The mutual admiration and inspiration they are founded upon makes them almost impossible to demoralize. In stark contrast to capitalist, fascist, and communist structures, they function without any need for hierarchy or coercion: participation in an affinity group can be fun as well as effective. Most important of all, they are motivated by shared desire and loyalty, rather than profit, duty, or any other compensation or abstraction: small wonder whole squads of riot police have been held at bay by small affinity groups armed with only the tear gas canisters shot at them.

Affinity groups operate on the consensus model: decisions are made collectively, based on the needs and desires of every individual involved. Democratic votes, in which the majority get their way and the minority must hold their tongues, are anathema to affinity groups: if a group is to function smoothly and hold together, every individual involved must be satisfied. In advance of any action, the members of a group establish together what their personal and collective goals are, what their readiness for risk is (as individuals and as a group), and what their expectations of each other are. These matters determined, they formulate a plan.

Since action situations are always unpredictable and plans rarely come off as anticipated, an affinity group usually has a dual approach to preparing for these. On the one hand, plans are made for different scenarios: *if A happens, we'll inform each other by X means and switch to plan B; if X means of communication is impossible, we'll reconvene at site Z at Q o'clock*. On the other hand, structures are put in place that will be useful even if what happens resembles none of the imagined scenarios: internal roles are divided up, communications systems (such as two-way radios, or coded phrases for conveying secret information or instructions aloud) are established, general strategies (for maintaining composure, keeping sight of one another in confusing environments, or blocking police charges, to name some examples) are prepared, emergency escape routes are charted, legal support is readied in case anyone gets arrested. After an action, a shrewd affinity group will meet (again, if necessary, in a secure location) to discuss what went well, what could have gone better, and what comes next.

An affinity group answers to itself alone—this is one of its great strengths. Affinity groups are not burdened by the procedural protocol of other organizations, the difficulties of reaching accord among strangers or larger numbers of people, or the limitations of answering to a body not immediately involved in the action. At the same time, just as the members of an affinity group strive for consensus with each other, each affinity group should strive for a similarly considerate relationship with other individuals and groups—or, at the very least, to complement others' approaches wherever possible, even if these others do not recognize the value of their contribution. People should be thrilled about the participation or intervention of affinity groups, not resent or fear them: they should come to recognize the value of the affinity group model, and so come to apply it themselves, from seeing it succeed and from benefiting from that success.

An affinity group can work together with other affinity groups, in what is sometimes called a cluster. The cluster formation enables a larger number of individuals to act with the same advantages a single affinity group has. If speed or secrecy is called for, representatives of each group can meet ahead of time, rather than the entirety of all groups; if coordination is of the essence, the groups or representatives can arrange methods for communicating through the heat of the action. Over years of collaborating together, different affinity groups can come to know each other as well as they know themselves, and become accordingly more comfortable and capable together.

When several clusters of affinity groups need to coordinate especially massive actions—for a big demonstration, for example—they can hold a spokes-council meeting. In this author's humble experience, the most effective, constructive spokes-councils are those that limit themselves to providing a forum in which different affinity groups and clusters can inform one another (to whatever extent is wise) of their intentions, rather than seeking to direct activity or dictate principles for all. Such an unwieldy format is ill-suited to lengthy discussion, let alone debate, and whatever decisions are made, or limitations imposed, by such a spokes-council will inevitably fail to represent the wishes of all involved. The independence and spontaneity that decentralization provides are our greatest advantages in combat with an enemy that has all the other advantages, anyway—why sacrifice these?

The affinity group is not only a vehicle for changing the world—like any good anarchist practice, it is also a model for alternative worlds, and a seed from which such worlds can grow. In an anarchist economy, decisions are not made by boards of directors, nor tasks carried out by masses of worker drones: affinity groups, circles of friends who share common needs and interests, decide and act together. Indeed, the affinity group/cluster/spokes-council model is simply another incarnation of the communes and worker's councils which formed the backbone of earlier successful (however short-lived) anarchist revolutions.

Not only is the affinity group the best format for getting things done, it's practically essential. You should always attend any event that might prove exciting in an affinity group—not to mention the ones that won't be, otherwise! Without a structure that encourages ideas to flow into action, without friends with whom to brainstorm and brainstorm and build up momentum, you are paralyzed, cut off from much of your own potential: with them, you are multiplied by ten, or ten thousand! "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world," as Margaret Mead wrote: "it's the only thing that ever has." She was referring, whether she knew the jargon or not, to affinity groups. If every individual in every action against the state and status quo participated as part of a tight-knit, dedicated affinity group, this revolution would be over in a few short years.

You don't need to find a revolutionary organization to join to get active—you and your friends already comprise one! Together, you can change the world. Stop wondering what's going to happen, or why nothing's happening, and start deciding *what will happen*. Don't just show up at the next demonstration, protest, punk show, traffic jam, or day at work in passive spectator mode, waiting to be told what to do or entertained. Get in the habit of trading crazy ideas about what should happen at these events—and of making those ideas reality!

An affinity group could be a sewing circle, a bicycle maintenance collective, or a traveling clown troupe: it could come together for the purpose of starting a local chapter of Food Not Bombs, discovering how to turn a bicycle into a record player, or forcing a multinational corporation out of business through a carefully orchestrated program of sabotage. Affinity groups have planted and defended community gardens, burned down and built and squatted buildings, organized neighborhood childcare programs and wildcat strikes; individual affinity groups routinely initiate revolutions in the visual arts and popular music. Your favorite band—they were an affinity group. It was an affinity group that invented the airplane. Another, composed of disgruntled Nietzsche enthusiasts, nearly succeeded in assassinating Adolph Hitler during the second world war.

*Let five girls and boys meet who are resolved to the lightning of action rather than the quiet agony of survival—from that moment, despair ends and tactics begin.*



**AUTONOMY, COMRADERIE, ENGAGEMENT—  
ALL POWER TO THE AFFINITY GROUPS!**

problems and whether they helped us out, and how funny it would have been if they did. Similar things happened on our street, as criticism was levelled at us kids for being the offspring of users. Once during a Halloween trick or treat my younger brothers and sisters knocked on the door of a house up the street, and were told to leave without lollies as they didn't deserve any and were only going to end up like their parents. This caused me a great amount of anger and to decide to smash their windows with rocks. I never did though.

Once again the expectation of these conditions of living coming to a change fell away as the traffic continued through our house. In fact the period of the next three years was the worst, both at home and in the conditions of the dealing hierarchy of which I knew nothing at the time. Again the role of the prison as a political and economic institution was apparent. Nothing in our conditions had changed in terms of either of my parents' habit, and they did try – my mum spent 3 months in a real rehab centre in between sentences. Instead, my stepfather went to prison with responsibility for the court costs as well as the debt of what he had illegally acquired how ever many years before. These debts were still being paid off this year, nearly ten years after the charges.

In some instances supplying heroin can be a reasonably lucrative practice. In our case however, the habit of using got in the way of profit, and led to some pretty serious trouble. The habit of using that my parents had meant that they realistically shot up what profit they would have made through selling in the first place. My mum had immense guilt over this, and attempted to make up for it as best she could. This meant a great deal of shoplifting, and spending money – that in reality belonged to someone up the dealing hierarchy – on her children. On my sister's birthday she was getting dinner for the party, which was a chicken from a chicken shop. She had no money so parked out the front, ordered and ran out and drove off with my sister and friends in the car. This is a minor, minor example of the lengths she would go to meet our at times unreasonable demands.

We would fluctuate between being really quite poor and reasonably well off during this time. This was due to mum spending money she was meant to give to her dealer on us. She maintained this for quite a while, but it eventually caught her up. The dealing had intensified to a ridiculous level throughout this period, and the spending of the money she was getting put her into debt with the dealers based in Sydney whom she had been working for. She was well respected in this circle, and the head dealer would buy us kids presents and stuff, but this relationship pretty quickly deteriorated as the debt accumulated. The result of this was that mum had continued selling but gotten further and further in debt to the point where she was being threatened by people higher up than her. A means to rectify this situation was obviously desperate. The means she came up with was to rob banks. I think she successfully robbed four banks; this relieved the pressure from those she worked for, but not the police. I don't know much detail about how she went about it. I know the charges were dropped from armed robbery to just robbery. This had to do with the inability of the police to prove there was a weapon beyond the allusion to it. At this point police surveillance reached a level that I found quite unbelievable. We were raided a number of times due to this. On one occasion, which was by far the worst the police brought what must have been nearly a whole swat team. At about 7am both our front and back yards were full of police, as were all the surrounding yards. This time they were heavily armed and protected.



neighbourhood with only my mother and myself as the dominant people in the house. If it has not become apparent yet I will boldly state that in many regards I was a terrified child and early adolescent – with regards to violence, judgement and the police – and this only got worse whilst my stepfather was in prison. Our neighbourhood was violent in some ways, which fuelled my fear, and I had a good enough understanding to know that people in need, including addiction, will and in many cases should, do what is necessary to meet that need. In my head this meant that we lived in danger of being raided not only by the police but also desperate heroin addicts who couldn't pay. In some ways I think I was right as we did spend some nights in fear, as for example, one time the keys went missing from inside the house during one of the busier periods of traffic, leading us to assume they had been taken for a particular end. It was once again, however, the police who caused the most trouble. The one experience of the police that changed my behaviour for about the next three years occurred during this time. Mum had continued to use and deal whilst my stepfather was away so the police attention had been maintained, and their annoyance at not managing to get both my parents in gaol, and with more serious conditions had increased. One morning before school we were all sleeping in my mother's room, all six of us. At about 5:30am we were all awoken to huge banging sounds. Everyone was in that early morning woken-up daze, so it took a couple of seconds to register what exactly was going on. It was soon apparent that it was the police. The by now familiar "it's the police, open up!" had sunk in. But as we were all asleep because the sun hadn't come up yet, we didn't hear them. As we didn't get up to humbly let them in, they proceeded to take a sledgehammer to the back door and break their way in. So at 5:30 we awake to our house being broken into by the pigs, as we try to cognitively process what is going on and actually let them in before they completely destroy the back of our house. This of course filled us all with an immense amount of anger, with much abuse of the police. I was never able to contain my emotions whilst we were raided, and this had been the worst experience of it yet. I usually ended up yelling and screaming at them before I started to cry with anger, hopelessness and embarrassment. This was no exception, only a little worse. Part of the reason why this was worse, not only in their behaviour, but also in terms of possible repercussions, was that if they charged mum with something that would see her into gaol, then both our parents would be in gaol.

Following this I was unable to sleep through the mornings. For about the next three years, nearly every day, I would wake up with the sun and continually look out my bedroom window when I heard a car to see if it was the police. As much as I tried not to, I could not stop doing it, even after my stepfather came home it continued. As had been the case in the past, my main method of dealing with all this was denial. It had however become more apparent that no matter how much I persisted with this it was futile and pointless in terms of my own development, and most everyone knew at school, and everyone on my street knew, anyway. The best I had managed was to be able to talk about it with some people outside my immediate group of three friends. These were somewhat connected anyway, like my friend whose dad sometimes came to buy off my parents.

As more people came to know about my life, I became the focal point for some of their jokes. People would make jokes about my having drug addicted and dealing parents who went to gaol. They also made jokes about the programs the Salvation Army had for families dealing with drug

## Here Come the End Days



Industrial Capitalism has continued civilisation's age-old attack on the wild and free—resulting in unparalleled biological and cultural meltdown. The decimation of wild peoples (cultural meltdown) and the devastation of ecological diversity (biological meltdown) are now reaching truly apocalyptic proportions.

### Biological Meltdown

"Indeed, all the indications are that we are standing at the opening phase of a mass extinction event that will be comparable in scale to the five great extinction episodes that have taken place in the history of life on earth, the most recent being the loss of the dinosaurs some 65 million years ago. Impending extinction rates are at least four orders of magnitude than is found in the fossil record. That means in the order of 10,000 times greater, a frightening prospect to say the least. If

allowed to continue the current extinction episode, could well eliminate between a third and two thirds of all species... [within this] century."<sup>1</sup>

One third to two thirds of all species on earth—GONE! Stop a while, attempt to conceptualise the magnitude of the moment.

Nothing in the history of humankind has prepared us for this appalling event, but OUR generation will probably witness the disappearance of a third to one half of the earth's rich and subtle forms of life, which have been evolving for billions of years. In the early 1990s Michael Soule, founder of the Society for Conservation Biology, made this chilling assessment of the status of the earth's biosphere:

"For the first time in hundreds of million of years significant evolutionary change in most higher organisms is coming to a screeching halt... Vertebrate evolution may be at an end."<sup>2</sup> Soule is

saving that humanity's disruption of the environment has been so systematic and profound that it has halted the same natural processes that have brought everything we know into existence, including our very bodies and minds.

## Cultural Meltdown

It is tempting when facing this scale of doom to think of humanity as an intrinsically ecocidal organism. A pox on the earth. This however lets us and our society—city culture—off the hook.

Numerous cultures have developed a sustainable and harmonious relationship with their surroundings: the Mbuti, the Penan, the !Kung, to name but a few. These societies chose not to dominate nature. In the larger history of humankind, they are the norm and we are the exception.

On civilisation's periphery, some of these wild peoples live on. Their very existence is a serious threat to city culture; simply in the fact that they show that there is a reality outside our world. Defending their autonomy and the land of which they are a part, they are the best protectors of some of the earth's wildest places.

Just as wild nature is being denuded and domesticated, so too is wild humanity. This century will probably be the last for many cultures ages old. Civilisation aims to wipe out their other worlds. Men of money and men of god conspire. If these tribes are wiped out by our culture, it will be the first time in millions of years that no human communities have lived in harmony with nature.

Guns, gold, god and diseases could make Homo Sapiens extinct in our lifetime. For when the last gatherer-hunters are hunted down, all that will be left of humanity will be in the entrails of Leviathan—having the potential for life but unliving.

'Land, the mother earth from which we are born and to which we die, on whom our lives depend, through which our spiritual ways remain intact. To impose changes on this ancient order would serve to destroy our dignity and identity as Indigenous people. Without the land, the peoples are lost. Without the Indigenous peoples the land is lost.'— Declaration of Indigenous Peoples. 1987

## A Critical Moment

It is in this context that we must see ourselves. Not simply as rebels against empire, like so many before us, but rebels at the most critical moment in human history.

Our generation will likely see the decimation of remaining ecological/anarchic cultures and the haemorrhaging of the earth's life support systems. Reformist strategies are

irrelevant but (r)evolution is not only unlikely but also takes time. This has often been acknowledged by radicals in the past. Emma Goldman in her last

years wrote that she believed anarchy was too huge an idea for her age to move to in one step. She looked to future generations, seeing in them hope for the spring. Her feelings echo that of many over the aeons. Looking back, an example arises from the ashes and war cries of arson and insurrection in early 19th century England. One rebel anthem sung with gusto at the time resonates.

"A hundred years, a thousand years.

We're marching on the road.

The going isn't easy yet.

We've got a heavy load.

The way is blind with blood and sweat.

And death sings in our ears.

But time is marching on our side.

We will defeat the years."<sup>3</sup>

They fought, but like many before and after, failed to get to the promised land. Yet they took solace in believing their path was right and others would follow, reaching where they had not. Their belief in an almost endless future of possibility, in the unswerving progressive march of humanity through and with time gave hope to the weary.

We no longer have that luxury.

Today time is not marching on our side, but against us. We must fight all the faster. We cannot pass the gauntlet of defending the wild to unborn generations. It is that wildness and those unborn generations that are in peril today. What we do in our lives, in this moment, is of utmost importance. For no other generation has the weight of the future rested so heavily on the present.

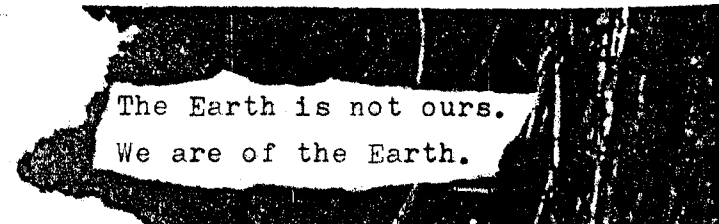
change of opinion) raising five children etc. Upon her release from prison however, she returned to church only to receive such judgement and treatment that caused her to leave that church, the wrath of god's judgement not sufficing for these soul-saving practitioners.

When she came home it seemed as though things would be 'normal' for once, and were for a while, but not long. The alleged function of prison as social rehab centre notwithstanding, socio-economic conditions unchanged, and an addict with addict acquaintances lead back to the lifestyle of user/dealer for my mum and stepfather. The continuation of dealing obviously meant the continuation of police surveillance and scrutiny. The next three years saw an increase in dealing and police intervention. This meant an increase in my communication with both users and cops, and as I was getting older my perceptions of these situations slowly became clearer. The formulations of my perceptions and the subsequent judgements I made were clear and simple from the start. No matter how much I hated the traffic through our house and the implications of it, no matter how pathetic I found some of the people that came through our house, no matter how much I hated my parents using and going on the nod and going to gaol, I nevertheless respected them and a number of the users I met as people. The feeling that this situation was at least human, as well as painful, sorrowful and a struggle for everyone involved gave it a reality that, whilst it could never really be enjoyed, must at least be understood in as many ways as it could. On the other hand the intervention of the police into our space always felt like an invasion of sorts. I found every police officer and detective absolutely pathetic and loathsome. I found, even from an early age, their methods of dealing with our situation, which I soon extended to their treatment of other situations, to be violent, problematic and as a contributing cause to the perpetuation of addiction and poverty. Later as my political and class analysis developed this made complete sense, however at ten or so and dealing for the first time with an overt intervention from the state into my life, this was a little harder to fathom.

The police continued to search our house in search of drugs and a means to put my parents in gaol properly. After a number of unsuccessful raids of our house they came up with evidence worthy of another gaol sentence. Although this was not directly related to drugs, they found past documents of income that showed that my stepfather had been working and on the dole at the same time, this of course constitutes income fraud, and being a member of the lower-working class, results in a gaol sentence. I was fourteen when my stepfather went to gaol. After three years of increased dealing and unsuccessful attempts at imprisonment by the police, they finally managed to get a nine-month sentence handed down.

I am not entirely sure how my parents always avoided more frequent and longer gaol sentences, but I know that when they did get caught for something one of them would take all the blame so one could stay at home.

During the legal proceedings this time around, we were all informed as to what was going on, and what the likely outcome would be. As such, despite this all being painful we were nonetheless better prepared for it. I remember visiting him in the holding cell in Nowra the night he was sentenced and going home without him. My indoctrination to the idea of men as protectors and providers became very apparent at this time, if not well or at all analysed, as I found myself scared of living in our



The Earth is not ours.  
We are of the Earth.

would always, without any deviation, excepting one of the more friendly people who liked or cared about us kids, go along these lines, "hey is your mum or dad there?" "yeah, I'll just get them", and then one of us yelling out or making the extra effort to walk to their room to get them up or to pick up the phone in their room when there was one. This would happen everyday, through until the evening. The mornings before school were thus characterised by the chaos of getting five kids ready for the day, my parents needing to get to the methadone clinic and the people who would come around this early to score. There were times, sometimes before school but mainly on weekends, where I think my parents' responsibility and respect for our space in the house slipped. These were the times when the kitchen might be taken up by people using, whilst we were all still around and using the space of the house. The same thing happened with the bathroom, and it was not that uncommon for one of us to walk into these rooms and see people preparing needles and so on. This made me more angry than usual when it would take place when I or my sisters and brothers had friends over; I still had a huge feeling of shame rather than understanding at this point.

Not that long after moving to this house was the first police raid that I remember. It happened while I was at school, so when I came home my mum was at the police station. At this point not all my siblings were at school, so the younger ones and my stepfather filled me in. The house was fairly torn apart, not broken, just all our shit everywhere. This fair freaked me out, and one of my major concerns, after that of whether mum was going to come home and the possible repercussions was, again, whether I could avoid public scrutiny over this. In spite of the raid the dealing didn't stop.

One of the greater shocks of my life came as a result and not long after this police visit. My parents must have decided that it was best not to tell any of us what was going on with legal proceedings. This was probably because they thought we were too young to understand, and were also probably hoping nothing would happen. But as it happened I came home from school one afternoon with my sister to find that our mum had gone to gaol. She had received a three-month sentence for the supply of heroin. Admittedly, three months isn't really that long, but at ten years of age it felt like a big deal to me.

