Recipes For Disaster

An Anarchist Cookbook

CrimethInc.

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Disaster? Yes, disaster.

When you think of disasters, perhaps some secret part of you thrills at the idea of *something happening*, something interrupting the tedious routines that comprise existence for so many of us. You might not be ready to own up to actually desiring one, but a disaster would at least offer a chance to escape your cage and explore the unknown for a little while. What anguish, to live in longing for a reprieve from your own life, never knowing when or if it might come!

Or perhaps you cringe at the word, thinking of all the senseless tragedy and loss of life that real disasters entail. In that case, it may have already occurred to you that we are in the midst of the most terrible slow-motion disaster in history, as the natural environment is utterly laid to waste and the diversity of human experience is steamrolled into the monoculture of capitalism. In such a disaster, you can't cook out of the books your ancestors developed for more peaceful times.

Whether disaster is something you privately pine for or desperately hope to escape, one thing is for certain — the old recipes won't suffice anymore. We need recipes for disaster. Here they are.

Disclaimer for Our Enemies

Authorities take note: No members of the Crimethlnc. ex- Workers' Collective endorse or engage in any of the dumb and dangerous activities described herein. As middle-class beneficiaries of capitalist iniquity, we have no incentive to contest the structures that guarantee our special privileges, nor do we ever do so — just ask our colleagues.

The "we" utilized in these pages is the anarchist we: it refers to all those whose actions proceed from the social continuum of anti-authoritarian resistance, and does not necessarily denote any of the editors of, contributors to, or hangers-on associated with this work. We're so busy cashing in on others' insurgency that we wouldn't have time to participate even if we wanted to — honest, officer!

Your potential inconvenience, the Crimethlnc. Action Faction

Disclaimer for Our Friends

<quote> "Plans are worthless, but planning is everything — keep yourself steeped in the character of the problem you are called on to solve."

-President Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1957 </quote>

These are indeed recipes for disaster. Anyone with the slightest experience in the field knows that nothing ever goes as planned, especially not the first time. Inevitably, at that tense, trembling moment you call in the bomb threat, the receptionist will hang up on you before your recording device plays it — and you'll realize you only brought one dean quarter.

This book can serve as a source of information, but it is meant at least as much as a source of inspiration — it is an attempt to broaden the public toolbox, to encourage others to try out ideas of their own. It is indeed important that beginners around the world be armed with specific skills that are ubiquitous in some contexts but have never been applied in others, but the process of

discovery and experimentation is always more valuable than the products thereof. Don't abide by any formula in here — improvise, improvise.

Many of the recipes we composed for this volume were test-driven in small towns. We selected such locations for our rigorous process of experimentation and analysis on the grounds that they were utterly unremarkable. Perhaps the importance of San Francisco and Barcelona in the struggle for freedom and adventure for all has been overestimated; not everyone can or should live in such places, and besides, many revolutionary strategies which are now impossible in these cities are still tremendously dangerous everywhere else. Why risk arrest in the financial district to put up graffiti that will only remain for a few hours, when there are a thousand unguarded stop signs in the suburbs waiting to sing your song? Quite a few of these recipes are designed especially for the Middles-of-Nowhere of our world, the nondescript margins of history where Nothing Ever Happens. As they say, the quickest way to the top is to turn the world upside down. Revolution is, among other things, a reversal: the first becomes the last, the margin becomes the mainstream, the nameless convict becomes Nestor Makhno, commander of the anarchist armies of the Ukraine. The anonymous, inexperienced teenagers who get their hands on this book in Missoula, Montana could be the ones to make hip New York, and this book itself, totally obsolete. If you're one of them — wherever you live, however old you are — for everyone's sake, don't underestimate your own strength.

One more subject bears comment — the countless recipes left out of this book, especially the ones you think we should have included. Those, my friend, are the first recipes in your book, which you had better start writing as soon as possible.

Yours for total destruction and recreation, and wishing you many a sweet repast,

Crimethlnc, International Federation of Food Service Industry Escapees

Preface: Direct Action — What It Is...