The visits to the prison were somewhat scary and felt like they were somehow beyond reality. The change in the proximity of prisons in my life from television cop shows, the news and movies, to visiting my mum there was a bit shocking. We rarely owned a car, so we mainly caught the train and the bus. The trips there were always lonely despite being with the rest of my family, and leaving to go home was even worse. My method of dealing with these issues was still denial. On the first day back at school after this had happened I was asked by some people if my mum had gone to prison, as they heard it on the radio, but I just said no she hadn't, it must have been someone else. The publicity of these events always frightened me, as I continued to hope they would go away, rather than confront them. The covers of newspapers and small TV coverage of this small event unsettled me no end. I did however learn something of compassion, support and understanding, and their position in the church during this period of my life. My mother was a faithful Christian and attended church regularly. The father of the church had actually said she was a model mother (interestingly, a newspaper headline read Model Mother Gaoled for Drugs, running the original comments by the priest, and subsequent

# Against Civilization

...and its consequences.

I can't write a righteous manifesto, furiously yet eloquently denouncing every evil of civilization and inciting readers to take up arms and join the anarcho-primitivist struggle. Not today. Sometimes I feel like I don't have the right or something. I know very well that it's a conditioned response to think to myself 'Calling for the destruction of civilization? How dare you! What right do you have to call into question all you've ever known?' (What could be more civilized than the inability to question civilization?), but that doesn't make it any easier to shake. I mean, I'm just a white boy who fell into anarchist politics through punk rock. Sure, nowadays the anarchist politics mean a hell of a lot more to me than the punk rock, but I still live the easy subculture lifestyle. I don't know militant, desperate struggle. I can't intellectualize and dazzle you with cutting-edge theories. I have no real connection to the natural world, having lived in urban/city environments since I was an adolescent...

But I know how I feel. And while I'm still questioning and discovering what I *will* do, I know what I won't do. I won't shut up. I won't stop questioning. I won't stop wanting something more. I won't shuffle inconvenient facts – like the inherently destructive and completely unsustainable nature of industrialism of all kinds – to the back of my brain, or out of it entirely. I won't stop loving, or caring.

Two nights ago, I had a dream that horrified me more than any other I've ever had. It was long, and complicated, but it culminated in scenes I will never forget as long as I live.

Everybody had been conscripted into the army. Everybody, apparently, except me. It was my job to observe. I was assigned to a General, who was to show me what had become of a new batch of Privates – peers of mine who had just been forced to join up. He took me from place to place – all of them military settings, such as inside a tank, or in the middle of a war zone – to introduce me to the Privates one by one. Every single one of them had taken a gun, put it inside their mouths, and pulled the trigger. The General was unfazed by this – he seemed to expect it. But there was something else: not one of the Privates had died. They were all still alive, and *conscious*; the bullet, in each and every case, having freakishly ripped through their heads without having killed them, leaving them instead in agony, unable to call for help, and unable to lift the gun again and put themselves out of their misery. There was always blood and brains and gore. Everywhere. Dripping down the wall they were slumped against, and pooling beneath them. The inside of the Privates' skulls were frequently visible. The General would crouch down next to them, and speak to them gently, lovingly. He would tell them that they had every reason to live. He would tell them that life is beautiful, that hardships and despair were worth struggling through, because life was all there was, and despair was part of living. Sometimes he would take their face in his hands, in order to stare deeply into their eyes as he was speaking to them. Eventually, they would all come around to what he was saying. Understanding would break like dawn across their faces, and they would smile slightly and croak, "I want to live". Then the General would tell them that it was too late, that they had made the ultimate mistake in attempting to destroy themselves, and now there was no going back. He would impress upon them savagely that death is the end – that nothing awaited them but a gaping, empty void. Every single Private understood this, and sobbed bitterly, with indescribable regret and misery, as they died. The General would stand and look contemptuously down at the broken, lifeless being at his feet, soaked in blood and tears, and then take me with him to repeat the process elsewhere.

I lived through this scene a dozen times or more that night. Suffice to say I awoke deeply disturbed and desperate for meaning. But the dream had upset me and traumatized me in such a way that I could barely stand to think about it, let alone draw out deep-seated meaning from it. Well now I have described it for you, in as much detail as I could bear. Here is what I think it means...

We are killing ourselves. In our senseless and savage destruction of the planet, which we are, needless to say, completely reliant upon, and in our social and economic systems that allow us nothing but polite slavery, we are engaged in suicide on the installment plan. I think the dream is a clear indication that I have finally taken into my being the understanding that *civilization is killing the planet*, that *civilization is killing us*.

The dream also spells out bluntly a fear that accompanies this understanding: the fear that we will not see the error of our ways until it is too late. More than that, that *perhaps it is already too late*. Perhaps we have driven one too many species extinct, or clear-cut a million too many trees, or introduced a hundred thousand too many poisons to the natural world, and the trigger has been pulled. The humyn race is about to go extinct, and may take the entire natural world with it. Now we're just slumped against the wall, and it doesn't matter if we come to understand what has happened or not – it's too late and we're dead anyway.

I don't vocalize this fear nearly as much as I vocalize my understanding about how inherently and catastrophically destructive civilization is. Partly because it's a deep-seated fear, and I've been taught so well not to discuss such things. But mostly the reason is that I don't think it matters. Maybe the humyn race has doomed itself – whether it has or not changes nothing about the way I feel and the way I feel we must act.

The humyn race has drastically overshot the carrying capacity of this planet. Even if civilization came down tomorrow, and we all immediately started working on setting up sustainable hunter/gatherer communities, several billion people would starve to death. This I know. But I also know that civilization will collapse sooner or later, whether we take it down or not – it has to. It is built on processes that take (and destroy) more than they give. A lot more. We live on a finite planet that can only give so much. One day, if we continue to take (and destroy) more than we give back, it will have nothing left to give. It is also clear to me that the longer we wait, the messier the collapse will be, for many reasons, not least the rapidly increasing amount of damage we are doing to the earth, i.e. *how much of the natural world is still left*.

That the humyn race may already have pulled the trigger on itself is something I am prepared to live with, horrifying dreams notwithstanding. As much as I long for the generations to come to have a future – for my nephews to live full, happy lives and be able to consider having children of their own – I cannot change what may have already happened. What I am not prepared to live with is the distinct possibility that we will take the entire natural world with us. I am not going to let that happen. I am not prepared to resign myself, or this earth, to an apocalyptic fate I had no part in choosing. If all of us and everything we know are to perish at the hands of this twisted, senseless culture, *it will not be without a fight*. For every species driven extinct, for every indigenous culture annihilated, for every womyn raped, for every river poisoned, for every desire denied, for every life wrecked – *this culture will pay a penalty*. Total and utter destruction of this entire planet and everything on it is what this culture wants – this we have learned, as this is what it pursues so fervently. This is what we must make sure it doesn't get. We know what is at stake. We know who and what we are dealing with. In time, we will dance around the smoldering ashes of an empire that wouldn't listen to reason...

*So we had to try something else.*

heroin. Here my mum found another job, as did my stepfather. I can't remember how long it took for things to start resembling the way things were in Sydney, but it wasn't that long. It got to the point where they started dealing as well as using. Over the years our houses were raided by the police more times than I can remember, and I don't know if our house was searched in Sydney, but I think now that it must have been because our first house in Bomaderry was across the road from the high school, and although I wasn't at high school yet I was terrified of being raided because of ridicule from other kids. I knew we were living with a secret and carried a profound sense of shame due to this. I remember being told as much once with a friend of mine who had come over, and my stepfather saying to both of us that what happened in this house stayed within the house, as something had happened that we both noticed. Before I go any further I want to make clear that I am not writing this to bad-mouth my parents in any way whatsoever, who for their faults and vices are amazing and loving people who taught me a lot about how to treat people well and fairly.

The knowledge of what was happening, but also the lack of knowledge as to the precise meanings and causes of what was happening weighed heavily on me, and often lead me to tears for no apparent reason to anyone but me, and I never said why I was upset, or at least not the real reason. It did get to the point once where I told mum that I wanted to talk to her, my stepfather and dad about what I was feeling. This was when I was nine. I remember driving around with my dad, who had come round after school to talk, and being incredibly frightened of actually voicing my feelings, and felt like I was accusing them of something and being ungrateful to people who had otherwise taken such good care of me. I ended up just blurting it out after I don't know how long of just crying. Dad kept asking what was up and what it was I wanted to talk about, so I just said "you are on drugs", and then continued to cry. He tried to reassure me and to try and understand for himself just what it was I meant when I said drugs, that is did I mean bongos or something more. I meant bongos and something more. I knew there was more to it than bongos through finding syringes at home and knowing their use. I think this situation was resolved through my parents' admittance of using drugs and saying that they would not continue to do so.

Anyone who has ever dealt drugs of whatever sort or lived with someone who does will know that the amount of traffic that goes through the house, or at least the phone, is a pretty sure giveaway of the fact that there is dealing going on. When we moved from the house that was across from the school to one that was slightly more secluded, I was relieved at the prospect of our situation not being so obvious to so many people. As it happened though, the intensity of the situation seemed to increase not long after we moved. It was over the course of the next number of years that things were the worst for our family.

This house was situated in the centre of the housing commission area I explained earlier. There was a massive amount of kids on the neighbouring blocks, which was pretty awesome in a lot of ways. Soon the dealing aspect of my family's drug problem got pretty heavy, and got worse over a number of years despite some fluctuation at times. A brief description of the atmosphere of our house during these years would go like this: the phone would start to ring at about 7:30-8:00 in the morning, and it would always be one of us kids that would answer it as we would be up first. These phone calls

# The Sounds of Panic

## *Growing up with crime, pigs & imprisonment*

I guess the original idea for this piece was for it to be a means by which I could explore and share parts of my life I rarely talk about, and to talk about the influence my childhood had on my politics and world-view. Clearly it would have been incredibly self-indulgent. I hope now that it may still function as originally planned, but also, humbly, to contribute to discussions and actions that will help to free our lives from hierarchy, oppression and prejudice.

I'm not really sure how to start so this may not come out chronologically, not that it really matters. What I want to talk about with relation to my life and childhood is my experience of growing up with heroin, the police and gaol, as well as social stigma, as permanent realities for my family. It is important to note that I am a white male, and as such this experience whilst very painful was nevertheless sprinkled with certain privileges that made it more bearable and easier to escape than it was for others who I knew who lived with these same conditions but with different coloured skin and/or gender. My neighbourhood was a housing commission area, so in case you don't know what this generally means, it is a neighbourhood of the working poor, indigenous peoples, struggling migrants and others on the fringe of the underclass. As such, questions of race/ism, class and drug abuse were everyday realities in one way or another for everyone who lived in my neighbourhood, and as said earlier, all things considered my life and my family were not nearly the worst off.

My mother has had problems with heroin addiction since she was in her late teens and has never been able to stop using for more than year or so at intervals, usually when she was pregnant, and the immediate time after. I am the eldest of her five children. My Parents' separated when I was about one, and my mother has been with her current partner since I was about two. I am now 23. I have two sisters and two brothers, born within seven years, who grew up with me in this place.

I think I became aware of the presence of drugs in our lives when I was about six or seven even though my mum and stepfather didn't use in front of us kids, yet it was clearly more obvious than my mum would of hoped. Obviously I didn't really grasp all the implications or the gravity that this reality potentially entailed, but I knew that there was something that affected the mood, behaviour and atmosphere of those around me and of our house. I don't really know how I could have been so sure, and correct, about what was going on, but as I've gotten a bit older and have had the opportunity to see other kids deal with particular situations it is clear that we are incredibly perceptive of our surroundings and particular social dynamics, particularly when it involves those we love, from a very early age. Despite my awareness of my parents' (when I say my parents I am referring to my mum and my stepfather, and will refer to my dad when necessary) drug habits I had no idea how to confront it, nor the courage to do so anyway, and as such treated it as a taboo hoping it would go away.

By this time we had moved from Sydney to Bomaderry, at least partly as an attempt by my parents to escape the circle and heroin they were involved with there, an attempt to start over without

I think taking down civilization involves becoming a force of nature. It means physically doing what we (humans who perceive civilization as the purely destructive force it is) wish, hope, see in our wildest dreams, and intensely fear that the natural world will accomplish in terms of removing civilization's physical structures. It means taking out the power grid, blowing up dams, dismantling and destroying the machines (and parts of machines) that humankind uses for everything from growing food to exploring space, demolishing manufacturing plants, permanently disabling all military equipment (and personnel), ruining transportation and communication networks and devices, and taking out any other physical thing that could possibly allow civilization to postpone its inevitable end or destroy more of the human or nonhuman world in the process of its collapse. It also means helping and hiding humans who do such things, containing or killing those in power who threaten them, and taking whatever action is necessary to best protect whatever places you can.

I want to be clear. I'm not saying that becoming a force of nature means we should always (or ever) act with reckless abandon. We should be smart. We should respect the fact that we are one way (out of many) that the planet thinks and acts. It's a fallacy of civilization—an utterly pathetic fallacy—to believe that the planet is in some way mindless. The planet is highly intelligent, with or without humans, and 'reckless abandon' is more of a civilized trait than anything I've seen in the natural world. Ultimately, to *not* act to protect the natural world (and, in so doing, ourselves) is the least intelligent thing imaginable. It is to recklessly abandon one's natural place in the universe, on this planet, in our own bodies.

It would be nice if we (as individuals and as a species) would wake up and take some human responsibility and do some things that wind and fire, oceans and forests, grizzly bears and bacteria, and all other beings might take longer to accomplish (presuming they will be around to accomplish them). What would happen if at long last we began to align ourselves with the natural world and do all of the things we once did for civilization, only this time against it? What would happen if we paid careful attention to the tactics routinely used by the civilized, and used them against this deathly culture? If one is annoyed by ants, the civilized solution is to not only poison the ants one actually sees, but to make them carry the poison back to the ant hill, to kill it at its source so that one simply won't see ants anymore (at least none of those ants). There are so many examples of how civilization has successfully annihilated the uncivilized that we need only look in a book, outside in our backyards, in our own relationships to see what 'works.' So, the problem doesn't really lie in not knowing what to do, we've all been well-trained in getting rid of what we don't want to deal with. The problem is that we've been also well trained into the hierarchies on which civilization is founded, and we at all times make sure to only harm those lower than we are in the hierarchy.

Timing is a huge problem, too. The question I struggle with is not so much where or how, and certainly not why (I've got that one down), it's when. If there is no communicated, coordinated consensus among those willing to risk their lives to take it down, how will I know that my efforts will be part of a grander effort and have some effect beyond giving civilized humans one more example to showcase why such actions are neither sane nor part of a solution? I sometimes wonder if isolated actions actually do more harm than good to the overall cause. This may simply be something civilization needs me to believe, because it certainly has had the (desired) effect of keeping me from acting and in that way has preserved civilization longer. We need to hit at the system, hit it hard, hit it in many ways from many different directions, and keep hitting at it, until it ceases to destroy the planet. I don't think the natural world has a whole bunch of time left.

Becoming a force of nature also means removing oneself entirely from the moral structures set up by any civilized society, because their purpose is to preserve such societies. It means killing when necessary and appropriate and not killing when not. It means truly empathizing with the natural world and mourning those people one loved who were civilized but not what was civilized within them. It means reconnecting with other species and appreciating and bonding with a place, a community, that is not human being-based—or any single being-based. It means becoming more resourceful and shattering the idea of 'resources.' It means reminding each other and teaching future humans that there are truly shameful ways to live, but no one right way to live. It means, at the very least, not helping humans who don't grasp and practice that basic truth to live. And it likely means not allowing them to. I understand that it might not be possible to remove several thousand years' worth of domestication and indoctrination in a single lifetime (or even several lifetimes), but I think there will be lines between the natural and the unnatural and that we can and will choose on which side of them to stand. We can be a psychological and spiritual force as well as a physical force, and where our loyalty lies will truly dictate what we are and what we do.

We can discuss whether humans will change before, after, or because of the crash. But I think most simply won't. And, truly, it only matters that the humans who survive change. It seems that when nature truly levels the playing field, which will happen, there will be far fewer humans than lived on this continent when White people first set foot on it. We have used up, torn up, and fucked up too much of it to expect it to support very many of us in any sustainable manner without some serious time to recover free from further (unnatural) assault.

And then, we must never again forget: it is only the survival of this planet that may allow humans to survive—not the other way around.

Nobody thought much of it when the power first went out.

It was a decided inconvenience, but hardly the end of the world.

Winter was still ~~not~~ dying - only a few weeks earlier a storm had cut the power for several hours. Only this time there was no storm. People cursed as their favourite TV shows disappeared before their eyes. They frowned as they flicked useless switches up and down and back again. They switched on torches and dug out candles, dreading already the responsibility of finding things to do not somehow reliant on power until it returned. "How bored we will be", they thought. "There's no storm - what possible reason can there be for this?" they said.

The evening wore on. People bathed in candlelight balefully stared at their blank TV screens and computer monitors (never stopping to think whom is monitoring whom when the screen tells them what they want to know), saying silent prayers to the gods of the energy industry to deliver them from this primitive state... yet still the power stubbornly refused to return. One by one from house to house they blew the candles out and went to bed, joking confidently to each other about their impending awakening by the lights and TV and stereo and microwave suddenly springing back to bright, noisy life.

But one by one they awoke the next morning still in darkness; the bright morning sun meant nothing to them without power. Without their clock radios and electric kettles and mobile phones freshly & charged, they were in darkness.

Almost everybody showed up to work, but there was no power there either, and practically nothing to be done without the computers working. The boss could only send them home again.

may have

I am an introvert. I am an anarchist. I know how to fight publicly, how to cry quietly, how to wander streets, how to stare at walls, how to stream and kick and throw and attract disapproving stares, how to avoid eye contact and make sure nobody in a room even notices I'm there. I want to cover city walls with paint and questions and outrage, I want to squat abandoned buildings and watch super markets burn. I want to watch grass growing and seasons passing outside my window, I want to retreat into the silence of my bedroom and never speak again. I want to use my brain and my body as a monkey wrench, to obstruct absurdities and short-circuit assumptions. I want to be absolved of all responsibility and turn myself into an inanimate object. I'm conscious of the operation of global power structures but sometimes sunlight matters more, the afternoon moments when every particle of dust is settled and quiet.

# The Liberation Army of the Free Papua Movement (TPN/OPM)

We are not terrorists!  
We do not want modern life!  
We refuse any kinds of development:  
religious groups, aid agencies, and governmental organisations  
just Leave Us Alone, Please!

## Historical and Political Reasons for Fighting

We were invaded by force and manipulation by Indonesia under the UN and US supervision with disastrous vested interests in their politics;

We are treated like we don't matter: mass murdered, tortured, oppressed by various ways;

We are misplaced by translocation/relocation, urbanisation and other social engineering activities carried out by the Indonesian government under the support of the World Bank and other international aid agencies and environmental organisations like ICRC and WWF;

We are regarded as security disturbance force and terrorists even though we are fighting for our own environment, our own rights, and our own people;  
Our voices are always neglected and ignored.

## Logical reasons for fighting

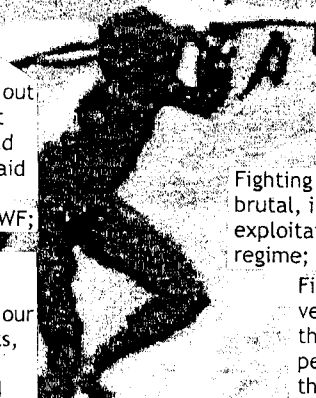
Fighting back is the natural way of responding to the destruction and exploitation without any concern to the human life and their environment;

Fighting back is the natural reaction to the intolerable killings, disappearances, torture, oppression, and intimidation carried out by the Indonesian government;

Fighting back is necessary in this brutal, inhuman, destructive, exploitative, ignorant and terrifying regime;

Fighting back is important for the very survival of tribal people on this planet, not by lobbying, not by persuasion, not by diplomacy, not through democracy;

Fighting back is the right thing to do against the fighting from the Indonesian army, strongly supported by 'empty' and 'meaningless' so-called democratic countries.



Contact:  
opmsg@eco-action.org  
OPM Support Group  
c/o Solidarity South Pacific

you Family Box may also contain the following: Rockneiron, Pineapples, Strawberries, Celery, Corn.

That night the jokes were made with much less ~~confidence~~ confidence.

On the third day they rose again to find themselves still floating in power-less limbo. "If there's no point showing up to work, and the TV still won't work, what are we going to do today?" It was on this day that the rumour started.

It was called a rumour because nobody could identify the source of the information - certainly no official agencies would be throwing around such alarming speculation. The rumour went like this: *The power may not be coming back. Ever.*

Nobody really believed the rumour at first, not publicly at least. But as they shared food with their next-door neighbours the weight of conversation shifted slightly, from 'What is going on?' to 'What if..?'

Chaos was creeping in. People had given up on ever going back to their jobs. DVD players and TV's and toasters were thrown out in the streets everywhere. Banks and real estate agents were seen with 'CLOSING DOWN SALE! EVERYTHING MUST GO!' painted crudely on their windows.

Kids were digging up vacant lots and planting vegetable gardens with the old folk from the nursery. Police looked on helplessly. There was nothing to police anymore.

An official announcement never came, but in time everybody understood that the rumour had come true:

*The power isn't coming back. Ever.*

# Letters

Dear [redacted]

...If my brain was functioning with greater clarity this evening I'd probably take you up on questions of 'the protest zone' that you wrote about in your zine, in relation to May Day. I'm thinking about it because I'm going to Canberra tomorrow to yell at that fucking President (I don't want to blemish this letter with his name), and I'm anticipating a really boring and disempowering protest already, which is pretty depressing. The space of protest was such a frustrating thing during the war, and a divisive strategy used to great effect by the corporate media - 'acceptable' protest (keeping within the conventions) and unacceptable. The old reductive lie about violence/non-violence, as if it was so clear-cut.

There's something in one of my old zines about this, I can't remember quite what I wrote, something about the terror of known happiness, that fear of taking the step beyond the 'rules' of protest into the space where we really do have to construct new modes of behaviour. I think I've only ever experienced that beyond point at two protests - Woomera and S11, and I think it's no coincidence that both experiences, while providing brief moments of elation, were also incredibly traumatizing. The absolute shock of not knowing what to do, or where to start...

I got a letter from a dear friend of mine, who is living in Tasmania and is four months pregnant with her first child, and she told me she'd had a nightmare about having 'done nothing' with her life, but she wrote that she realised she has done vital things, maybe not stopping governments but at least learning to live as a womyn in a really hostile world, trying hard to make liberating relationships with other people. And it's true, because this friend has profoundly enriched and influenced my life, and that is the crucial thing...

Pain and love are so closely bound together and sometimes I wonder why it must be so, but then I often think that all we can do is take these two things in their proximity and use them as the fiercest, truest weapons we have and the only barrier we can build against overwhelming insanity. As humyn beings we have to be able to love each other or we will die, we will lose everything, I do believe that. And if you were here right now I would try to convey as much in less words and more gestures, to trust what feels right in heart and head... but how do we begin to escape from all the emotional and physical and sexual repressions that put such wants under so much pressure, warping revolution into alienated despair?

A thought has just struck me: how rarely I say 'I love you' to anybody, or have it said to me. I... in emotional and physic put such wants under so much pressur alienated despair?

write it instead, although that's rare too, and just as occasionally people write it to me. You wrote it to me and it made me cry, I was moved by it, moved away from myself, away from that space where I constantly tell myself that I am not important to anybody. Why do we torment ourselves by trying to prove that we don't matter, loving others fiercely and deeply but never accepting how this implicates ourselves in love? Not only that we don't 'love ourselves', but that we're always trying to remove ourselves from messy involvement by saying 'I don't matter, I don't matter', and that therefore our relationships don't matter that much, even though we know that they do. Crossing the street to avoid our friends (I do this too), always holding ourselves back. Trying to make our relationships 'fit' with all the other narrow routines we're forced into, rather than letting them spill, using the force and energy of love to crack the walls...

...do you sometimes hate places so much that running away is tempting as a real option? Though usually it is not an option. Remnants of today. My mind floods foggy to all else as memories become searingly noisy inside. Back in grooves of those tingling experiences, a layer outside my body inflates with warmth and sensuality. Inspiring this in me, it makes you so far and so close.

The music is black and plays to the pathetic, empty streets. I want to shut out the lack of real sound. The green lights not changing to let no one go. I wish I had a third hand, a distractful mind, to express the passing driving flirtiness of towns like this. It caresses me and spits on me. Four wheels spin uncomplaining beneath me. I absorb all bumps and squeaks. There is no one else to be this courageous. To onfront the real face of where they are, so easily presenting itself upon the city's unfaltering ritual of polluted orange.

My mind searches for words that can later be remembered, recorded for someone, for an outsider to know never to pass this way. The blue inside here could be the entire contents of this place, music flowing out over the tops of streetlamps a cloud suffocating the asphalt echo. No one to admire or make use of this empty electricity. An expanse of fumbles and discontent. It could be a trap.

This is future past and present all at once. It is you. It is the imprint others have made. The places we've been. The wet that slowly seeps out and stays as your fingers cross me, as desire aches. The deep warm flash that shocks me as I read (words by) you. as I remember how you feel. As I wonder how you feel. I want to give you all the space you need and yet I want to occupy all your space. I want more and more space and then I want to close it all around me with you right here in the middle, with your eyes soft spelling smooth and so here I am safe.

## Get Active!

### Publicise the Struggles

Organise an event in your town. There are films we can give you details of, and possibly even someone from SSP-in Australia would be able to do a talk. Contact us if you're interested. Download posters from the website to put up in your town, university/school or workplace.

### Harass the Attackers

Genocide and ecocide is rooted in the global industrial system. Australia is the base for many of the organisations responsible. The SSP website lists corporations and organisations involved in the destruction and a quick internet search can usually identify local targets. Make sure to tell us (preferably anonymously!) of any actions or demonstrations you do - we will pass it on to the Pacific peoples concerned. News of even small actions can really raise the spirits.

### Raise Funds

Organise benefits, fundraising stalls, or simply donate to one of our direct aid funds. Any money received will go direct - none will be taken out. Cheques or (for more anonymity) postal orders should be made out to 'Agta Support Group' and sent to the SSP address in England, along with a note saying where you want the money to go.

### Support Prisoners

Pressuring courts, police stations and prisons can have a real affect, with relatively little effort. You do not need to speak Indonesian, Pidgin or Filipino; English is fine - though we can send you a list of handy phrases if you're feeling adventurous. To get put on the urgent action 'Papuan Prisoner Support List' email: [koteka\\_prisoner\\_support@xsmail.com](mailto:koteka_prisoner_support@xsmail.com) Donations for prisoners and their families in West Papua can be sent to the address in England. For Papuan prisoner support cheques and postal orders should be made out to 'Koteka'. For Philippines support cheques should be sent to the same address but made out to 'Agta Support Group'.

To find out more about the struggles we support and how to get involved

visit our website:

[www.eco-action.org/ssp](http://www.eco-action.org/ssp)

Send donations to:

Solidarity South Pacific, c/o SDEF!  
Prior House, Tilbury Place, Brighton BN2 2GY, UK



# Where The Wild Things Are

Solidarity for South Pacific Indigenous Struggles

As hard as it is to imagine from the concrete streets of a city, there are places left on earth where civilization doesn't yet have a stranglehold. The destruction of wildness is not yet complete. Tribal people hide in corners of the world, living in sustainable, respectful relationships with the land that raised them. There are areas of land where biodiversity still exists.

But, if the corporations, missionaries and governments have their way, these pockets of cultural and ecological diversity won't exist for much longer. The forces of darkness are assembling for their final assault on the earth and her peoples. These people don't see the forest, they see the timber. Everything falls before profit. Across the planet, people rise up against the death culture. Whether 'primitive' or 'civilized', many of us realise the cost of destroying these last pockets of wild nature, and the cultures of the wild people who live there. Species are being made extinct, ancient eco-systems are being lost that we can never regain. The time to act is now.

Contrary to the propaganda of the multi-nationals, not all indigenous people are clamouring for 'development' and 'progress'. Many realise that assimilation into the dominant global culture often means death for them and the land that is sacred to them. The South Pacific is rife with examples of so-called savages who have tasted the fruits of civilization and decided they'd rather live without it. A striking example is the people of Bougainville, who shut down the massive copper mine on their island, kicked out the multinationals and took their land back.

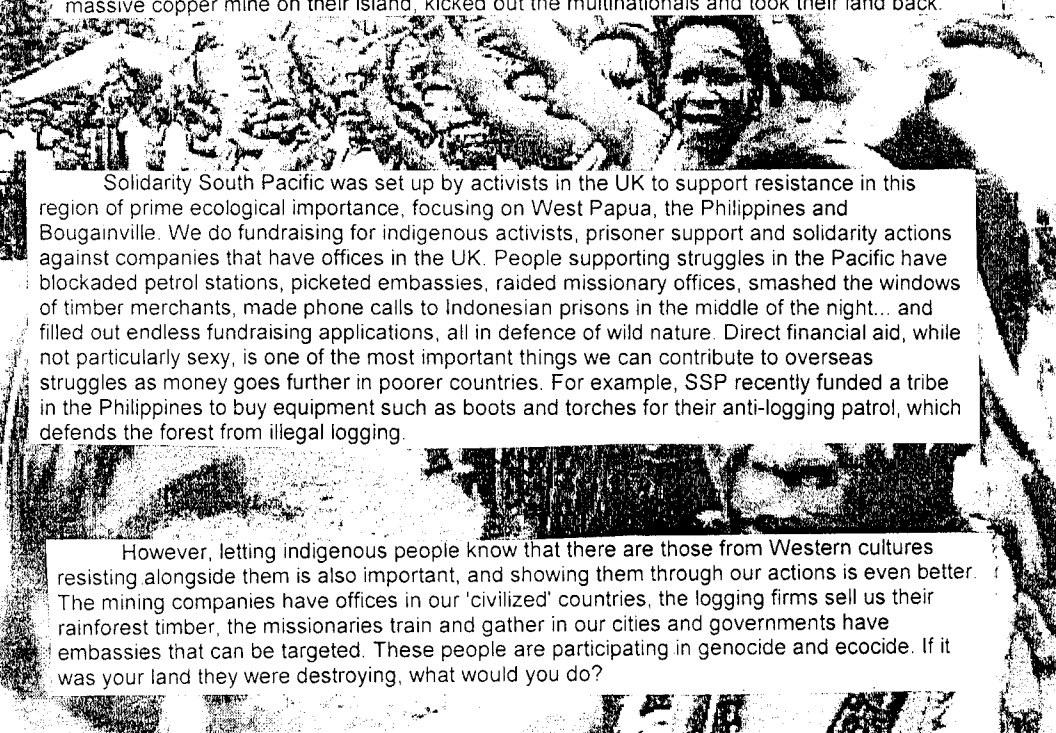
Solidarity South Pacific was set up by activists in the UK to support resistance in this region of prime ecological importance, focusing on West Papua, the Philippines and Bougainville. We do fundraising for indigenous activists, prisoner support and solidarity actions against companies that have offices in the UK. People supporting struggles in the Pacific have blockaded petrol stations, picketed embassies, raided missionary offices, smashed the windows of timber merchants, made phone calls to Indonesian prisons in the middle of the night... and filled out endless fundraising applications, all in defence of wild nature. Direct financial aid, while not particularly sexy, is one of the most important things we can contribute to overseas struggles as money goes further in poorer countries. For example, SSP recently funded a tribe in the Philippines to buy equipment such as boots and torches for their anti-logging patrol, which defends the forest from illegal logging.

However, letting indigenous people know that there are those from Western cultures resisting alongside them is also important, and showing them through our actions is even better. The mining companies have offices in our 'civilized' countries, the logging firms sell us their rainforest timber, the missionaries train and gather in our cities and governments have embassies that can be targeted. These people are participating in genocide and ecocide. If it was your land they were destroying, what would you do?

To  
 awesome  
 explain  
 which I  
 first up,  
 you held  
 your eye  
 someone  
 breaking  
 I felt right  
 simultaneous dedication to your  
 ideas and to love and feelings and  
 emotion. Your ability to accept the  
 messy relationship between the  
 feelings and the ideas. And I like  
 the way you seem, like me, to have  
 some kind of respect or transcendent  
 need to believe in love.  
 But for all of this pain I  
 am feeling right now, I wouldn't  
 trade it in for never having tour of  
 love. Maybe one day there will be a  
 place for us (me and [redacted]), or maybe  
 we have already had it and that is  
 enough. Give me the transience of  
 every fucking thing every time.  
 Love always. Keep the faith (ha!)

...So basically I just want to say that if you ever  
 try to take my maleness away from me, I will string you up  
 on a cross with such force and wrath that your mind will die  
 of despair long before your internal organs liquefy.  
 kind of belief, a clinging on,  
 idea of pure desire or love  
 You say that you are radical feminists, but how  
 can you be? Feminism is a wonderful, important thing, but  
 men can never be feminists. Feminism is about women  
 realizing that male oppression exists, and liberating  
 themselves from it, an experience that only women can  
 have, and men can only guess at. We can be pro-feminist,  
 but not feminists. Also, if you're genuinely concerned about  
 male oppression of women, then the only way you can  
 change is to work on it as a male, for sure taking input from  
 women, but it's still up to us to decide how to go about it in  
 the end.  
 ...ciao,

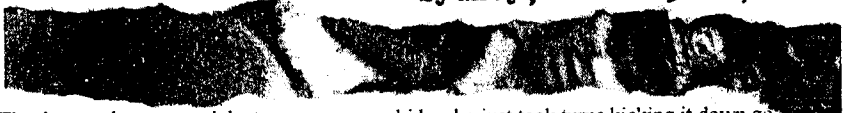
Address letters to:  
 its already here @ wildmail.com  
 (please keep your death threats  
 original if you want to be  
 considered for publication).




Attempted storming of UTS (University of Technology, Sydney) chancellery in protest of raised HECS fees and the ridiculous idea that people should pay to have their spirits broken by a noxious patriarchal institution like a university (right?)

- Sydney, March 31st, 2004.

used as students storm chancellery in fees protest



The door rattles open and the two courageous kids who just took turns kicking it down go charging into the crowd of seriously pissed-off TRG's [Tactical Response Group - protest police] and cops waiting on the other side. They somehow make it through and are promptly wrestled to the ground and arrested, the rest of us meet the pigs head-on in the doorway. The TRG's hold us off by keeping their arms straight and their hands on our chins. The kid next to me is getting his neck broken, as the crowd behind him (now being attacked by cops from the other direction, I later found out) keeps pushing his body forward and the pig in front of him keeps pushing his head back. I am desperately trying to bring my arms up, which are pinned by my side by the swarming crowd, in order to try and make sure this kid doesn't get his head snapped off, but as I start to squirm I see a cloud in front of my eyes. In the split second before it hits me I think 'What the fuck is that? Are those *chilli flakes*???' The cloud hits my eyes and I instantly get my answer. Pepper spray. The fuckers are using pepper spray, without warning, in a tiny enclosed space that is crammed with people who can barely move, let alone disperse. The pain is *excruciating*. My eyes clamp shut and I somehow force my way out of the crush in the doorway and out to the side. I find a wall a few feet away. The pain is so intense that I can barely stand. It feels like my eyeballs are melting. I can feel the fluid pouring down my face. I can hear myself sobbing. I still can't open my eyes. In a moment that is nothing short of an epiphany, I remember that I have a small bottle of water in my back pocket. I take it out and, trying unsuccessfully to force open my eyes, I pour it over my face. The relief is miniscule and lasts for only as long as the water is flowing past my eyes. I still can't open them. I am now certain that my eyeballs are disintegrating behind my eyelids, and that I will be blind for life. I lean against the wall with all my weight and try not to pass out. The fight rages on a few feet away, and the cries of pain, the barked orders and the distant chants are almost deafening. Somebody puts a hand on my shoulder and says "More water - keep washing it out", putting a water bottle on the floor next to me. The voice promptly disappears and as I reach down to try and pick up the bottle I am so panicked by another, much harsher, voice directly in front of me that yells "Grab that one" that I manage to wrench my eyes open just in time to see that the cops have pushed everybody back, out of the doorway and down the hall, and I have been left behind enemy lines. A TRG and a cop are advancing towards me, clearly about to follow the order they have just been given. I am so enraged by the burning pain that I can yell nothing more intelligible than "NO!" and "FUCK OFF!" as they grab me by the wrists. They yank me in the direction of the crowd. It doesn't occur to me to be thankful that I'm not getting arrested, and I make it hard for them. The tiled floor is wet with the water I was trying to wash out my eyes with and I slip. The pigs let go of me just in time for me to go crashing to the floor. I hit my head hard enough that standing back up again doesn't feel viable. I open my eyes just far enough to make out the large bottle of water that I so desperately need standing on the other side of the cops who just dumped me on the floor. I crawl towards them saying "Water! I need that water bottle!" One of them walks over to it, looks at me, and kicks it hard in the other direction. Seeing the only thing that will even slightly relieve the agony I am in go flying out of reach all I can do is whimper "*no...*" Somebody immediately behind me manages a much more sensible "You fucking pig. You fucking bastard pig." I hear the voice calling frantically for water, and within 30 seconds they have given me two large bottles to keep washing out my eyes with. I thank them with every ounce of gratitude I can muster. I am still on my knees, and, although I am just barely able to open my eyes, the pain has not abated even slightly. For the next 5 or 10 minutes I stay crouched down on the floor, leaning against the wall, constantly trying to wash out the poison that still feels like it is melting my eyeballs. I am still sobbing - my tear ducts unashamedly try to help push out the pain that is so determined not to leave. I think about you and everything that's happened. The tears



## Every Text Message a Tombstone

The war in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which has been going on since August 1998 has resulted in at least 2.5 million deaths and 2.3 million refugees. This under-reported conflict is Africa's First World War. Oxfam has called it "the world's biggest humanitarian disaster."

Fuelling the conflict is coltan (colombo tantalite), a rare mineral used in almost all cell phones, laptops, pagers and many other electronic devices. The huge expansion in mobile phone use has made this mineral incredibly valuable. The world's fourth-largest coltan reserve lies under the tropical rainforest of the Eastern Congo and the rival factions in the war have been competing to control it, resulting in huge numbers of deaths and massive destruction to one of the most ecologically important areas in the world.

According to a UN Security Council report, American proxies Uganda and Rwanda have been looting the Eastern Congo with most of the proceeds going to the West. Companies like Sony, Nokia, Ericsson, and Intel increased their demand for the mining of coltan in the Congo in the late 1990s and Rwanda and Uganda took control of the mining areas. The Rwandan army made \$20 million per month mining coltan in 2000. Both Rwanda and Uganda have been rewarded by Western governments and by the World Bank for their massive human rights abuses, massacres, torture and rapes with increased aid and debt relief.

Coltan is being illegally mined in the Kahuzi-Biega National Park and Okapi Wildlife Reserve, both UNESCO World Heritage sites in the Eastern Congo. Over 10,000 miners have moved into the parks and are chopping down the forest and killing the wild animals. The numbers of lowland gorillas, okapis, and elephants have significantly dropped. The gorillas are very rare and may be on the brink of extinction. Also the indigenous Twa and Mbuti pygmies are being killed, raped, kidnapped and cannibalised by the rebel factions, primarily backed by Uganda.

### Surveillance

Your mobile phone is not only responsible for the slaughter of endangered wildlife and thousands of people but is also the most widespread tracking and surveillance device ever to be introduced. Mobile phone cell location surveillance was officially acknowledged several years ago. By logging the base station used by the handset to connect to the network, the authorities can locate its owner to the accuracy of a few hundred metres in cities whenever the phone is switched on, even if you're not making a call. Within two years, with new 3G technology, all mobile phones will have satellite-tracking devices built into them which will be

accurate to within a few metres. All the information on everyone's phone calls made and received and mobile phone location data is retained and can be accessed by the authorities at will.

The government is now also funding a secret surveillance programme called 'Cellidar' which uses mobile phone masts to allow the surveillance of anyone, at any time and anywhere there is a phone signal, whether or not they themselves have a phone. The technology detects the shapes made when radio waves emitted by mobile phone masts meet an obstruction. Signals bounced back by immobile objects, such as walls or trees, are filtered out by the receiver. This allows anything moving, such as cars or people, to be tracked 'in real time'. The system, used alongside technology which allows individuals to be identified by their mobile phone handsets, will mean that individuals can be located and their movements watched on a screen from hundreds of miles away. Researchers are working to give the new equipment 'X-ray vision'—the capability to 'see' through walls and look into people's homes.

### Health

And to top it all, there is serious concern over the health effects of mobile phones—they are pulsed at the same frequency as the cells in your body use to communicate (the "bioband"—0-400 Hz) and scientific studies have proven that radiation from mobile phones causes biochemical changes in the brain which could pose general risks to health and increase the risk of brain tumours. The 2000 government Stewart Inquiry concluded that radiation from handsets could cause "subtle biological changes". There is also an increased risk to children and teenagers, whose thinner skulls and still developing nervous system make them all the more receptive to the effects of mobile phone radiation.