This is a handbook for direct action. It's not the only on — there are thousands: every gardener's guide is a direct action handbook, as is every cookbook. Any action that side- steps regulations, representatives, and authorities to accomplish goals directly is direct action. In a society in which political power, economic capital, and social control are centralized in the hands of an elite, certain forms of direct action are discouraged, to say the least; this book is about those in particular, for anyone who wants to take control of her life and accept responsibility for her part in determining the fate of humanity.

For the civilian born in captivity and raised on spectatorship and submission, direct action changes everything. The morning she arises to put a plan into motion, she awakens under a different sun-if she has been able to sleep at all, that is — and in a different body, attuned to every detail of the world around her and possessed of the power to change it. She finds her companions endowed with tremendous courage and resourcefulness, equal to monumental challenges and worthy of passionate love. Together, they enter a foreign land where outcomes are uncertain but anything is possible and every minute counts.

Direct Action versus Representation

Practicing direct action means acting directly to meet needs, rather than relying on representatives or choosing from prescribed options. Today the term is commonly applied to the use of illegal protest tactics to pressure governments and corporations to make certain decisions, which at bottom is not much different from voting or making campaign contributions; but it most properly describes actions that cut out the middleman entirely to solve problems without mediation.

Need some examples? You can give money to a charity organization, or you can start your own chapter of Food Not Bombs and feed yourself and other hungry people at once. You can write an angry letter to the editor of a magazine that doesn't provide good coverage of the subjects you consider important, or you can start your own magazine.

You can vote for a mayor who promises to start a new program to help the homeless, or you can squat unused buildings and open them up as free housing for anyone in need. You can write your Congressman, asking him to oppose a law that would allow corporations to cut down old-growth forests — but if they still pass that law, you can go to the forests and stop the cutting by sitting in trees, blockading roads, and monkey- wrenching machinery.

The opposite of direct action is representation. There are many kinds of representation — words are used to represent ideas and experiences, the viewers of a soap opera let their own hopes and fears be represented by those of the protagonists, the pope claims to represent God — but the most well-known example today can be found in the electoral system. In this society, we're encouraged to think of voting as our primary means of exercising power and participating socially. Yet whether one votes with a ballot for a politician's representation, with dollars for

a corporate product, or with one's wardrobe for a youth culture, voting is an act of deferral, in which the voter picks a person or system or concept to represent her interests. This is an unreliable way to exercise power, to say the least.

Let's compare voting with direct action, to bring out the differences between mediated and unmediated activity in general. Voting is a lottery: if a candidate doesn't get elected, then the energy his constituency put into supporting him is wasted, as the power they were hoping he would exercise for them goes to someone else. With direct action, one can be certain that one's work will offer results. In marked contrast to every kind of petitioning, direct action secures resources -experience, contacts in the community, the grudging respect of adversaries — that others can never take away.

Voting consolidates the power of a whole society in the hands of a few individuals; through sheer force of habit, not to speak of other methods of enforcement, everyone else is kept in a position of dependence. In direct action, people utilize their own resources and capabilities, discovering in the process what these are and how much they can accomplish.

Voting forces everyone in a movement to try to agree on one platform: coalitions fight over what compromises to make, each faction insisting that its way is the best and that the others are messing everything up by not going along with its program. A lot of energy gets wasted in these disputes and recriminations. In direct action, no vast consensus is necessary: different groups apply different tactics according to what they believe in and feel comfortable doing, with an eye to complementing one another's efforts. People involved in different direct actions have no need to squabble, unless they really are seeking conflicting goals, or years of voting have taught them to fight with anyone who doesn't think exactly as they do.

Conflicts over voting often distract from the real issues at hand, as people get caught up in the drama of one party against another, one candidate against another, one agenda against another. With direct action, the issues themselves are raised, addressed specifically, and often resolved.

Voting is only possible when election time comes around. Direct action can be applied whenever one sees fit. Voting is only useful for addressing topics that are currently on the political agendas of candidates, while direct action can be applied in every aspect of your life, in every part of the world you live in. Direct action is a more efficient use of resources than voting, campaigning, or canvassing: an individual can accomplish with one dollar a goal that would cost a collective ten dollars, a non-governmental organization a hundred dollars, a corporation a thousand dollars, and the State Department ten thousand dollars.

Voting is glorified as a manifestation of our supposed freedom. It's not freedom — freedom is getting to decide what the choices are in the first place, not picking between Pepsi and Coca-Cola. Direct action is the real thing. You make the plan, you create the options, the sky's the limit.

Ultimately, there's no reason the strategies of voting and direct action can't both be applied together. One does not cancel the other out. The problem is that so many people think of voting as their primary way of exerting political and social power that a disproportionate amount of time and energy is focused on electoral affairs while other opportunities to make change go to waste. For months and months preceding every election, everyone argues about the voting issue, what candidates to vote for or whether to vote at all, when voting itself takes less than an hour. Vote or don't, but get on with it! Remember all the other ways you can make your voice heard. This book is for people who are ready to get some more practice using them.

Direct action need not be popular to be effective. The point of a direct action is the action itself, not pandering to supposed public opinion or anticipated media coverage. Those raised in

Democracy Monoculture on the assumption that voting is the alpha and omega of social participation often presume that the only possible purpose of any political activity is to convert others to a position in order to build a constituency; consequently, they fail to recognize the broad diversity of roles direct action can serve. These are the people who are always quick to pontificate about how graffiti hurts the public image of "the" movement, or how individual artistic projects are irrelevant to the needs of "the" people. But helping "convert the masses" is only one of many roles a direct action can play. Let's go over some of the others.

Direct action may simply solve an individual problem: a household needs to eat, so food is grown, dumpstered, or stolen; an advertisement is offensive, so it is torn down or adjusted; a circle of friends wants to learn more about Latin American literature, so a reading group is established. Direct action can be a means for a small group to contribute to a community: people need to know that a rapist has been active in the neighborhood, so fliers are made and posted; police are out of hand, so a cop- watching program is initiated. Direct action can be an opportunity for small groups to get used to working together in larger networks: the slumlord won't fix anyone's apartment, so a tenants' union forms to organize a rent strike.

Direct action can be applied to sway the opinion of a whole nation, but it can also be addressed to a small, specific group that can more easily be influenced: street graffiti may not be taken seriously by middle-class adults, but some of their children experience it as a revelation. Direct action can be for the benefit of isolated individuals, rather than "the" mainstream: a wheatpasted poster reading Pm Concrete Doesn't Burn may not be widely appreciated, but it will help others who share this sentiment to feel that they are not entirely alone and insane, and it might inspire them to turn their silent rancor into expressive projects of their own.

Direct action can give visibility to a group or perspective not otherwise represented, or emphasize the possibility of a viewpoint those in power would deny: a newspaper wrap spreads the news the corporate media won't share, just as broken corporate windows prove that, whatever the pundits say, not everyone is happy under capitalism. Direct action can demonstrate that social facts and physical conditions that seem inevitable are actually subject to change: an unpermitted street party that transforms a shopping district into a free, festive space shows that the function of any space is up for grabs. Direct action can make life less predictable, more magical and exciting or at least humorous, for chance spectators as well as participants. When business as usual is oppressive and depressing, simply interrupting it is a service to all.

Popular or not, direct action can keep important issues in the news and in private conversations: sabotaging an environmentally destructive dam can bring up its ecological effects, whether or not people approve of the sabotage itself. Direct action can give a group political and social leverage: in the 1980s, Dutch squatters facing threat of eviction demonstrated their power with a directed campaign of harassment and vandalism that lost Amsterdam its bid to host the Olympic Games, and thus gained an advantage for bargaining with the city for their homes. Direct action can provide a deterrent: after the demonstrations during the meeting of the World Trade Organization in Seattle, no nation but Qatar would host the next WTO summit. People who would not otherwise oppose their government's going to war may do so if they how war will trigger massive demonstrations that will cripple business and interfere with daily life.

Direct action can hinder corporate wrongdoing by inflicting financial losses: animal rights activists have driven several fur corporations out of business by means of vandalism, obstruction, and picketing. Direct action can discredit or disable nefarious organizations by connecting them in the public mind to violence and trouble: if every time a racist party tries to hold a meeting it

ends in street riots, no city is likely to permit them to meet openly and few converts will join their ranks. Direct action can polarize opponents: when one cannot persuade or at least coexist with adversaries, a campaign of provocation and interference can drive them to a paranoid extremism that will alienate them from everyone else.