Even those who don't have a mobile may be at risk from the radiation produced by mobile phone masts. There is a current government enquiry into whether mobile phone masts can cause brain cancer and leukaemia, prompted by the eruption of 'cancer streets' across the country where clusters of people are living near to mobile phone base stations. There is consistent evidence of headache, sleep disruption, impairment of short-term memory, nosebleeds and, more seriously, an increase in the frequency of seizures in some children already suffering from epilepsy in people living near to mobile phone masts.★  
**What more reason do you need? Ditch that gorilla-killer state tracking device!**

[www.mastsanity.org](http://www.mastsanity.org)  
[www.theecologist.org](http://www.theecologist.org)

My life is a structure of denial and despair, alienation and abstraction, repression and loneliness and fear and minute after minute after minute of wasted fucking time. I am beholden to forces and systems that have no respect for me, my loved ones, the land base on which we all rely – that have no respect for anything *real* or *alive*. These forces and systems, and the structures and destruction they have spawned and now rely upon, can be called Civilization, and in fact denial and despair, alienation and abstraction, repression and loneliness and fear make up its foundations. I am truly civilized.

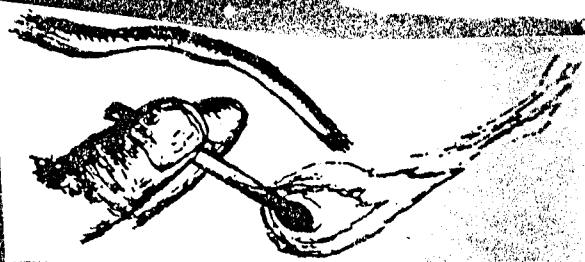


No longer. This head will be unbowed, this heart will beat again, these shaking hands will fight to the bitter end, for I have come to realise that in a world of death and slavery, there is only one way to live and be free; that in an upside-down world the only true creation is the destruction of that which destroys.

BURN

IT

DOWN.



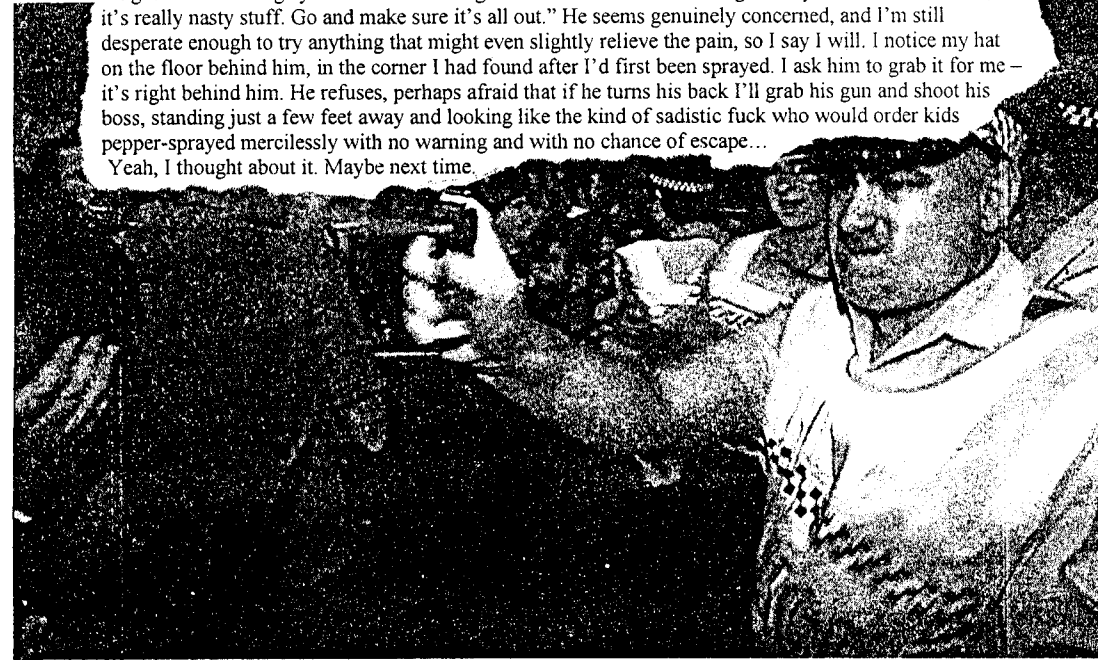
If it takes a  
**BLOOD BATH**  
let's get it over  
with. No more  
appeasement.

THOSE WHO MAKE A REVOLUTION BY HALVES  
ONLY DIG THEIR OWN GRAVES.

Ronald Reagan  
Governor, State of California

come harder and faster. I'm sorry to say that at that moment – on my knees with my head ringing, surrounded by chaos and pain and utter defeat, sobbing uncontrollably at my helplessness and the sheer agony I'm in, almost perfectly mirroring the scene in my bedroom just a few days earlier when you hadn't needed pepper spray to reduce me to crying on the floor – I equate you with the pigs.

Eventually I stand up and survey the scene around the room. I am hugely relieved to see some of my friends waving and the kid who was next to me in the doorway with his head still somehow attached to his body. A kindly cop ("obviously a new recruit if he hadn't learnt how to be a total pig yet", a friend of mine said later) holding the line in front of me, clearly shocked at the carnage he finds himself enforcing, asks me if I've been sprayed. I glare at him through my wincing, swollen, red-raw eyes and say "Right in the fucking eyes". He tells me to go outside and find a medic right away – "I'm serious mate, it's really nasty stuff. Go and make sure it's all out." He seems genuinely concerned, and I'm still desperate enough to try anything that might even slightly relieve the pain, so I say I will. I notice my hat on the floor behind him, in the corner I had found after I'd first been sprayed. I ask him to grab it for me – it's right behind him. He refuses, perhaps afraid that if he turns his back I'll grab his gun and shoot his boss, standing just a few feet away and looking like the kind of sadistic fuck who would order kids pepper-sprayed mercilessly with no warning and with no chance of escape...  
Yeah, I thought about it. Maybe next time.



↓ mad props to the kid who grabbed the cop's pepper spray can and, literally, gave them a taste of their own medicine. ↓



# Derrick Jensen

Extracts from his forthcoming book 'Endgame: The Collapse of Civilization and the Rebirth of Community'

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...But does someone's prior indoctrination mean they need not be stopped?

This I know: Indigenous peoples have entirely different relationships to each other and to the land, based on perceiving "nature" as consisting of beings (including humans) to enter into relationship with, not objects to be exploited. This I know, too: those working to protect land they love are working to protect land they love, and those destroying the land must not love it, or surely they would not destroy it.

Part of what I'm getting at is that those who value things and control over life can be more likely to kill to gain things or control than if these values were reversed. Obviously: they value things and control more than they do life. As we see. On the other hand, if we value life over control or things, we're less likely to kill even to defend life. As we also see. When groups holding these different values come into conflict this functional difference makes for a grotesquely uneven contest, or if you will allow me the language, battle.

This was true of the plots against Hitler. Many plotters argued over whether to kill Hitler as he blithely caused millions to die. Even during the July 20, 1944 coup attempt the plotters merely arrested Hitler's henchmen. When the coup failed that night these same henchmen didn't hesitate to kill the plotters, or at least the lucky ones: others they tortured before killing.

We've seen this same disparity time and again in interactions between the civilized and the indigenous. We can read account after account of the indigenous welcoming the civilized as guests, showering them with gifts, giving them food, keeping them alive, and we can read account after account of the civilized killing, dispossessing, enslaving the indigenous. Years ago I heard an account of the Indian writer Sherman Alexie saying he wished he would have been alive five hundred years ago to greet Christopher Columbus. Alexie described what he would have done to Columbus with a bow and arrow, or hatchet, or axe, or gun, or chainsaw, then concluded by saying, "No, I wouldn't have done that. I would have invited him in and fed him dinner, because that's what my people do."

This is what many Indians did. Some in time learned that their generosity and kindness was not only misplaced, but in this case suicidal. Some Indians of course have fought back. And when they do? "In war they shall kill some of us; we shall destroy all of them." [Thomas Jefferson]

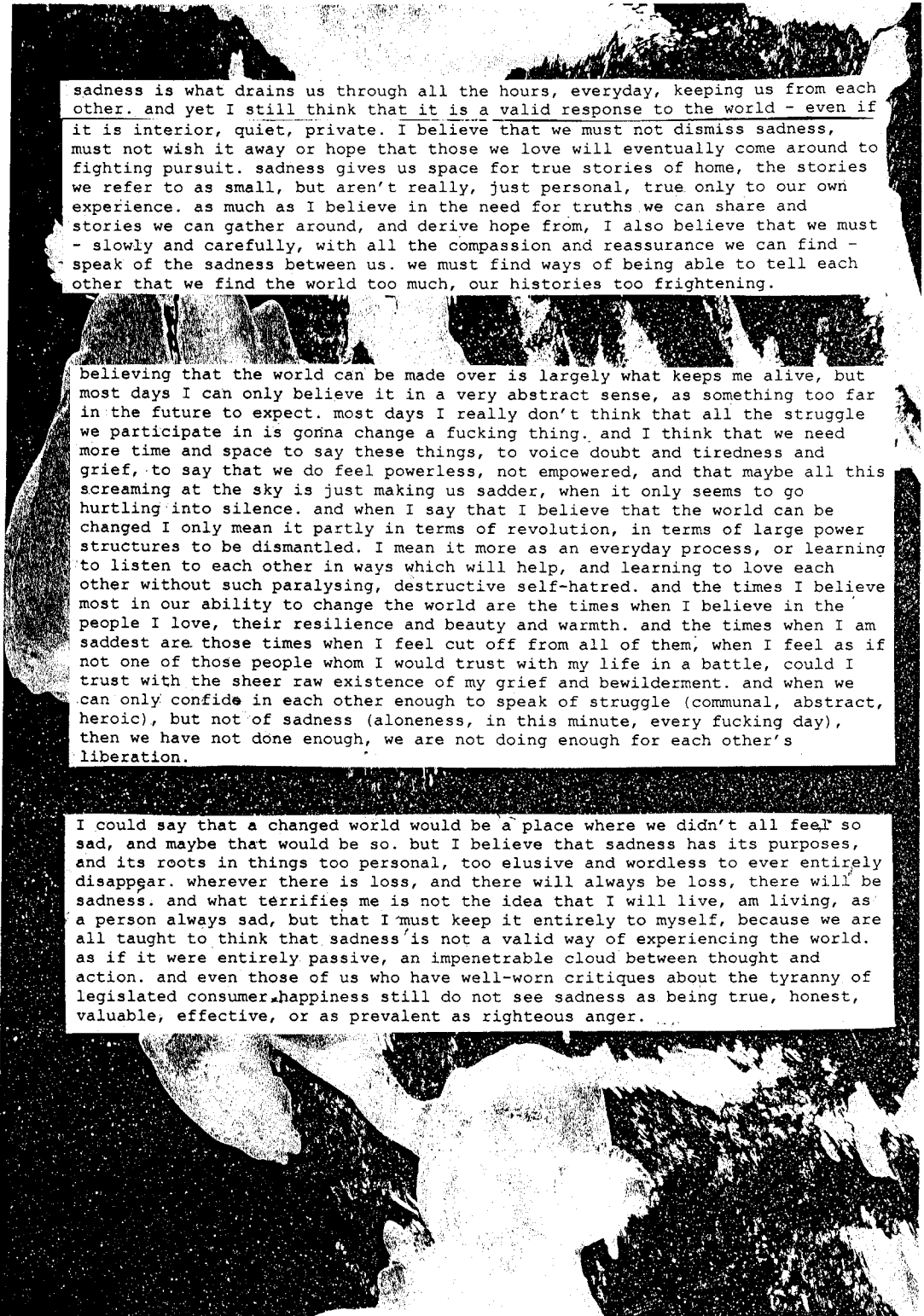
We see this same thing today, every moment of every day. Those who run governments and corporations routinely lie, steal, cheat, murder, imprison, torture, dispossess, cause to disappear. They make and use no end of weapons. We, on the other hand, make really cool papier-mâché masks and pithy signs. Some of us even write really big books. We try to act honorably.

There is of course nothing wrong with acting honorably, and with having empathy. Those are both good and important things. These qualities are supposed to guide our lives. But what do we do when faced with people who are themselves not honorable, and who lack empathy?

Part of the problem is that in general abusers know what they want and know what they'll do to get it. They want to control everything they can and destroy what they can't. They'll do *anything* to achieve that. We, on the other hand, for the most part don't even know what we really want, and in any case we're not sure what we're willing to do to accomplish it.

I know what I want. I want to live in a world with more wild salmon every year than the year before, a world with more migratory songbirds every year than the year before, a world with more ancient forests every year than the year before, a world with less dioxin in each mother's breast milk every year than the year before, a world with wild tigers and grizzly bears and great apes and marlins and swordfish. I want to live on a livable planet.

And I know what I'll do to get there. The question: Will you join the effort?



sadness is what drains us through all the hours, everyday, keeping us from each other. and yet I still think that it is a valid response to the world - even if it is interior, quiet, private. I believe that we must not dismiss sadness, must not wish it away or hope that those we love will eventually come around to fighting pursuit. sadness gives us space for true stories of home, the stories we refer to as small, but aren't really, just personal, true only to our own experience. as much as I believe in the need for truths we can share and stories we can gather around, and derive hope from, I also believe that we must - slowly and carefully, with all the compassion and reassurance we can find - speak of the sadness between us. we must find ways of being able to tell each other that we find the world too much, our histories too frightening.

believing that the world can be made over is largely what keeps me alive, but most days I can only believe it in a very abstract sense, as something too far in the future to expect. most days I really don't think that all the struggle we participate in is gonna change a fucking thing. and I think that we need more time and space to say these things, to voice doubt and tiredness and grief, to say that we do feel powerless, not empowered, and that maybe all this screaming at the sky is just making us sadder, when it only seems to go hurtling into silence. and when I say that I believe that the world can be changed I only mean it partly in terms of revolution, in terms of large power structures to be dismantled. I mean it more as an everyday process, or learning to listen to each other in ways which will help, and learning to love each other without such paralyzing, destructive self-hatred. and the times I believe most in our ability to change the world are the times when I believe in the people I love, their resilience and beauty and warmth. and the times when I am saddest are those times when I feel cut off from all of them, when I feel as if not one of those people whom I would trust with my life in a battle, could I trust with the sheer raw existence of my grief and bewilderment. and when we can only confide in each other enough to speak of struggle (communal, abstract, heroic), but not of sadness (aloneness, in this minute, every fucking day), then we have not done enough, we are not doing enough for each other's liberation.

I could say that a changed world would be a place where we didn't all feel so sad, and maybe that would be so. but I believe that sadness has its purposes, and its roots in things too personal, too elusive and wordless to ever entirely disappear. wherever there is loss, and there will always be loss, there will be sadness. and what terrifies me is not the idea that I will live, am living, as a person always sad, but that I must keep it entirely to myself, because we are all taught to think that sadness is not a valid way of experiencing the world. as if it were entirely passive, an impenetrable cloud between thought and action. and even those of us who have well-worn critiques about the tyranny of legislated consumer happiness still do not see sadness as being true, honest, valuable, effective, or as prevalent as righteous anger.

the politics of sadness.

I do not have enough energy to be righteously angry. I'm twenty-two and so often I feel old, weary and blank. I lie with my eyes closed, curled foetal, feeling through my skin the closeness of my greying bedroom walls, so much old unwashed dust.

no. I don't want this to turn dripping, heavy with self-pity. I feel sad, I don't know how many years it's been of feeling so fucking sad, I feel I was born to it. and maybe I was, this is what scares me, the buried, slow-release effects of my family. hereditary sadness. sometimes I can feel all those lined and ancient relatives on their distant farms, with their empty paddocks, and long silent lives dug out of poor soil and isolation - and I try not to moan low with terror. this is how I'm meant to be, curse of the bones, I'm laid close against sadness for as long as I choose to keep breathing. I think of my father - never without sudden and unnameable grief - and all the ways he hated himself and turned it on others. all the ways I wanted to comfort him and never could, because I was a child, utterly bewildered by the depth of his adult pain. although this never stopped him asking for my help, which I couldn't give and eventually stopped wanting to, at which point he left me. everybody always fucking leaves me. what is it I do that makes me keep losing them?

beyond self-pity, this is my worst and deepest fear: that I keep losing the people I love because I am worthless, not worth the keeping. this is what haunts me, drives me to sudden sobbing or leaves me for hours immobile and curled, my conviction that all the sadness I hold like pooling water is my own fault and doing. I can't shake this belief, no matter who may tell me that it is a destructive, irrational belief to have of myself. I can't believe the people who tell me this because they leave too, in time. I push them away, close off, make myself distant and cold. I don't have enough self-esteem to make friends with ease and warmth, it takes me years, and even those I am close to I can never love without anxiety, thinking - when are you going to find me out? please tell me when you plan to leave. and I feel that people will not believe me if I tell them how old and sad I feel, because I am not old enough for tiredness, and I haven't really experienced anything to justify my sadness. nobody has ever died on me, just left me, and I am certain that these things are not the same.

so maybe sadness is an indulgence, maybe it's only for the people who have time to feel sad, and if you try hard enough you should be able to turn it into anger, outrage, something burning and constructive. but I think, fuck that, anger takes much more energy than sadness, much more confidence (or maybe bravado), a feeling that you have the right to impose yourself upon the world. most of the time, I don't feel like that at all. I don't feel entitled to speak. (and I know that this has everything to do with gender, that as a womyn I don't feel entitled to be angry, or to speak from a point of anger. but I don't want to construct false binaries here either, I don't think that womyn are sad and men are angry, it doesn't work like that at all, or at least it shouldn't.) one awful sad evening the person I love most in the world told me that they didn't feel entitled to be held, to feel somebody's arms around them. and I knew exactly what they meant, and I was heartbroken, because I loved them so much and it wasn't making any difference to their sense of worth. and I thought, have I caused this kind of pain to others, broken their hearts and bewildered them because I could not accept their love? and I think I have done this, and when this friend and lover of mine had left my house, with agonising slowness, each of us clinging to the other like lifelines, I cried for both of us, howled, wept.

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I've been bashing hope for many years. Frankly, I don't have much of it, and I think that's a good thing. Hope is partly what keeps us enchained to the system. First there is the false hope that suddenly somehow the system may inexplicably change. Or technology will save us. Or the Great Mother. Or beings from Alpha Centauri. Or Jesus Christ. Or Santa Claus. All of these false hopes—all of this rendering of our power—leads to inaction, or at least to ineffectiveness: how, for example, would Philip Berrigan have acted had he not believed—hoped—God would bail him out?

One reason my mother stayed with my father was that there were no battered women's shelters in the fifties and sixties, but another was because of the false hope that he would change. False hopes, as I've written elsewhere, bind us to unlivable situations, and blind us to real possibilities. Does anyone really believe that Weyerhaeuser is going to stop deforesting because we ask nicely? Does anyone really believe that Monsanto will stop Monsantoing because we ask nicely? If only we get a Democrat in the White House, this line of thought runs, things will be okay. If only we pass this or that piece of legislation, things will be okay. If only we defeat this or that piece of legislation, things will be okay. Bullshit. Things will not be okay. They are already not okay, and they're getting worse.

One of the smartest things Nazis did to Jews was co-opt rationality, co-opt hope. At every step of the way it was in the Jews' rational best interest to not resist: many Jews had the hope—and this hope was cultivated by the Nazis—that if they played along, followed the rules laid down by those in power, that their lives would get no worse, that they would not be murdered. Would you rather get an ID card, or would you rather resist and possibly get killed? Would you rather go to a ghetto (reserve, reservation, whatever) or would you rather resist and possibly get killed? Would you rather get on a cattle car, or would you rather resist and possibly get killed? Would you rather get in the showers, or would you rather resist and possibly get killed?

But I'll tell you something important: the Jews who participated in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, including those who went on what they thought were suicide missions, had a higher rate of survival than those who went along. Never forget that.

It isn't merely false hopes that keep those who go along enchained. It is hope itself.

Hope, we are told, is our beacon in the dark. It is our light at the end of a long, dark tunnel. It is the beam of light that against all odds makes its way into our prison cells. It is our reason for persevering, our protection against despair (which must at all costs, including the cost of our sanity and the world, be avoided). How can we continue if we do not have hope?

We've all been taught that hope in some better future condition—like hope in some better future heaven—is and must be our refuge in current sorrow. I'm sure you remember the story of Pandora. She was given a tightly sealed box, and was told never to open it. But, curious, she did, and out flew plagues, sorrow, and mischief, probably not in that order. Too late she clapped down the lid. Only one thing remained in the box: hope. Hope, the story goes, was "the only good the casket held among the many evils, and it remains to this day mankind's sole comfort in misfortune." No mention here of action being a comfort in misfortune, or of actually *doing something* to alleviate or eliminate one's misfortune. (*Fortune*: from Latin *fortuna*, akin to Latin *fort-, fors*, chance, luck: this implies of course that the misfortune that hope is supposed to comfort us in is just damn bad luck, and not dependent on circumstances we can change: in the present case, I don't see how bad luck is involved in the wretched choices we each make daily in allowing civilization to continue to destroy the earth.)

The more I understand hope, the more I realize that instead of hope being a comfort, that all along it deserved to be in the box with the plagues, sorrow, and mischief; that it serves the needs of those in power as surely as a belief in a distant heaven; that hope is really nothing more than a secular version of the same old heaven/nirvana mindfuck.

Hope is, in fact, a curse, a bane.

I say this not only because of the lovely Buddhist saying, "Hope and fear chase each other's tails"—without hope there is no fear—not only because hope leads us away from the present, away from who and where we are right now and toward some imaginary future state. I say this because of *what hope is*.

More or less all of us yammer on more or less endlessly about hope. You wouldn't believe—or maybe you would—how many editors for how many magazines have said they want me to write about the apocalypse, then enjoined me to "make sure you leave readers with a sense of hope." But what, precisely, is hope? At a talk I gave last spring, someone asked me to define it. I couldn't, and so turned the question back

on the audience. Here's the definition we all came up with: Hope is a longing for a future condition over which you have no agency. It means you are essentially powerless.

Think about it. I'm not, for example, going to say I hope I eat something tomorrow. I'll just do it. I don't hope I take another breath right now, nor that I finish writing this sentence. I just do them. On the other hand, I hope that the next time I get on a plane, it doesn't crash. To hope for some result means you have no agency concerning it.

So many people say they hope the dominant culture stops destroying the world. By saying that, they've guaranteed at least its short-term continuation, and given it a power it doesn't have. They've also stepped away from their own power.

I do not hope coho salmon survive. I will do what it takes to make sure the dominant culture doesn't drive them extinct. If coho want to leave because they don't like how they're being treated—and who could blame them?—I will say good-bye, and I will miss them, but if they do not want to leave, I will not allow civilization to kill them off. *I will do whatever it takes.*

I do not hope civilization comes down, and that right soon. I will do what it takes to bring that about. When we realize the degree of agency we actually do have, we no longer have to "hope" at all. We simply do the work. We make sure prairie dogs survive. We make sure tigers survive. We do whatever it takes.

Casey Maddox wrote that when philosophy dies, action begins. I would say in addition that when we stop hoping for external assistance, when we stop hoping that the awful situation we're in will somehow resolve itself, when we stop hoping the situation will somehow not get worse, then we are finally free—truly free—to honestly start working to thoroughly resolve it. I would say when hope dies, action begins.



I'm sure by now we've all heard the cliché about how eskimos have something like ninety-seven words for snow. It ends up that's kind of bullshit. First, they're not eskimos, but Inuits. Second, the translations for their words for snow aren't all that exciting, kind of like "fluffy snow," "hard snow," "cold snow," and so on. The reason they have so many words for snow is that they don't have adjectival forms exactly like in English.

Along these lines, though, I do think we need more words in English for violence. It's absurd that the same word is used to describe someone raping, torturing, mutilating, and killing a child; and someone stopping that perpetrator by shooting him in the head. The same word used to describe a mountain lion killing a deer by one quick bite to the spinal column is used to describe a civilized human playing smackypace with a suspect's child, or vaporizing a family with a daisy cutter. The same word often used to describe breaking a window (the ELF and ALF are considered by the feds the number one domestic "terrorist" threat, yet they've never injured anyone: their "violence" is that they destroy property) is used to describe killing a CEO and used to describe that CEO producing toxins that give people cancer the world over. Check that: the latter isn't called violence; it's called production.

Sometimes people say to me they're against all forms of violence. A few weeks ago, I got a call from a pacifist activist who said, "Violence never accomplishes anything, and besides, it's really stupid."

I asked, "What types of violence are you against?"

"All types."

"How do you eat? And do you defecate? From the perspective of carrots and intestinal flora, respectively, those actions are very violent."

"Don't be absurd," he said. "You know what I mean."

Actually I didn't. The definitions of violence we normally use are impossibly squishy, especially for such an emotionally-laden, morally-charged, existentially-vital, and politically-important word. This squishiness makes our discourse surrounding violence even more meaningless than it would otherwise be, which is saying a lot.

The conversation with the pacifist really got me thinking, first about definitions of violence, and second about categories. So far as the former, there are those who point out, rightly, the relationship between the words violence and violate, and say that because a mountain lion isn't violating a deer but simply killing it to eat, that this would not actually be violence. Similarly a human who killed a deer would not be committing

top. i went limp. i gritted my teeth, hesitated for a moment and then tried to gather the strength from all the corners of my body, but my legs would not relinquish their energy to the struggle. my body seemed unable to act as a whole force — it covered and heard voices telling it to sit still. sit still! the power of your body is the power of passive. the power of how your chest grows breasts . . . women's traps and strengths are silent. men hunt, women lay in waiting. lay down. sit still. my brother will respect me for my breasts. he'll see i am a woman now, i thought. i don't have to push him off. my body went limp.

"come on," he said to me. "try and get up"  
"i don't want to fight anymore."

the fight knocked out of me i began not to recognize the battles. already, i have watched becca's desire to take risks slip from her. i have seen her cry anxiously over the places her own creative energies are taking her to.

a pit to be fallen into and i have always loved the night. i have always loved the night from afar. it is the same relationship i have with my anger. but i have told becca many times — it is okay to be angry. if someone hits you, you hit them back. don't just stand there. for heaven's sake, don't just stand there!

the boys have left the swing set. they are over in the grassy glass area to my right, surviving while the other boys climb on top of them. it seems good practice for life. in the distance, across the play area, there is a figure by a street light. i remember why i am here. i rehearse what i am to

do — call his name as he approaches the park. let him see clearly that it is another woman, a concerned mother of a girl-child and then i will run for the phone. thomas lucinda, i will say. thomas lucinda. you have passed this dark pit onto another generation. you will teach my daughter to walk with her head down. you will make her hesitant to trust or venture, constantly looking down for all the holes little girls can fall into.

the man has come into the park. he is walking directly toward me. i want to look down. he gets so close that i can see the features on his face. he is walking straight toward me. i stand up and call "thomas lucinda, thomas lucinda. you . . ." and he turns slightly from his course and moves from me, crossing toward a group of bushes. instead of moving to the telephone i quickly follow, picking up a rock as it get behind him.

i raise my arm and bring the rock to the back of his head. "thomas lucinda," i say, "i am unlearning."

i did not stop at that. he stumbled, stunned at the hard, sharp rock and i swung again and again. he fell and i kicked him with everything i had in me, repeating to myself/to him: this is for my mother, one is for becca, this is for myself, this one for pam, this is for all the mothers, for betty your wife, this is for the woman raped up the street who dreams it every night, this is for all those who watch nights from behind glass.

sweaty and keenly alert, i turn to walk away. he lies on the ground, making no motion or sound.



Any area declared free from state control will feel the might of government attack. As the graffiti illustrates, (r)evolution—the politics of the people—needs armed struggle to survive.

THOSE WHO MAKE A REVOLUTION BY THE

understand the electric dream current in our brain, are already with us. we enter a dream and know that an evil man has left the scene a few hours before, saying he would soon return and even though we were no where before we stood in that empty room of dream, all the facts that define that individual dream are KNOWN. this previous "knowledge" guides us, allows us to assess backwards and forwards, stepping simultaneously. that knowledge allows us to act in dreams because visibility is endless. i can say, knowingly: it is cold in here and terrifying but (i know) all i must do is go in the next room and look behind the hung clothes and there will be a stairway leading to a warm room with huge windows that i can see from. i just know that this is what i must do.

the air does not cool quickly in the city as the evening comes. evening just settles down in between the heat and the dark. when i see him, i will call his name. shocked, he will turn around and he will see who has discovered him and run and then i will call the police. never will he suspect that it was his wife who gave him away. never will he suspect that it was the woman who vowed faithfulness.

the air does not cool quickly in the city as the evening comes. evening just settles down in between the heat and the dark and waits. there are boys on the swings still. they are loud and take little caution with their voices or bodies, three or four of them tangled onto one swing, arms and legs having lost their proper torso. some legs pump the swing and the masses of limbs higher and they fall to the ground with tumbling battlecries. they laugh and scramble and roll, then get up and brush their dusty brown faces off with dusty brown hands. becca is their age, i know, but she does not move like this.

the night is a pit to be fallen into and the bench i wait on is splintered. the wood is rough and stabs the back of my thighs. it is too dark to feel comfortable sitting in this park with no obvious purpose or companion.

the boys continue to wrestle the swing set. they slither up the silver-covered metal frame, their

arms pulling, their legs sustaining their new position. up, up, pull up, then let loose and slide, whooping to the ground. they do not seem afraid of falling to the ground from the top of the swing set. they do not seem afraid of falling into the darkness. no one has repeated the words to them over and over: keep your head down when you walk the streets, be careful who you talk to, don't take chances, don't get dirty, nobody likes little girls that run around like that, you sit still so nicely.

pee wee told me to act as if i were attacking the pole, wrap my legs around it and clench my thighs. he told me to extend my arms above my head, fingers spread, sealed.

"now pull yourself up with your arms, try and bring your head to your hands. that's it. loosen your legs a bit, not too much. your head. no, pull up with your arms."

the pole was raw on my uncovered legs, my skirt pushed up, gathered at my waist. i stretched my arms but they seemed so inadequate for the task. i remained, straining. the cold metal hooked between my legs. i couldn't move. i thought it was a trick; i thought that pee wee had purposely left out the essence of the skill. that there was some secret that could never be mine.

"practice," pee wee said to me. "it only takes a few times. i couldn't do it the first time either."

i didn't believe him. i felt foolish welded to that pole, gripping my hands raw, unable to collect the strength in my muscles to propel myself upward. but i was more afraid that it was a sign of what was to come—

i watched the ability to act slip away as my brother and i wrestled. i had the smallest bits of breasts and i kept one eye on them the entire time we pushed and rolled. his arms were pinned. i remember i had his shoulders firm to the floor, the weight of my body stretched across his. he gritted his teeth, breathing hard with his face puffed, he hesitated for a moment, withdrew from the situation, then threw me and climbed on

an act of violence, so long as the predator, in this case the human, did not violate the fundamental predator/prey relationship: in other words, so long as the predator then assumed responsibility for the continuation of the other's community. The violation, and thus violence, would come only with the breaking of that bond. I like that definition a lot.

Here's another definition I like, for different reasons: "An act of violence would be any act that inflicts physical or psychological harm on another." I like this one because its inclusiveness reminds us of the ubiquity of violence, and thus I think demystifies violence a bit. So, you say you oppose violence? Well, in that case you oppose life. You oppose all change. The important question becomes, What types of violence do you oppose?

Which of course leads to the other thing I've been thinking about: categories of violence. If we don't mind being a bit *ad hoc*, we can pretty easily break violence into different types. There is, for example, the distinction between unintentional and intentional violence: the difference between accidentally stepping on a snail and doing so on purpose. Then there would be the category of unintentional but fully expected violence: whenever I drive a car I can fully expect to smash insects on the windshield: to kill this or that particular moth is an accident, but the deaths of some moths are inevitable considering what I'm doing. There would be the distinction between direct violence, that I do myself, and violence that I order done. Presumably, George Bush hasn't personally throttled any Iraqi children, but he has ordered their deaths by ordering an invasion (the death of this or that Iraqi child may be an accident, but the deaths of some children are inevitable considering what he is ordering to be done). Another kind of violence would be systematic, and therefore often hidden: I've long known that the manufacture of the hard drive on my computer is an extremely toxic process, and gives cancer to women in Thailand and elsewhere who assemble them, but until today I didn't know that the manufacture of the average computer takes about two tons of raw materials (520 pounds of fossil fuels, 48 pounds of chemicals, and 3600 pounds of water; four pounds of fossil fuels and chemicals and 70 pounds of water are used to make just a single two gram memory chip). My purchase of the computer carries with it those hidden forms of violence.

There is also violence by omission: By not following the example of Georg Elser and attempting to remove Hitler, good Germans were culpable for the effects Hitler had on the world. By not removing dams I am culpable for their effects on my landbase.

There is violence by silence. I will tell you something I did, or rather didn't do, that causes me more shame than almost anything I have ever done or not done in my life. I was walking one night several years ago out of a grocery store. A man who was clearly homeless and just as clearly alcoholic (and inebriated) approached me and asked for money. I told him, honestly, that I had no change. He respectfully thanked me anyway, and wished me a good evening. I walked on. I heard the man say something to whomever was behind me. Then I heard another man's voice say, "Get the fuck away from me!" followed by the thud of fist striking flesh. Turning back, I saw a youngish man with slick-backed black hair and wearing a business suit pummeling the homeless man's face. I took a step toward them. And then? I did nothing. I watched the businessman strike this other twice more, wipe the back of his hand on his pants, then walk away, shoulders squared, to his car. I took another step toward the homeless man. He turned to face me. His eyes showed he felt nothing. I didn't say a word. I went home.

If I had to do it again, I would not have committed this violence by inaction and by silence. I would have stepped between, and I would have said to the man perpetrating the direct violence, "If you want to hit someone, at least hit someone who will hit you back."

There is violence by lying. A few pages ago I mentioned that journalist Julius Streicher was hanged at Nuremberg for his role in fomenting the Nazi Holocaust. Here is what one of the prosecutors said about him: "It may be that this defendant is less directly involved in the physical commission of crimes against Jews. The submission of the prosecution is that his crime is no less the worse for that reason. No government in the world . . . could have embarked upon and put into effect a policy of mass extermination without having a people who would back them and support them. It was to the task of educating people, producing murderers, educating and poisoning them with hate, that Streicher set himself. In the early days he was preaching persecution. As persecution took place he preached extermination and annihilation. . . . [T]hese crimes . . . could never have happened had it not been for him and for those like him. Without him, the Kaltenbrunners, the Himmlers . . . would have had nobody to carry out their orders." The same is true of course today for the role of the corporate press in atrocities committed by governments and corporations, insofar as there is a meaningful difference.

For years I've been asking myself (and my readers) whether these propagandists—commonly called corporate or capitalist journalists—are evil or stupid. I vacillate day by day. Most often I think both. But today

I'm thinking evil. Here's why. You may have heard of John Stossel. He's a long-term analyst, now anchor, on a television program called *20/20*, and is most famous for his segment called "Give Me A Break," in which, to use his language, he debunks commonly-held myths. Most of the rest of us would call what he does "lying to serve corporations." For example, in one of his segments, he claimed that "buying organic [vegetables] could kill you." He stated that specially-commissioned studies had found no pesticide residues on either organically-grown or pesticide-grown fruits and vegetables, and had found further that organic foods are covered with dangerous strains of *E. coli*. But the researchers Stossel cited later stated he misrepresented their research. The reason they didn't find any pesticides is because they never tested for them (they were never asked to). Further, they said Stossel misrepresented the tests on *E. coli*. Stossel refused to issue a retraction. Worse, the network aired the piece two more times. And still worse, it came out later that *20/20*'s executive director Victor Neufeld knew about the test results and knew that Stossel was lying a full three months before the original broadcast. This is not unusual for Stossel and company. I recently spoke with one environmentalist/teacher who was interviewed by him who said, "It was nothing but a hit piece. He sliced and diced the interviews with me and the grade schools students to make it seem as though we'd said things we hadn't, and as though we hadn't been able to answer questions that we had. He edited the piece to make the children look stupid." Another called him "the worst motherfucker on the planet," which is saying quite a lot. And now I've got another Stossel story to add to the evidence when he joins the ghost of Streicher in the docket. I got a call a while ago from one of *20/20*'s reporters, who wanted to talk to me about deforestation. The next "myth" Stossel is going to debunk, she said, is that this continent [North America] is being deforested. After all, as the timber industry says, there are more trees on this continent today than there were seventy years ago. She wanted a response from an environmentalist. I told her that 95 percent of this continent's native forests are gone, and that the creatures who live in these forests are gone or going. She reiterated the timber industry claim, and said that Stossel was going to use that as the basis for saying, "Give me a break! Deforestation isn't happening!" I said the timber industry's statement has two unstated premises, and reminded her of the first rule of propaganda: if you can slide your premises by people, you've got them. The first premise is the insane presumption that a ten-inch seedling is the same as a two-thousand-year-old tree. Sure, there may be more seedlings today, but there are a hell of a lot fewer, ancient trees. And many big timber corporations cut trees on a fifty-year rotation, meaning that the trees will never even enter adolescence so long as civilization stands. The second is the equally insane presumption that a monocrop of douglas firs (on a fifty-year rotation!) is the same as a healthy forest, that a forest is just a bunch of the same kind of trees growing on a hillside instead of what it really is, a web of relationships shimmering amongst, for example, salmon, voles, fungi, salamanders, murrelets, trees, ferns, and so on, all working and living together. Pretty basic stuff. But, she asked, aren't there more of some types of wildlife today than ever before? I responded by telling her that one of the classic lies told by the Forest Service and the timber industry is that because there are more white tailed deer now than before, that means forests must be, in better shape. The problem is that white tailed deer like the edges between forest and non-forest, so more white tailed deer doesn't mean more forests: it means more edges, which really means more clearcuts. To say, I continued, that more white tailed deer means more forests is simply another lie. I talked to her for more than an hour, and by the end she seemed to really understand these points. I made clear that the only way you can make Stossel's leap—from saying that there are more trees today than there were seventy years ago, to saying that deforestation isn't happening—is if you're either ignorant of these premises or you're lying. As George Draffan and I wrote in *Strangely Like War*, "To even imply that a tree farm on a fifty-year rotation remotely resembles a living forest is either extraordinarily and willfully ignorant, or intentionally deceitful. Either way, those who make such statements are unfit to make forestry decisions." She understood that. We sent her a copy of the book. She said they might have me on the program. They didn't, which is fine. But here's the point. Stossel went ahead with the program anyway. Further, he explicitly said that an indicator that deforestation isn't happening is that white tail deer are increasing. He had been made fully aware that his statements are untrue. He was made fully aware of the facts. These facts—that seedlings are different than ancient trees, that monocrops of trees are different than forests, and that increasing numbers of white tailed deer are not an indicator that forests are increasing—are neither controversial nor cognitively challenging. They are not opinions. They are facts as clear as water is wet and fire is hot and ancient trees are ancient. This means he no longer had the first excuse, ignorance. Stossel may or may not be stupid. I have no experience with that. But in his case I now know the answer to the other half of that question. Like Streicher, he is committing violence by lying: violating the truth, violating the sacrality of words and discourse, violating our psyches, and paving the way for further violation of the forests. Like Streicher, it may be that he is less directly involved in the physical commission of crimes against the natural world than are people like Hurwitz. But my submission is that his crime is no less

the street, on fire escapes — city apartments eat light and dark alleys eat lives.

"i'm sure pam would like that very much . . ."

there are mothers who keep their children home and those who give their children ten minutes to arrive from school and panic at fifteen. never before have my neighbors smiled and welcomed police cars into the neighborhood. the efficiency granted to drug busts is spared on rapists and child molesters. for a week this man has been loosed on our children and the police look at us as if to ask: why don't you just move to a better neighborhood? as if we shouldn't be angry, as if — if you get hit by a rock, you should have ducked. they think our anger is like pampers, or paper toweling. i wrap my arms around becca, her shoulders are tucked under me. her mouth flaps tiny teeth and tells tales of boys at school, the kickball game, a math test, movies, books, neat socks.

there is a knock at the door.

betty lucinda stands very still as i open the door. she stands in the frame of the door like a bride posed by a photographer who thinks marriage is synonymous with paralysis.

"come in betty, what can i do for you?"  
"i need to talk with someone. you."

she glances toward becca to test whether we are within hearing distance. becca is busy with her face in the juice glass. i guide betty into my bedroom and close the door behind us. the woman who sits herself down on the chair by my bed is beginning to shake, her mouth is stuttering air. she is telling me that it is her husband who has been molesting the children in the playground. at first i am angry with her; inside me i ask why she didn't call the police, tell someone sooner, who was she protecting — why protect this dangerous man? but i must not scream before i listen. scream, no listen. scream. listen.