Direct action can set an atmosphere for an event: if banners have been dropping and pirate radio stations broadcasting all week, everyone will expect the weekend's corporate trade conference and anarchist counter-demonstration to be historic — and that expectation will help itself come true. Direct action can demonstrate tactics that others can appropriate and use themselves; for years, these tactics may only be relevant to a small minority, until in a time of crisis they are suddenly indispensable to everyone. When the crisis hits, it will be to the advantage of all that some have already been practicing and perfecting these skills, and that everyone else has at least heard of them.

Direct action can save lives and give those who engage in it back their dignity by enabling them to confront injustice directly, as in animal liberation raids. It can be the best form of therapy, helping those who a d to cure feelings of boredom, hopelessness, and impotence. When one is doing nothing, everything seems impossible; once one has begun doing something, it is easier to imagine what else is possible and recognize opportunities as they arise.

Direct action offers the chance to cash in one's convictions and desires as the life experiences they rightfully should be. Don't just think about it, don't just talk about it, for heaven's sake don't just bicker about it — do it! Direct action is a means for getting in the healthy habit of acting rather than looking on: every impulse that is allowed to flow into action is a spell cast for more of the same. In this passive, paralyzed society, we desperately need to nourish in ourselves the habits of engagement and participation. As they say, direct action gets the goods.

Mutual Aid and Outreach

Anyone with direct action skills stands to gain from sharing them with others. This is the opposite of "converting" people: it means empowering people to be themselves, not attempting to turn them into copies of oneself. The more capable each individual and group is, the more all can offer each other, and the more all are able to enforce their equality. The dissemination of direct action skills fosters relationships of coexistence and mutual aid, as well as undermining hierarchy and oppression: when people are similarly informed, equipped, and versed in taking initiative, they have more at stake in learning to get along, and freedom and equality necessarily proceed.

Accordingly, anarchists and other partisans of direct action do not give orders or offer leadership: direct action is an adjective followed by a noun, not a verb followed by an object! Instead, they demonstrate options by acting autonomously, being careful to extend to others whatever knowledge and resources experience provides — this book being a case in point.

Many who set out to educate others about injustice make the mistake of providing them with a great deal of data without offering any ideas about what to do. Overwhelmed with facts, figures, and bad news, most people find it harder to take action, not easier; thus, such attempts to raise awareness for the sake of provoking change often sabotage themselves. When informing people, it is wise to apply this rule of thumb: for every issue you introduce, spend as much time and energy presenting skills, suggestions, and opportunities for action as you do presenting

information and background. A similar rule of thumb is that the more comparable a person's circumstances are to yours, the more he or she might gain from hearing your suggestions and perspectives; the more your life stories diverge, the more you will benefit from listening and learning, rather than prescribing outside the context you know.

It also happens that some who practice direct action, eager to be out from under the yoke of their oppressors, escalate their engagement with these powers to such an extent that no one else can join in. This is often to their misfortune. When considering a tactic, it's important to ask to what degree it enables others to act as well, rather than leaving them immobilized as spectators. For example, the black bloc at the protests against the World Trade Organization in Seattle in 1999 presented a model that others subsequently employed countless times to great effect, while the tactics of the Weather Underground in the 1970s achieved some impressive feats but failed to result in many people becoming similarly active. In the long run, the most powerful tactics are the ones that inspire and equip others to join the fight. It is important to pace the escalation of a struggle so that new people get involved at a faster rate than participants are immobilized by repression: this is how the momentum that generates revolutions is created. Your enemies on high want nothing more than to isolate you from everyone else who is angry for the same reasons. Make a point of staying accessible and connected to others, so they can come with you if they like when you set out on your journey to a new world.

Communities that practice direct action are often plagued by conflicts over which tactics are most effective and appropriate. Such debates are usually impossible to resolve-and that's a good thing. Instead, to the extent it is possible, the activities of those employing different methods and even those pursuing differing goals should be integrated into a mutually beneficial whole.