"you know pam at school, don't you mom? she got hurt by that man yesterday."

i thought we were talking about neat socks. but pam is no stranger to me. she ate egg salad with becca and me last week.

"do you know what happened?"

"no, cause i just heard cause pam wasn't in school today and of course they told us not to talk to strangers. but pam knew that. mom, he just can't keep going around hurting children, can he?"

there are hundreds of answers to that question: yes, because there is little we can do; yes, because another will take his place after he is caught; yes, because when it is not done in the streets, it is done in the home; yes, because we feel powerless in the face of it all; yes, because we leave it up to the forces which usually jail our children and take them away from us.

"no, becca, he can't keep hurting children."

when becca and i get home, we have juice together. becca looks distressed and asks if she can call pam.

*sometimes we enter our sleeps with our dreams already far ahead of us. characters have entered and long gone, but we are aware somehow that they have been present. facts we need in order to*



# The Night is a Monster

WENDY STEVENS

The night is a monster — a pit to be fallen into, my mother would say.

the children come inside at the first sign of dark. They have no choice for they are given their mother's terror even if they won't take it. my neighbor's three children fight and protest — it has only begun to get dark, we have only begun our games, there is nothing on television at this hour. i hear, as i walk up the street to retrieve becca, the sounds from radios turned outward by open windows, making music for those sitting on stoops. i guide becca down the street to our apartment. i know she does not understand why i have begun to guard her like virginity. it is not fair to share my fear with her. she will learn soon enough that the world expects her to cross her legs, soon enough she will unlearn how to make a fist, her fingers will forever remain discouragingly polite.

the night is calm from behind closed windows — no terror within full view until it decides to come through your window. when terror comes in my window, i have thought, i will stab him with a scissors. i will not pretend i am dead, asleep, discouragingly polite.

but fear is in the playground with my daughter. fear is dressed like a man, well-disguised down to his pressed pants and shiny slip-on shoes. fear is in the playground with my daughter and her friends and so i wrap her in my arms and escort her home, as if my presence alone were protection.

when becca was six she climbed trees with fervor; she wrestled the branches and hung at their edges. but now at eight she seems confused as to her boundaries and she doesn't tackle trees, although she continues to climb them. her caution is self-conscious; she watches her arms and her legs like a young woman balancing in heels. and i think: she is hardly mine to wrestle with anymore. those who deny their children twinkies will have children who eat twinkies the rest of their lives — along with her education, i too have been taught my limits.

there is a man who follows young girl-children home from the park. he doesn't force himself on them, children have been taught to respect adults; it is not fear they feel, they have always been handled this way. it is not the violence which first shocks them, but the intimacy, embarrassment, bodies out of context —

excuse me, little girl, i have lost my book. it looks exactly like this one. my eyesight, it's bad, perhaps you could help me find it? over here somewhere in these bushes where i was sitting. and the man has a saddened look on his face. he doesn't like this child he has asked to help him. he does not like girl-children. they are powerless to him, whimpering and weak — and what shall i tell my child about this man; who he is, why does he do these things? i have many answers but i cannot share this kind of terror with her. there are boogie monsters and shadows in the closet, frankensteins in the hallway to the bathroom and men climbing in your window, men waiting out on

the worse for that reason. No government or corporation in the world could have embarked upon and put into effect a policy of mass extermination of the forests without having a people who would back them and support them. It is to the tasks of educating people, producing those who countenance and even call for deforestation, educating them and poisoning them with a hatred of truth and a hatred of the natural world, that Stossel has set himself. Deforestation could not happen were it not for him and for those like him. Without him and others like him, the Hurwitzs, Weyerhaeusers, and others like them would be stopped from destroying our landbases.

Things are actually worse than I said. Would you like to know what other myths Stossel was debunking during that same program? I cannot do better than to simply quote 20/20s online promo, to reveal the level of disrespect accorded deforestation: "*Do strange things really happen when there's a full moon? Is swimming after eating dangerous? Are SUVs safer than cars? 20/20 viewers sent in questions to ABCNEWS.com, asking us to find out what the experts have to say about some popularly held beliefs. In a special 20/20 airing Monday, March 22 at 10 p.m. ET, John Stossel checks out 10 more "myths." Here are some of the questions Stossel will be tackling in Myths, Lies & Downright Stupidity. Have psychics solved lots of crimes? Does shaving cause hair to grow back faster and thicker? Are we destroying our forests? Does a more expensive skin cream always work better? Are you safer driving an SUV than a car? Tune in Monday, March 22, at 10 p.m., to see if your answers match those of the experts.*"

All writers are propagandists. That doesn't mean we're all liars. Some are liars. Some are not.

I have never met John Stossel, but I hate him. I hate him for what he's doing to the forests, and to the world, and for what he is doing to discourse. I hate him because he's a liar. I hate him because his lies harm those I love.

I probably shouldn't pick on Stossel. He's not the only liar. The entire culture is based on lies, from the most intimate and personal to the most global. The smartest lines I ever wrote were in *A Language Older Than Words*: "In order for us to maintain our way of living, we must tell lies to each other, and especially to ourselves. It's not necessary that the lies be particularly believable, but merely that they be erected as barriers to truth. These barriers to truth are necessary because without them many deplorable acts would become impossibilities. Truth must at all costs be avoided." Members of abusive families lie to each other and to themselves in order to protect the violent perpetrators (they convince themselves—and are convinced by the perpetrators and by the entire family structure—that they are protecting themselves), and to keep their violent social structures intact. Members of this abusive culture lie to each other and to themselves in order to protect this culture's violent perpetrators, and to keep this culture's violent social structures intact. We tell ourselves we can destroy the planet—or rather, for those of us who care, allow it to be destroyed—and live on it. We tell ourselves we can perpetually use more energy than comes in from the sun every year. We tell ourselves that a 90 percent decline in large fish in the oceans may not be unreasonable. We tell ourselves that if we are peaceful enough that those in power will stop the killing. We tell ourselves that civilization is the most desirable form of social order, or really the only one. We tell ourselves things are going to be okay.

Stossel is not the only liar.

There are other types of violence. There is the necessary violence of killing to eat, whether we are killing salmon or salsify. And of course we can make a distinction in this violence, between that done to animals, that done to plants, that done to fungi. We can differentiate between eating a carrot, which kills the plant, and eating a lettuce leaf, which does not.

There is metabolic violence, the violence done by my body, to the food I digest, to the bacteria I excrete, to the invasive germs my white blood cells destroy. I presume there are no pacifists anywhere so stringent they would object to these forms of violence.

There is violence done to humans. There is violence done to nonhumans. There is violence done to rivers, mountains, oceans. There is violence done to the earth. There is, some say, violence done to human-made inanimate objects. There are others who say there is no such thing as an inanimate object (but it's important to note that those who objected to members of the Black Bloc breaking windows at Starbucks were attempting to defend the corporation, not the windows).

There is violence done to human psyches, and violence done to nonhuman psyches. There is violence done to discourse.

There is violence done with conscious motivations. And there is violence done with unconscious motivations.

There is offensive violence, as in someone attempting to torture you to death, and there is defensive violence, as in you fighting back.

There is violence done for hate, and there is violence done for love. There is violence done for pity. There is violence done for greed. There is violence done for fear. There is violence done for power. There is violence done for anger. There is violence done for survival.

There is violence done for toxic mimics of many of these.

There is violence done alone, and there is violence done collectively.

There is personal violence—violence done by or to me or you specifically—and there is impersonal violence, like being poisoned by pesticides on your food, pesticides John Stossel says aren't there.

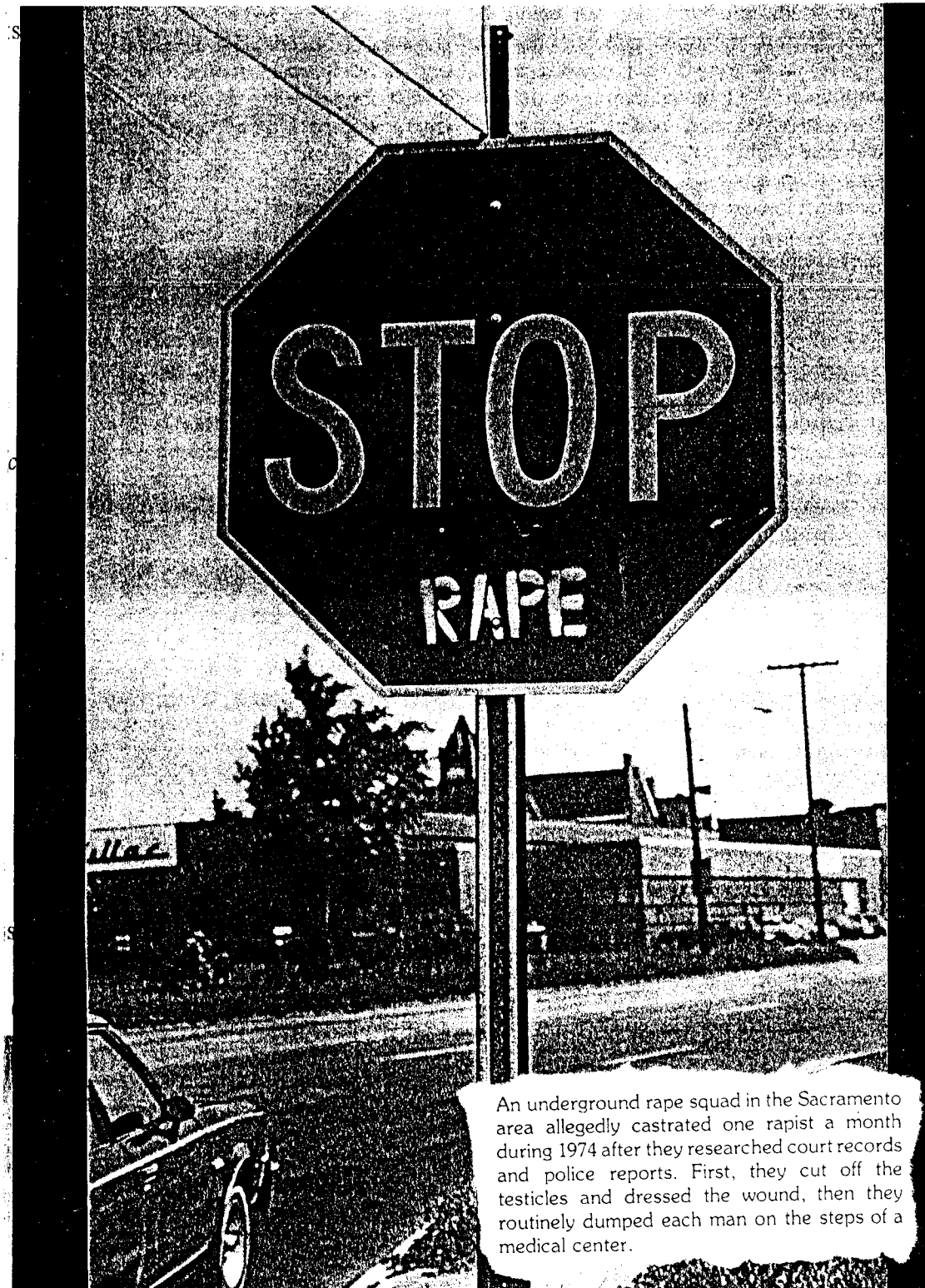
It is absurd for someone to say he or she doesn't believe in violence. That's like saying you don't believe in death. Certainly one can say that one doesn't want to participate in certain forms of violence, just like one can say that one doesn't want to cause certain forms of death. But violence, like death, is simply a part of life, no larger nor smaller, no more nor less important than any other. In fact it's inseparable from the others. We all participate in violence daily. The only questions are our degree of awareness, and what we do with that awareness.

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An underground rape squad in the Sacramento area allegedly castrated one rapist a month during 1974 after they researched court records and police reports. First, they cut off the testicles and dressed the wound, then they routinely dumped each man on the steps of a medical center.

## OUR NATURE

WHAT IS STILL WILD IN US

Now we will let the blood of our mother sink into this earth. This is what we will do with our grieving. We will cover her wounds with mud. We will tear leaves and branches from the trees and together pile them over her body. The sky will no longer see her fallen thus. We will pull grass up by the roots. We will cover her. Thus, as we do this, we know her body will melt away. And only her bones will remain. But these we will take. Still feeling her absence, we will cradle her tusks in our trunks, and carry them to another ground. And thus will this soil be absolved of her death, and the place of her dying be innocent again, and thus her bones will no longer be chaffed by the violence done there. But though all traces of her vanish, we will not forget. In our lifetimes we will not be able to forget. Her wounds will fester in us. We will not be the same. The scent of her killer is known to us now. We cannot turn our backs at the wrong moment. We must know when to trumpet and charge, when to recede into denser forest, when to turn and track the hunter. We feel the necessity of these acts in us. We will pass this feeling to our young, to those who follow in our footsteps, who walk under our bodies, who feel safe in our presence, who did we not warn them, did we not teach them this scent, might approach this enemy with curiosity. Who imitate our movements and rely on our knowledge; we will not allow them to approach their enemies easily. They will learn fear. And when we attack in their defense, they will watch and learn this too. From us, they will become fierce. And so a death like this death of our mother will not come easily to them. This is what we will do with our grieving. They will know whom to beware and whom to fear. And this hatred that began to grow in us when we saw her body fall will become their hatred and no man will approach them safely. No man will come near them and live. We will not forget and this memory will protect them. What they have learned from us, all that we have taught them so that they can survive, how to suck up water into their trunks, how to pull down leaves from trees, how to lift with their tusks, and dig holes by the river with their feet, all this they will pass on, and generation after generation will remember the scent of this enemy. This is how long our grieving will last. And only if the young of our young or the young of their young never know this odor in their lifetime, only if no hunter approaches them as long as they live, and no one with this scent attempts to capture them, or use them to his purpose, only then will the memory of this death pass from our hide. Only then will those with the scent of her killer be absolved, as the soil is absolved, of her blood. Only then, when no trace is left of this memory in us, will we see what we can be without this fear, without this enemy, what we are.

Susan Griffin

## I think I know a rapist.

My partner and I had a conversation just the other day – in a shopping centre, of all places – about the overwhelming predominance of men who actively wield abusive power over womyn. She talked about the men who make her feel uncomfortable with just their eyes everywhere she goes. I told her the little I understood (having only had it summarised to me by a close female friend) of Valerie Solanas' SCUM Manifesto. We theorised about the viability of Solanas' idea. We were both very deeply emotionally involved in the conversation. Soon I found myself, at the very brink of tears, quietly declaring that I would die for a world that was safe for my sisters, and I meant it. Business continued as usual all around us. We sat there and held onto each other and hoped with all our hearts that one day we'd both see that world. Then business as usual stepped in to remind us just how far away that world is – two guys sitting just two or three feet away from my partner started up a conversation about 'girls' that was so misogynist in tone and content that all we could do was stand up and walk away. So that was what we did.

As a friend of mine has pointed out, if 25% of womyn in our culture are raped at some point in their lives, and a further 19% of womyn will fend off a rape attempt, then an awful lot of men in this culture are rapists. It's not just one guy who's really busy. It's not just psychopaths in dark alleys. It's not even just the guys that leer in the street or creep you out on the bus. 'Ordinary' men everywhere are rapists... Everywhere.

That includes our friends, relatives, acquaintances, co-workers. That includes 'the scene'. It could even (gasp) include 'the community'.

Seriously considering this fact – that I almost certainly know, in some way or another, a rapist – has really fucked with my head. After all, if I'm as pro-feminist, anti-rape as I say I am, shouldn't I do something about this?

*What the fuck should I do?*

I haven't come close to arriving at an answer to that question, but I can already sense the defensive proclamations and sarcastic asides from people who wouldn't have any alternative suggestions... Sometimes I think about taking these people's sarcasm literally: maybe we do need a witch-hunt.<sup>1</sup> Maybe we should just expel (from the 'scene'/'community'/'movement'/'our lives) every male about whom there is 'just a rumour' – after all, considering the statistical predominance of rape and sexual assault, the rumour is almost certainly true. Sure, a whole bunch of people would probably be falsely accused and expelled (along with an infinitely larger group of people who were not accused falsely)... But would that be so bad? We're talking about womyn's lives here! What the fuck does it matter if a few guys are kicked out of the scene who don't necessarily 'deserve' it?! Speaking for myself, I would gladly withdraw from any social circle I'm part of if the womyn involved would feel safer without me. It would actually be a relief to finally be able to do something to help the womyn around me feel safer – even if all I could do was remove myself from their lives.

All this assumes that 'expulsion' is a fitting punishment for rapists, which, when you think about it, is quite a silly idea. Expulsion is often talked about as a way that post-revolution anarchist communities might deal with people who refuse to respect others in the community. This makes sense to me – the threat of expulsion from a healthy, vibrant, sustainable and self-sufficient community (and, presumably, being prevented from joining another such community) would be a genuine deterrent from anti-social behaviour. But we don't have healthy, vibrant, sustainable and self-sufficient communities yet. We have, at best, social clubs. Social clubs that may vocalize opposition to capitalist and State hegemony, but are still, sadly, very much complicit. Expulsion from such a social club, then, would hardly be the end of the world. It would inconvenience the rapist into finding another social club – preferably one with no prior knowledge of his actions, or at least the willingness to overlook them or disregard them as 'rumours'.

Expulsion, then, is a woefully insufficient deterrent to rapists in radical communities, or in any communities. It's a bare minimum. How tragic that we hesitate to perform even this basic task to ensure womyn's safety.

It is, of course, entirely inaccurate to talk about rape in black and white terms, especially considering which side of the fence of patriarchal privilege I am writing from. A guy I know, who I think would call himself pro-feminist, likes to say that all men are misogynist, and men that claim they aren't are lying. I disagree. The

<sup>1</sup> If you'll pardon the expression.

dictionary I have to hand here defines misogyny simply as "hatred of women". I don't hate womyn. At all. Almost all of the people I love most on this earth - the people I would die for, the people I wouldn't want to live without - are womyn. I find it infinitely easier to relate to and generally communicate with womyn than with men. Consequently the vast majority of my friends are womyn. I only know one or two people personally that I would say *do* hate womyn (not including the guy who says all men are misogynist) - for the most part, I'm fairly successful in my aim to only associate with people I can relate to and respect (that is womyn, and men who love and respect womyn).

I am a little suspicious about this kind of logic - that all men are misogynist - coming from a man associated with feminist politics, because it's just a little too convenient. The implication is that pro/feminist awareness, discussion and action amongst men is a waste of time, as we're powerless to escape the clutches of patriarchal conditioning. We hate womyn. That's just the way it is. Oh well, I guess we may as well go back to watching TV/playing in bands/talking about records...

I disagree, because at the same time as the rape rates show us that an awful lot of men are rapists they also show, on the other hand, that an awful lot of men are *not* rapists. Despite being brainwashed since birth and all but destroyed by a pathological culture, many men are attempting to deprogram themselves and have begun to fight back against patriarchal conditioning and practices - this has always, in my experience, come about through listening to and learning from womyn. This is proof, as if any were needed, that patriarchy is a social condition, and not a biological function, as apologists for rape have argued, and as the logic that 'all men are misogynist' comes dangerously close to arguing. The fact is that patriarchy is learned behaviour - albeit deeply ingrained - and can thus be unlearned when we have the commitment to try. As angry atheists have been known to say of God: *if we invented him, we can kill him.*

There is, on the other hand, an aspect of the logic I agree with. Patriarchal conditioning is certainly virulent and affects everybody born into this culture. Misogyny, in its many forms, is certainly an epidemic - any number of billboards will tell you it's downright commonplace. I don't think it's as all powerful and all consuming as the 'all men are misogynist' logic implies, but I do agree that it's everywhere. As we see (or not) with rape.

We see rape culture played out everywhere - in movies, advertising, TV. But we don't really *see* it. At the same time that we're bombarded with images of womyn reduced to body parts on billboards and dominated by our action hero's on the movie screen, actual rape as it happens to millions of womyn every single day becomes invisible. It gets a mention here and there when it can be used for a purpose - to justify inner city ethnic cleansing or to terrify womyn into staying indoors at night - but it's realities are known, and for the most part discussed, only by womyn who have lived through it.

*This has to change.* We are all, in some way, caught up in rape culture. We know womyn who have been raped (even though we may not know it). We know men who rape (even though we almost certainly do not know it). We pass billboards everyday that incite rape through the denigration of womyn, and we allow them to stand unscathed. We have people in our midst who are damaged and hurt, and we allow them to continue unsupported. We have people in our midst who have damaged and hurt, and we allow them to continue unchallenged.

*When I was 17, I initiated sex with my girlfriend while she was asleep. She woke up and we continued to have sex. I would like to say that it was my intention that she wake up, but in truth I don't remember. I would like to say that I would have stopped if she had not woken up soon after I began, but I'm not sure that I can swear to that either. She mentioned it in passing the next day, and seemed fine, so we never discussed it. After our relationship had ended, I got in touch with her wanting to discuss some things about our relationship that troubled me. I had come to realise that it was a problematic relationship in a lot of ways - that I had been very dominating. Understandably, she didn't want to talk about it. She was happy that we were friends, and she didn't see the point in going back through the problems of the relationship. I realise now that I will never know if she had really wanted to have sex that morning.*

I tell this story here to illustrate the virulent, complex nature of rape culture, and also in order that I may take responsibility for the role I have played in it. My request for consent, my attempt to ensure that I not violate and dishonour a loved one, was much too little, far too late. I must now try to truly appreciate the consequences of my actions, and act to ensure that I never make such a mistake again. As a movement, despite the best efforts of a few, we have achieved little in our war against rape culture. For so many of our sisters, we are already too late. Can we justify silence and submission any longer?



*This above all, we have never denied our dreams. They would have had us perish. But we do not deny our voices. We are disorderly. We have often disturbed the peace. Indeed, we study chaos—it points to the future. The oldest and wisest among us can read disorder. From dreams, or the utterances of madness, the chance cracks on a tortoise shell, the fortunate shapes of leaves of tea, the fateful arrangements of cards, we can tell things. And some of us can heal. We can read bodies with our hands, read the earth, find water, trace gravity's path. We know what grows and how to balance one thing against another.*

*Many of us who practiced these arts were put on trial. We stood at the gates of change, but those who judged us were afraid. They claimed the right to order the future. They would have had all of us perish, and most of us did. But some kept on. Because this is the power of such things as we know—we kept flying through the night, we kept up our deviling, our dancing, we were still familiar with animals though we were threatened with fire and though we were almost to a woman burned. And even if over our bodies they have transformed this earth, we say, the truth is, to this day, women still dream.*

*Sous les parés, la plage*

learning it's not our fault. so we suffer innocently. christian or jew, christ has not been a healthy model for oppressed people.

one step up from martyrdom, we support our right to defend ourselves. we organize, attend, and try to extend to other women classes in self-defense. we focus on dislocating knees. we try not to think about differences in size, weight, fighting skills, between an average one of us and average one of them. we are anxious not to escalate violence, so we rarely carry weapons or know how to use them.

this subject—of women organizing to do violence to men—makes us uncomfortable. we are the life-support system of the universe. we birth, nourish, and repair. how should we not shrink from committing violence?

—are we more comfortable as victims?  
—is fighting for our own people a guilty act?

when we try to envision ourselves using violence, we crash against the unthinkable, a taboo.

when we feel ourselves up against a taboo, we should ask ourselves: *why is this horrible? why do we want to reject this?* if we find no reason, only vague feelings of awfulness, we want then to think about this awfulness.

as long as a rule, commandment, behavior cowers in the unthinkable corner of our brain, we have no way of knowing whether the rule is ours or theirs, in our interest or theirs.

if using violence against men in an organized fashion is in our interest, and if we have reactions of discomfort, repulsion to the idea of fighting for our own people—

then maybe we need to struggle with our discomfort.

**men don't take us seriously because they're not physically afraid of us.**

we gloss over the fact that most successful resistance involves some kind of equalizer: a weapon.

we recognize that women who fight back fight back for all of us. but in contradiction to the

service performed for all women by those who resist is the fact that each resister has suffered for performing this service: at best, a painful and exhausting struggle in the courts; at worst, prison or death. as the death penalty is reinstated or its use is extended, we need to think about this.

the question arises inevitably:  
if we need men to know that committing violence against us is dangerous—  
if the use of violence is acceptable in an emergency, as a desperate choice—

**why wait for the next emergency**, for the next woman in danger to choose self-defense at great cost to herself?

**why not create our own emergencies???**

*imagine: every day in the paper, instead of a story about a woman who was attacked, raped, beaten, tortured and/or murdered—information which certainly has its effects on us—there were a story about a rapist or batterer who was beaten, shot, stabbed—even public humiliation would be better than nothing.*

**how long would it take woman-haters to get scared?**

one thing is clear:  
whatever any of us chooses to feel, think, or do about women fighting abusive men, women continue to fight. increasingly, the question then is not, *should this happen?*—**it is happening.** the question is, *how do i choose to relate to this fact of women's resistance?*

and if this resistance heartens us with each new appearance, inspires and empowers us, the question shifts again:

**how can i take part in this resistance?**

the implications of what i'm saying do not escape me.

i am frightened to write about them openly:  
there is danger in fighting.

there is also danger in not fighting.

# Battered and Raped The Physical/Sexual Abuse of Women

JANET HOWARD

## RAPE

As you are reading this first sentence, a woman somewhere is being beaten until she is bloody and half conscious, not sure if she is alive or dead. By the time you finish this page, ten more women will have been beaten, and at least one other woman will be aching with the pain and terror of rape.

Violence against women: injury, abuse and destruction directed against and experienced by women. In this country and in many countries around the world women are the object of a violence so wide-ranging and so much the result of interlocking oppressions that to untangle the violent web and understand the different strands will take a long, long time and the collective work of many people. Women are owned, bought and sold, paid unlivable wages, forced to work hard and provide services for no money at all, locked away, sterilized, used to sell every product that makes a profit, burned alive, drowned at birth, lobotomized, denied basic human rights . . .

Somewhere along the list of grievances we come to the physical abuse of individual women by individual men—the isolated, raw violence of a specific man against a specific woman, or a group of specific men against a specific woman. An individual violence that repeats itself again and again to become a kind of mass violence.

The violence known as rape is increasing, and already the number of reported rapes is staggering; the records suggest that a woman is raped every three minutes. But *reported* rapes are only a very small percent (the official estimate is 10%) of the number of rapes actually occurring. It is impossible to estimate the real number because women who are raped often choose to keep quiet rather than face further attacks from family, police and the rapist himself. Also, the definition of rape is very different depending on who you talk to. The state defines it very narrowly in terms of penetration and presence of semen, as if rape is something that happens to a vagina, not a whole woman. A woman experiences rape every time a man forces her into performing a sexual act against her will. "Force" takes many forms: actual physical force, the use of weapons, the threat of losing a job or being deported, the threat of death. Many women experience "soft rape"—emotional coercion (it will later be called seduction) that does not include obvious physical force but nonetheless results in a woman performing a sexual act against her will. Some women are "gang banged" by a group of men who take turns raping her. A rape attack always carries with it the threat of serious physical injury, or death, and often the threat becomes real.

# frozen inside

BY CINDY

I can't even believe how the fuck it keeps happening; people waking up to someone they know touching them. How the hell can anyone think it is ok to initiate sex with someone who is sleeping? Do they think about our abuse histories? Or the fact that we can't say "no" when we're asleep. Do they understand our complex defense systems and how vulnerable and terrified we might feel waking up to this assault. Do they know that even if we go along with it all, once we wake up, it doesn't necessarily mean we wanted to? We have complex ways of protecting ourselves. Do they think about this? Do they think at all? Are you reading this? The truth is, I used to crawl in people's beds too. I thought it was ok. I thought of course all guys wanted it. I never considered the fact that I might be capable of assault. But of course I am, a lot of us are. Are you seeing this? Will you to promise to take steps to never do it again? (like don't get in bed with someone when you're wasted or unsure about your intentions. Stop making excuses for yourself. Look at your life for real.)

I am sick of how it all keeps happening. I can't stand how often people tell me something like this "I told him, early in the night, that just because we were getting drunk together didn't mean I wanted to fuck him. I specifically said "I don't want to have sex with you" and then later he was just on me. Do we call this rape?" Or how many times I've heard "I didn't say no outright, but I tried to make it clear." And there are all the times we try to comfort someone or find comfort in their arms, and they think it's an invitation to do what they want. We trust people and they don't understand (or care?) about the difference between emotional openness and sexual desire. Or how it happens, if we're slutty or flirty people think we're open game. If we're shy they think it's a form of flirt and really they just need to be persistent in pressuring us. This game is not always a fun game for all of us.

Yesterday a tough girl friend of mine said "I have not had consensual sex all year." The day before I heard friends laughing about two people we knew who had been wrestling and one of them had just thought it was camaraderie until the other person... and everyone is laughing at the story because it is a boy boy story which I don't think is funny at all. The day before that I was reading a zine, where she's calling someone out. She says "That was assault, asshole!" but at the end of the page it says, "I know I should have fought."

I am sick of people saying, "well, if you didn't want it, why didn't you say something. I never would have had sex (or whatever) with you if I'd known." I am sick of the blame and self blame. We have had practically everything taken away from us and can not always speak. And what kind of world are we building. It's still seen as our responsibility to say something. Why isn't it their responsibility to ask, and watch for signs and signals, and ask again?

You know how there are supposedly two instinctual responses — fight or flight? Well, there's also freeze. You can see it everywhere in nature, especially in animals that are under constant attack. Like deer. If a cougar is trying to get a deer, right before it catches it, the deer will lay down and freeze. It's heart beat slows. It's breath. It's muscles rigid. It won't move an inch. A friend of mine tells me about this. She says "frozen, the soul can go somewhere where it won't be touched. Frozen, maybe the cougar will just pass it by. Frozen, if it does get killed, maybe it doesn't hurt as much." I laugh, nervous laugh, because do I believe in soul? Plus it's always hurt pretty bad the times I've been assaulted and/or raped while frozen. Why didn't I do something? Why didn't they notice? Why did it happen at all?

My friend says "one of the differences between us and the deer, is once the danger is past, the deer find their family and then they shake and snake, get the trauma out of their bodies, somewhere safe, with the protective family around. Where do we get that release and support?"

"At the punk show?" I say.  
"Come on now, really." She says, and of course it is true. It is not the same. She says, "We don't get support and release. We are almost never in a place of safety." She says, "The trauma builds in us. We freeze in our voices, our bodies. We become frozen inside."

She thinks it is instinct and culture. I think it is systematic oppression and patriarchy. But sometimes now, alone in my room, I shake and I shake and I scream.

Maybe we need 100 new words for when our friends or acquaintances or partners assault or rape us. One word to describe "I let you because I was half asleep and too tired to do anything else," one that's "I was sick of arguing about it," one for, "It's fucked up and scary the way you talk to me," one for "I told you I didn't want to do that," one for "why didn't you notice I wasn't present anymore," one for "we had an agreement you would use protection," one for "You said if I didn't do it you'd leave me. What choice did I have?"

Maybe we need 100 new words to talk about rape and sexual assault and sexual manipulation; words that speak clear about the seriousness of what is being done to our bodies. Or maybe our friends and acquaintances and partners need to have the courage to hear "You raped me", or "That was assault." (I still barely ever use these words because I know the backlash consequences. I know that no one has the courage to hear their actions defined that way. They don't want to admit they are capable of rape or assault. They don't want to admit that patriarchy exists and that it gives them the God and State granted rights to do these things. They don't want to look at the physical and political nature of their actions. They want to blow it all off. They have a million different reasons for what they did.)

Every time I've tried to talk to someone about sexual stuff that they did to me that I didn't want, their first reaction is to (usually frantically) try to explain it away. They want the story to be different than the one I'm telling. They want me to see it through their eyes and absolve them. They say "But I thought," they say "I never would have," even "No, that's not what happened." (as if their experience was the only one.) They try to make me out as crazy. They say I am blaming them for things that are really just stored up from my past.

I am not crazy. I am aware that capitalism and patriarchy and all systems of control depend on the denial of both the oppressor and the oppressed. I know that patriarchy values logic over emotion, and that "too much" emotion, too strong of a response, will label you crazy; and that women especially are considered crazy lots of the time. We are not crazy. What happens to us is real. All the attempts to silence us won't change this reality.

I carry with me a whole history of sexual abuse, and so do most of us. Each sexual act does not exist in a vacuum and I'm sick of people treating it as if it does. I never want to hear the fucking words "Well, why didn't you stop me?" again. I want to hear "Oh my god, I'm so sorry" and then I want them to want to hear my rage. I want them to ask what it's done to me, ask for my story. I want them to be able to take it instead of asking for pity. If I tell them to fuck off and leave me alone, then I want them to respect that. If it's someone I love, I might want them to hold me so I can cry. If it's someone I hate, I want to be able to punch them without the community saying "dude, that's so fucked up! She hit him!"

I want all of them to say "I believe you. I'm taking this seriously. I hate what I've done and I'm going to change. I'm going to commit myself (or recommit myself) to looking deep inside of myself and changing my behavior, and looking at this world and what it's make me in to, and it's my responsibility. I'm going to take this seriously. Thank you for having the courage to tell me. I'm going to work as hard as possible to make sure I never do that to anyone ever again."

I want them to say that, and feel it, and mean it, and follow through.

Cindy is the author of Doris zine — available in this part of the world through Moonrocket distro.



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these are the names of resistance fighters. the names of women whose attackers did not get away with it. the men who abused them are dead. the list continues to grow.

some of these women are in prison, along with

hundreds of others whose names i don't know. their history is our history of resistance. each of them has helped enlarge the possibility of resistance.

only as women choose to resist men's violence will men's consciousness change. when men are afraid of us, there will be a material base for changing their consciousness.

or at least we will be on terms of equality of fear.

**when women are as ready to stand up to men as men are ready to knock down women we can begin to talk about our common humanity.**

**not before.**

i am talking about women and violence. most often we experience violence as something done to us. we know it's horrible; we have learned 'are

today's paper (november 2): in portland, a 32 year old woman getting off work in a department store, going for her car in the city center parking structure, got grabbed in the elevator and raped yesterday.

one story. according to statistics, yesterday in portland between 2-20 women got raped. between 6-60 women got beaten. the same thing will happen today. of course these are only average counts.

every day in this country a woman gets raped every minute. 3 women get beaten every minute. these are also average counts.

what am i counting if not casualties of battle?

why then don't we admit we are at war?

**every man:** has probably raped or beaten a woman; or enjoyed rape fantasies; or threatened a woman with physical force, explicitly or with gestures—stepping closer, raising his voice; at least a man he works with or socializes with, who he thinks is an ok type, has raped or beaten a woman.

**every woman:** fears rape, or lives inside limits imposed by that fear: no late night walks, no living alone, no hours of solitude by the river. if she relates intimately to men, the threat of violence has probably sufficed to keep her in line. if she is a lesbian, her comfort is that the threat probably comes from men she is not intimate with.

*since i began writing this, L—, a close friend, has been raped. she carries a knife, has fought men, though she's small—and he was big, quick. she was afraid to use her knife. now she has an infection and might be pregnant.*

in sum: if you are a woman, you have probably been raped or beaten or will be; at least a woman you love has been raped or beaten or will be.

it's easy after saying this to think of men and women as separate species, one preying on the other.

the state of war waged on all women by men who are overtly violent gives all men power. rapists

and batterers are the military arm of patriarchy.

**to stop violence against women** we have to change schools, laws, a system where a few white men make a profit off our labor; almost all films, records, record jackets, tv, toys, advertising, the junk we get sold in paper cartons at the supermarket, isolated living situations and overcrowded living situations: every difficult edge of this culture contributes directly or indirectly to violence against women.

meanwhile there's another simpler fact:

**men rape women because they can.  
men beat women because they can.**

the only place where rape is considered a contemptible act is in prison—by other prisoners—not because it's cruel, hateful and vicious, but because everyone knows rape is a chicken-shit crime, a crime any fool can get away with.

in fact, few rapists land in prison. white skin, professional status, money: these are buffers, protecting rapists as they protect other criminals.

as for how batterers are treated in prison—who knows? they are arrested, prosecuted and convicted even less than rapists.

cops, judges, district attorneys, and legislators are (mostly) men who don't take women seriously.

**men abuse us because they can get away with it.**

our task then is to make abuse of women more and more risky, something men can't get away with.

*Inez Garcia • Joan Little • Yvonne Wanrow • Jennifer Patri • Claudia Thacker • Sharon McNearney • Evelyn Ware • Janice Hornbuckle • Hazel Kontos • Lenore Coons • Carolyn McKendrick • Margaret Pratt • Wanda Carr • Francine Hughes • Diane Davis • Agnes Scott • Marlene Roan Eagle • Miriam Greig • Gloria*

# To Kill a Rapist

(one last extract from Derrick Jensen's forthcoming book  
'Endgame...')

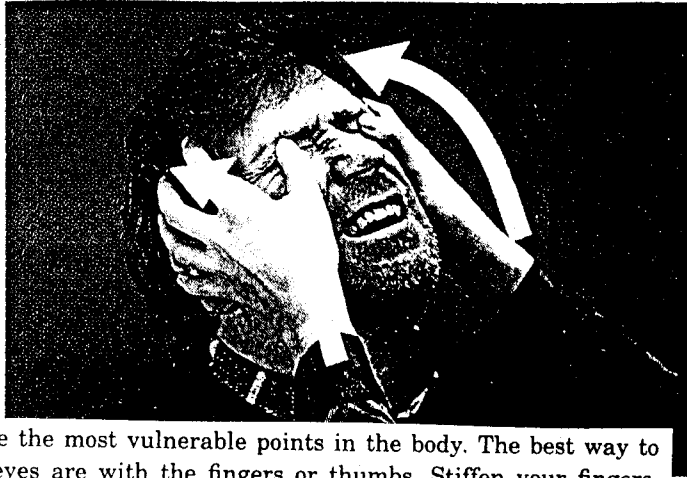
...I've thought about this a lot in terms of tactics for women (and men) who are threatened with rape. Now, first, I need to say that anyone in that situation can do no wrong: no one can ever complain at anything she may or may not think or say or do, nor at any attitude she may or may not assume. Having said that, though, I need to say that something that has helped some women, both as they are being threatened or assaulted, and then afterwards, has been to redefine the relationship they suddenly find themselves in. The first step in this redefinition is to change her perception of the relationship from one between a rapist and a victim to one between a rapist and a survivor, that is, to begin to perceive herself not as a victim with no choices (although she may recognize that her range of choices may have been at least temporarily diminished because of the circumstances she finds herself in through no fault of her own) but as someone who is going to use any available means she chooses in order to survive this encounter (or not, as she, once again, chooses). For some women this choosing to be a survivor may then lead to them submitting to the rapist's physical demands, allowing him to have her body while her soul remains her own. (This is one of the points I think Bertolt Brecht was making in his fable about a man who lives alone who one day hears a knock on his door. When he answers, he sees outside The Tyrant, who asks, "Will you submit?" The man says nothing. He steps aside. The Tyrant enters his home. The man serves him for years, until The Tyrant becomes sick from food poisoning, and dies. The man wraps the body, takes it outside, returns to his home, closes the door behind him, and firmly answers, "No.") For other women this may mean fighting to the death, preferably his. Still others—many others—do not consciously make the choice to move from victim to survivor in that moment of violation—they are too busy simply surviving to think about labeling themselves as survivors—but make that choice over time, in the months, years, and decades that follow, as they metabolize what was done to them, and their responses. And of course yet others choose different approaches: there are as many approaches to this question of changing from identifying oneself as a victim to identifying oneself as a survivor as there are potential victims, potential survivors.

The next step that at least some women pursue in this process of changing their circumstances is to attempt to get the man to no longer identify himself as a rapist, but as something else; one hopes not a murderer. An example may clarify. One morning in the mid-1970s, my sister was reading in bed when suddenly she felt a man's weight on her back and a knife at her throat. The man said he was going to rape her. She said, "You can do that if you'd like, but I have to tell you that my husband and I are being treated for syphilis. I don't know if you want to risk catching it." Our mother had always told her to keep a prescription bottle by her bedside, for exactly this contingency. (And what does it say about our culture that mothers need to prepare their daughters for this possibility, or really, given the rates of rape in our culture, this inevitability?) Fortunately, the man did not look closely at the bottle, or he would have learned that the original prescription was several years old, for medicines designed to alleviate my sister's migraines, and that the bottle was now full of aspirin. He told her that it wasn't worth the risk, and that instead he wanted all of her money. She had twenty dollars in her purse, and she gave him five. (If there's one thing I can say about my sister, it's that she has ovaries, or whatever the female equivalent of balls would be.) He left. The point is that my sister had caused the man to no longer identify himself as a rapist, but as a robber, and to act on that identification. She effectively killed the rapist. Sometimes, when men strongly identify as rapists, it is not possible to kill the rapist without killing the man. So be it.