Accepting a diversity of tactics provides for the broad diversity of real human beings. Every individual has a different life history, and consequently finds different activities meaningful and liberating. Insisting that everyone should adopt the same approach is arrogant and shortsighted — it presumes that you are entitled to make judgments on others' behalf — and also unrealistic: any strategy that demands that everyone think and act the same way is doomed to failure, for human beings are not that simple or submissive. Critics often charge that the tactics they oppose will alienate potential participants, but the more diverse the tactics employed by a movement, the wider the range of people who can recognize among those tactics approaches that appeal to them. It may be necessary for factions applying different tactics to distance themselves from one another in the public eye, but this need not be done in an antagonistic spirit.

A movement that employs a diversity of tactics is able to adapt to changing contexts. Such a movement is a laboratory in which various methods can be tested; the ones that work will be easy to identify, and will naturally become popular. As we haven't yet succeeded in overthrowing capitalism once and for all by any method, all methods are still worth trying, in case one works. In this sense, those who employ tactics other than the ones you favor are doing you a service by saving you the trouble of having to test them for yourself.

Different tactics, applied in conjunction, can complement one another. Just as the more confrontational politics of Malcolm X forced privileged whites to take the non- violent civil disobedience of Martin Luther King, Jr. seriously, a combination of tactics from accessible and participatory to militant and controversial can simultaneously attract attention to a struggle, offer opportunities for people to get involved at their own pace, and provide those who engage in it with leverage on a variety of levels.

Honoring a diversity of tactics means refraining from attacking those whose chosen approaches seem to you to be ineffective, and instead focusing on what missing elements you can add to make their efforts effective. Thus, it re-frames the question of strategy in terms of personal responsibility: at every juncture, the question is not what somebody else should be doing, but what you can do.

The importance of a diversity of tactics doesn't apply only when it is convenient for you. Don't claim to support a diversity of tactics and then argue that — just in this particular case, of course — others should prioritize your agenda over their own. Recognizing the value of diversity of tactics means taking into account that others will make different decisions based on their differing perspectives, and respecting this even when their decisions baffle you.

Accepting the legitimacy of a diversity of tactics means moving from a competitive mindset in which there is only one right way of doing things to a more inclusive and nuanced way of thinking. This contests hierarchies of value as well as of power, and undermines rigid abstractions such as "violence" and "morality."

Finally, respect for diverse tactics enables disparate groups to build durable solidarity Such solidarity must be founded on a commitment to coexisting and collaborating in harmony rather than on limiting demands for unity.

Just as some shortsightedly reject tactics other than their own as ineffective, others feel the need to compete to determine whose tactics are the most committed or the most impressive. But the most dramatic triumphs of militant direct action are only possible thanks to the support of people applying more conventional approaches, and vice versa. It is important that we not see tactics as existing in a hierarchy of value, from risk-free and insignificant to dangerous and glorious, but rather in an ecosystem in which all play an irreplaceable role. As revolutionaries, our role in such an ecosystem is to create a mutually-enhancing harmony between our efforts and those of others, even if some of them want to waste time competing with us for the currency of "being right" or "being bravest." No tactic can be effective alone; all can be effective together.

Legal and Illegal

Sometimes direct action means breaking the law. Indeed, direct action is a way of re-negotiating laws, both written and unwritten* When people act according to conscience rather than convention, when they transgress deliberately and en masse, reality itself can be remade. This is not to say that you can get away with breaking laws just by ceasing to believe in them; but if everyone breaks them with you, the dynamics change.

The agents of law enforcement are at the mercy of many factors at once. Their job, of course, is to enforce the laws on the books, protecting power and property and keeping human and financial resources flowing to the judicial industry and the prison-industrial complex. At the same time, to some extent, they are at the mercy of public opinion: the public, or at least the privileged sectors thereof, has to believe that they are "doing their job," but not overdoing it. They are also limited by simple logistics: if fifty people run out of a supermarket at once without paying, a single police officer can only hope to arrest one or two at best. On top of all this, they are only human (and that's flattering them): they have fragile egos to keep appeased, they can be slow on the uptake, their infrastructures are often badly organized and inefficient. It is possible to distract them, surprise them, even demoralize them.