# FIGHT BACK

*Feminist Resistance to Male Violence*



Eyes

Without our eyes we are fairly helpless. Damage to an attacker's eyes, causing temporary or even permanent loss of vision, will allow you to escape.

The eyes are the most vulnerable points in the body. The best way to attack the eyes are with the fingers or thumbs. Stiffen your fingers, part them slightly, and drive them THROUGH your attacker's eyes. Drive your finger THROUGH HIS HEAD . . . Never believe a promise that you will not be harmed if you cooperate. Once gaining control over your life for even a few minutes, your attacker may decide to exterminate you. He is not considering you as a human being with a right to exist—don't consider him one. DESTROY HIM before he destroys you.

Never feel sorry for someone who attacks you or feel you asked for it. Anyone who dares to threaten your safety and well being **DESERVES TO DIE.**



## Women and Violence

MELANIE KAYE

**men don't take us seriously because they're not physically afraid of us.**

*Ellen Willis, 1968*

the upstairs neighbor. if i keep typing, i can't hear his sneering voice, i can check the anxiety rising: will i have to deal with him again—or swallow myself, absorb his blaring stereo, his endlessly stupid thrumming the same out-of-whack chords on the electric guitar. practicing, no doubt, to be the next dylan (dylan, who beat his wife).

last time i asked him to turn down the volume, he snarled, "why don't you & your friend move out?" "why don't you shut your mouth," i shout back, and he screams, "why don't you make me? you're supposed to be the man in this relationship." later i hear him bellowing from upstairs, "i'll fuck her ass."

in the morning my car's windshield is goeey with spit; pinned to my door is a picture of fancy condoms; a poster with my name on it, taped up in the hall, is crumpled, destroyed.

i got off easy.

(from my journal, october 30)

i was just doing dishes, afraid i'd miss some informative sound. had to keep turning off the water to listen. the man upstairs hates me because i'm queer, is threatening me.

so i do dishes, checking for sounds. at the same time, the familiar ordering act, washing dishes. hands in hot water. calms me. is

this why we clean so furiously—to have one place where we are in control? i do dishes, rocking between contradictory voices:

- you exaggerate the danger, he's a cowardly wimp
- you underestimate the danger, you got him mad, you don't know what you're playing with

3 weeks ago i shouted "shut your fucking mouth" to a drunk man cursing me, my mother—there were 5 of us—and suddenly a second man materializes beside the car, he smashes the car window, grabbing my hair as i drive away.

to be prepared—in any instance of confronting a man—for violence. to be prepared to defend myself—or to keep my mouth shut: adjust to his noise, stomach his insults, accept his power.

these are our choices.

last night i dreamed i was walking to get the car, up stark to 20th, but the street was not a street, stark was a wind-tunnel, with machines for food, half-open doors printing shadows along the walls. i am trying to run against the wind, and think, suddenly: this is dangerous

*my body is the criminal  
the fault my body's spirit*

i offer these words to explain the danger, though i don't believe them. but the danger persists, as if they were true.



**Back** — Use elbow to ribs, solar plexus or groin.  
Use fist to strike or hands to grab groin.  
Stomp on instep, scrape shins.  
Twist out at first opportunity.

**Rear attacks** — Try to determine the motive of the attacker.

If it is rape, he may have to change positions, giving you a better chance to escape.

**Grabs** — If a person grabs your wrist, **YOU STILL HAVE THE REST OF YOU FREE.** Do not waste time trying to break loose unless a quick twist against his thumb works to release you. Kick to the knee and use strikes as described above.

Whatever strikes you use, repeat them as necessary. Remember too that men often do not show

pain quickly. You may be having more of an effect than you think.

### ON WEAPONS

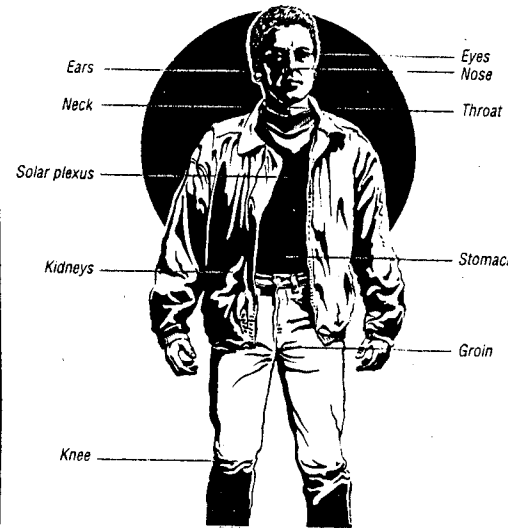
The best weapon you've got is one which doesn't look like a weapon. Whatever weapon you use, you run the risk of the attacker getting it away from you and using it against you. Have weapons available and know what to do with them.

Try not to call attention to your weapons so he doesn't suspect your intentions. A *rolled up magazine* or corner of a book look innocent, for example, but can deliver an effective blow against the throat, temple or face. *Boiling water* can deter an assailant yet be in the form of coffee-fixings. *House keys* held between the fingers of a fist can be used to strike the face or throat.

Practice looking for weapons around you. This week, make some changes in your environment or behavior that contribute to your safety. Put in that lock; replace that lightbulb in the hall; label your keys.

### Vulnerable part of the body

The body has many vulnerable areas which can make suitable targets in your defence. The diagram shows the main points where your strikes should be directed.



Grip the appliance end and swing the plug at your assailant; it is extremely effective against the head. The same principle can be used in the office, i.e. computer and printer leads.



### Keys

Most people carry a bunch of keys. Use them by laying the key-fob in the palm of your hand with the keys protruding between your fingers. This forms a very effective knuckle-duster. Direct your blows against the vital pressure points of the head and neck.



### Pen

Most types of pen have a pointed tip, which means that they will penetrate the skin if used in a punching manner. Hold the pen as if it were a knife and use it against any exposed part of the assailant's body, such as the neck, wrists and temple. The harder you punch with the pen the better the results.

### Scissors and screwdrivers

Such items are to be found in most homes. It is even legal to carry scissors in your handbag, and a screwdriver is a common item in any car. They are best used for jabbing and stabbing. Hold and use them as you would a knife.

### Bottles

For an emergency, most designs could have been made for fighting. Do not try to smash the end of the bottle off, as this normally results in the bottle disintegrating altogether. Use it as you would a club and strike for the head and temples. The body joints, such as the elbow and kneecap, are particularly good targets to hit with any bottle.



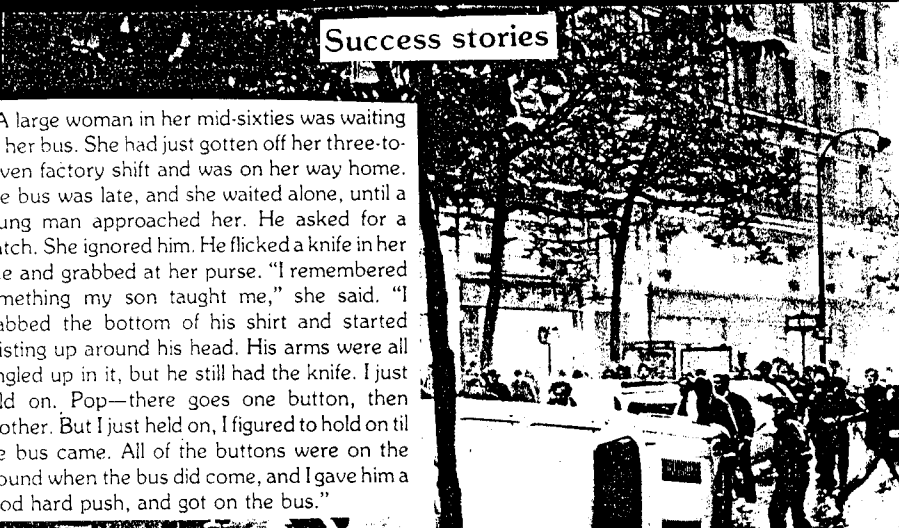
### Broom

Attacks in the house can be fended off by using any type of broom. A large, wooden-headed one can be used much like a mallet, and the bristles can be driven into the assailant's face. The broom can also be reversed, so that the handle can be used for jabbing into the solar plexus.

### Success stories

A large woman in her mid-sixties was waiting for her bus. She had just gotten off her three-to-eleven factory shift and was on her way home. The bus was late, and she waited alone, until a young man approached her. He asked for a match. She ignored him. He flicked a knife in her face and grabbed at her purse. "I remembered something my son taught me," she said. "I grabbed the bottom of his shirt and started twisting up around his head. His arms were all tangled up in it, but he still had the knife. I just held on. Pop—there goes one button, then another. But I just held on, I figured to hold on til the bus came. All of the buttons were on the ground when the bus did come, and I gave him a good hard push, and got on the bus."

A petite woman was walking home when she was suddenly surrounded by five young men who demanded her money. She said, "I picked out the one that looked like the leader, looked him in the eye and said, 'You get out of my way or I'm going to spill your insides all over this street and use the rest of you to mop him up!'" All five backed off without a word, and left her street.



## Dealing with aggressive drunks

Drunks can also be a nuisance at parties and discos, and for some reason they like to hang around your neck. They can usually be disposed of by the following steps.

With the drunk's arm around your neck, place your near-side leg behind the drunk and between his legs.



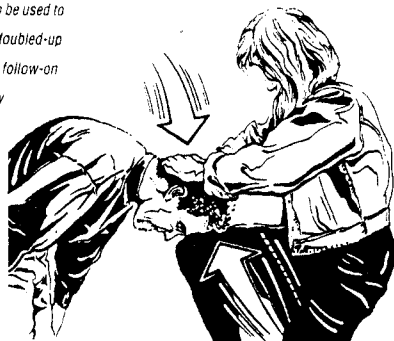
1



2

• Place your elbow onto his chest and push backwards (pic. 2).

The knee can also be used to good effect on a doubled-up attacker, e.g. as a follow-on strike from a blow to his stomach or groin.



3



• Twist your body around as he falls over backwards and either walk away or if necessary kick him in the testicles.



ample), take precautions before entering blindly.

13. Know where there are objects in your house which could be used as weapons. Keep a special one by your bed.

### Transportation

1. Do not enter or stay in an empty subway car if you can avoid it.
2. If you have a car, always check the back seat getting in. Have your keys ready as you approach it. In many places it is a good idea to keep doors locked and windows up (or quickly closed) while driving. Attackers may jump in at red lights.
3. If you are driving alone and another car signals for help, go to the nearest phone and get help for them rather than stopping. If someone signals that something is wrong with your car, try to get to a safe spot before checking it out. Be aware and follow your intuition basically.
4. If you are being hassled on public transportation and others are around, SPEAK UP. Men who paw women on buses and subways seek the safety of the crowd; bringing attention to them is usually devastating to them.

### The Phone

1. Have the number of police and fire departments readily available.
2. Do not give out your number indiscriminately. When in doubt, get the number of the other person and call them instead.
3. If you get an obscene phone call, hang up immediately or blow into the receiver with a police whistle.
4. Never give out personal information about yourself or others to a stranger on the telephone. You needn't answer anyone, and this includes the F.B.I. This is not always as easy as it sounds. For example, if someone calls and immediately asks, "who's this" or "Is this 482-8876?" if you are not aware, you will give them information before you know it. If someone you don't know calls for someone else you live with, do not give them all kinds of information about where the person is.

Get a number where they can be reached and then call your friend.

### Some Basic Weapons and Targets

Weapon	Target
1. Your voice is one of your most important weapons. YELL!	
2. Knees	Genitals, ribs, kidneys
3. Elbows	Nose, chin, jaw; ribs, solar plexus
4. Head (to butt)	Face of someone grabbing from behind
5. Teeth for biting	
6. Feet/legs —Instep —Ball of foot —Heel	Testicles Knee, shin Instep, shin, or knee of someone attacking from behind
7. Fingers —to jab —to scratch	Throat, eyes Face
8. Base of palm	Chin, nose, temple
9. Fist (learn a proper fist and punch)	Solar plexus, temple, bridge of nose, ribs

MAJOR TARGETS: EYES, THROAT, GROIN, KNEES

### Common attacks

**Choke** — *Back or front* — take a deep breath and tuck your chin to protect your windpipe.

*Front* — His hands are occupied. Your arms, legs, and feet are free. Use fingers to eyes or hollow of throat. Use knees to groin or solar plexus. Use feet against shins, knees or instep. Grab testicles and pull. Use hands against eardrums or to scratch face.

edges of books. Have them in your hand—not at the bottom of a pocket or bag. Be aware also of possible weapons on the street.

3. If you carry a purse, keep it tucked under your arm. Never count money out on the street.
4. Map out a route you often walk. Know where telephones are as well as places to run to, stores open late, neighbors likely to help. Know also the danger spots so you are following a conscious route. Have safe spots always in mind—don't wait for the time when you are in trouble to think of them.
5. If you think you are being followed, try to find out first. Look behind you. Use shadows or store windows as mirrors. Change your pace or cross the street to see if they follow. However, do not walk around looking obviously fearful; this will mark you for a victim.

Once you are reasonably sure you are being followed, there are several things you can do. Walk near the curb and if practical, into traffic to attract attention. Go to the nearest "safe spot," but do *not* go home. You do not want the attacker to follow you into your house or know where you live. If you run, YELL as you run and run to a destination. You may decide to confront them. If an attack is imminent, this is a good move. You will be facing them instead of giving them your back. An assertive response may discourage them.

If you are followed by a car, walk in the opposite direction. It will take the car longer to turn.

6. Walk near the curb away from buildings and alleys. Be aware however of not walking too close to parked cars. Be aware of cars passing repeatedly; start looking for an alternative route or safe spot.
7. Beware of conversations on the street. If you don't wish to have a conversation with someone who initiates one, tell him politely but firmly that you do not wish to talk to him. Beware of answering back to each of his questions or statements lest you get "stuck" in a conversation with him. This is a common ploy. Do and say only what you wish. If your intuition tells you something is wrong trust it. Practice this scene if you have trouble with it.

## Home

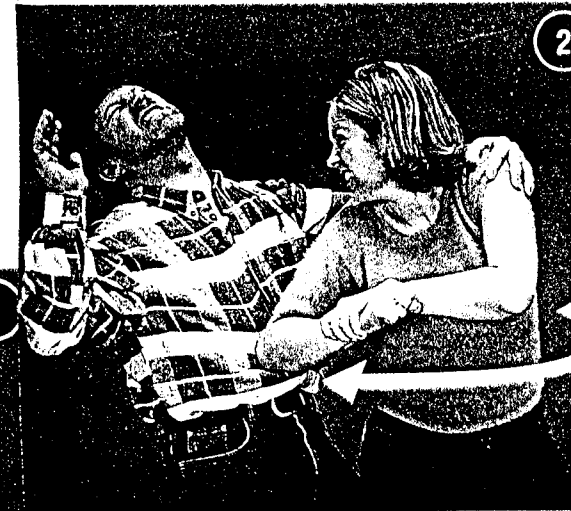
1. It is important to be able to get into your house quickly since many attacks take place at the door. Always have your key ready. Mark your key with a notch or colored plastic cover so you can find it quickly. If someone is behind you, do not go home unless no other option is available.
2. If someone accosts you in your home or in the lobby or hallway of a building, yell FIRE rather than Help! to attract aid.
3. Be aware of places that attackers could hide in and around your building. Make sure there is adequate lighting at the entrance.
4. If you surprise an intruder in your home, do not corner him. Make sure he knows the door is free.
5. Have one or two good locks for each door. Spring locks are usually not adequate. Make sure the door itself is secure. Vulnerable windows should also have locks. It is also a good idea to hang wind chimes or a similar object in front of windows and/or door to alert you if someone is coming in.
6. Do not keep your keys with any identification. If they are lost or stolen and there is identification with them, have your locks changed at once.
7. NEVER open the door without knowing who is there. Do not be embarrassed to ask questions, check ID carefully or call a company to verify an unexpected package or person checking your meter.
8. Do not give out your address to strangers or unconsciously put your full name with your address in ads, notices, etc.
9. Do not leave keys in obvious places—like under a door mat. Intruders have thought of these too.
10. Do not leave clues in the form of notes as to whether you are out, when you'll be coming home, if you'll be alone.
11. Do not let a stranger in behind you as you enter a building. It is difficult to refuse him admittance but make it a policy. If he has legitimate business there, he will get in without your help.
12. If something seems wrong when you go home (a door is not double-locked for ex-

- With your hands linked, swing your elbows out (pic.1).

- Using a rocking, twisting-type movement, swing from the hips, driving your elbow into your attacker's stomach (pic.2).

- Follow through with a back head-butt or back instep foot stamp.

- Once free—kick, break and run.



# FIGHT BACK

## Attacks From the Front

Most attacks normally start as an attack from the front. If you are quick and recognise that you are about to be attacked, take the following actions.

- Go into your "guard" stance (see p. 40).
- Block any strike with one and arm chin jab with your other hand (pic 1).

- Continue through the motion, push back your head to unbalance him.



- Make sure you are well balanced before bringing up your knee into his groin (pic 2).

- Try to avoid the attacker holding on by any part of your clothing.

- Once free—kick, break and run.

## Forced Against a Wall

In some cases, your attacker may block you against a wall and wait a few seconds before having a go at you. Should your attacker at any time present himself side-on to you, or you can manoeuvre yourself into this position, take the following action.

• Grab the crown of his hair and pull his head sharply back.

• This will not only unbalance your attacker, but will expose his throat.

• Bring your fist down onto his windpipe with one hard blow.

• If you continue to pull backwards, your attacker should drop to the ground.

• If your attacker has no hair to grip, use your hand like a claw and grab at his nose and eyes, forcing his head backwards.

• Once free – kick, break and run.



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There is an old saying in the SAS: 'Take hold of a man's hair and the body will follow.' The secret is maintaining your grip from the rear; never let your opponent twist around to face you.

## How Men Can Help

Men must realise that many women become nervous when they are alone, especially in a strange environment.

• Try not to walk too close behind a woman on a dark night or in an isolated spot.

• Don't sit too close on public transport late at night.

• If you see a woman in trouble, go to her aid, or get help.

• Talk to the women in your life about self-protection. Share knowledge you may have. Encourage, support, and, most of all, listen.



ENOUGH  
ALREADY

Sooner or later the uniformly moving body will collide with the wall of the elevator destroying the uniform motion. Sooner or later, the whole elevator will collide with the earth destroying the observers and their experiments.

ALBERT EINSTEIN and LEOPOLD INFELD,  
*The Evolution of Physics*

Gravity

# Some Facts on Self-Defense

NADIA TELSEY

## COMMON PLOYS

Attacks commonly begin with requests for directions or the time. The assailant uses this time to find out what kind of victim you would make. It is important that you be assertive; you do not need to be unfriendly but should be on guard. A strong response at this point will stop an attack before it gets going.

### Guilt

The game here is to try to enlist your sympathy or help with some matter or to make you feel guilty for being assertive. Be ready for this ploy. It is one of the most common and is very effective in getting women to open their doors, stop their cars, or otherwise get into trouble. If you are uncertain about whether a person really is in need of help, think of an alternative way to help without putting yourself in jeopardy.

### Flattery

This takes many forms as well. We are not only flattered about our looks but about our brains or talents as well. Be careful of people who come to the door with unexpected flowers or packages for you. Not only is this flattering, but it arouses our curiosity too. Also, beware of phone calls that start, "You have been chosen..." This is a common beginning for an obscene phone call.

## INTIMIDATION

Some forms, like weapons, are obvious. Other forms involve sternness or a tone of

authority on the part of an attacker. A man may try to enter your house, claiming he is from the phone company or with some other legitimate business and reacting gruffly and impatiently if you refuse to let him in or take the time to check it out. This tone is enough to make some people give up their caution. Don't be intimidated. Relatives, professionals, men in uniforms will try to use their positions of authority to intimidate you. Act on your own perceptions and judgment.

\*Children like to role play in these situations. Intimidation is an especially good one for them to work on.

## REACTIONS TO ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOR

Whenever we resist a ploy or confront someone about their behavior, we are likely to get a negative reaction. We might be called crazy, paranoid, or a "lezzie" in an effort to confuse or punish us. Expect the response. It will then have no effect.

## PRECAUTIONS

### On the Street

1. Do not overload yourself with packages, purse, books. If you are carrying packages and are attacked, drop them or throw them at your attacker. They are not more valuable than you are. Emptying the contents of a purse or bag suddenly can distract an attacker and give you time to run.
2. Get acquainted with items you carry that could be used as weapons—e.g. keys held between the fingers, a lighted cigarette.