Whenever you consider breaking the law, take into account all the factors that will influence the police response. Legal and illegal are not immutable aspects of the cosmos — they are as fluid as context itself: it's not against the law if you don't get caught, as every schoolchild and corporate CEO knows. An unpermitted march that would result in twenty arrests if attempted by twenty people can take place unobstructed if undertaken by two hundred; at the same time, twenty people with a plan and the certainty that it can be carried out can easily accomplish objectives that two hundred, less prepared, never could. Ultimately, when it comes to direct action, the laws are immaterial: if what you are doing really is subversive, the authorities will attempt to stop you whether it is legal or not — if they can. Your numbers, your courage, your preparation and foresight, your commitment to supporting one another, above all your conviction that what you are doing is possible: these are your permits, your guarantees, and you need no others.

When you participate in hazardous activities, it's important not to take things farther than you feel ready to go: if you get hurt or arrested or otherwise in trouble while engaging in a level of risk for which you are not emotionally prepared, the effects can be debilitating. Far better that you get started slowly and conservatively, building a sustainable involvement with direct action projects that can continue over a lifetime, than that you rush into an action with wild abandon, have a bad experience, and swear off all such activity. Pace yourself and always quit while you're ahead, so you can learn and develop your instincts at a safe rate. Believe it or not, there are people well into the prime of life who have fought all their lives in the war against capitalism without ever getting caught. Let's challenge ourselves and the world, let's run risks and push limits, but let's do so consciously and carefully, as part of a long-term process, so the experiences we gain in doing so will not go to waste!

One day, when the conflict between people and power approaches its climax, everything we do will be illegal; then, perhaps, courage and cooperation will win out over fear and tyranny, and we will break the law once and for all. In the meantime, every instance of direct action, humble as it may be, is a microcosm of that decisive moment, and a potential seed from which it may grow.

Nurturing a Direct Action Community

Although nothing is ever so simple, let's postulate that there are four essential elements that must be present for a community to become conscious of its own power and get in the practice of using it deliberately. First, at least a handful of individuals must invest themselves in direct action, mutual aid, and revolutionary social change as life projects. It takes the full-time labor, consumption, and faith of millions to maintain the protection racket that enforces servility, scarcity, and alienation. Whenever even a few of us stop investing ourselves in perpetuating this system and instead apply our resources to create a space outside its dictates, wondrous things can happen.

Second, direct action must be employed to provide for people's basic needs in a way that promotes self-reliance and builds networks of cooperation and trust. This might mean serving free meals in the park, or stopping an eviction by force, or organizing radical concerts and social events — the need for entertainment and camaraderie is no less fundamental than the need for food or for housing. The more people are able to meet their needs directly and together, the less they need the capitalist system and the conditional solutions it offers — and the more they can invest themselves in building alternatives to it.

Third, the power of direct action must be demonstrated in exciting, accessible, participatory ways. Rather than letting direct action become the specially of a subculture or expert class, those who appreciate its value should arrange opportunities for people of all walks of life to take part in it, starting with the communities with which they are most familiar. Everyone who is involved in such demonstrations should have empowering experiences that indicate the possibility of an entirely different way of life. For this to occur, the character of each demonstration must be dictated by the needs and circumstances of those who are to participate: a class of bored and rebellious high school students might discover their collective power by staging a walkout, while the residents a neighborhood could experience a similar revelation in the course of tending a community garden. All events and contexts are ripe for conversion into participatory direct action, however hopelessly repressive they may seem: a speech at a stuffy ceremony can swiftly be transformed into a hurricane of creative heckling, just as a crowd of docile consumers at a concert can take to the streets in an unpermitted march — all it takes is for a few individuals to seize a previously unthinkable but longed-for possibility in a way that is contagious. These demonstrations should not simply be isolated events: it should be easy for those they inspire to become connected to ongoing projects and communities in which they can give substance to their new visions.

Finally, an atmosphere must be created that provokes curiosity, builds momentum, and maintains morale. Everywhere people go, there should be evidence that something is afoot, that big changes are in store. The subject of direct action, however controversial, should be on the tip of every tongue, and the sub stance of it scrawled on every wall and employed in every workplace. Wild speculations, whispered rumors, secret invitations, passionate crusades, epic triumphs, surprises, suspense, drama, adventure: these are the stuff of revolutions, and without them it is not possible to break the deadlock between fear and desire.

Despite your best attempts, there will be periods when momentum dies down and it seems you are losing the ground you gained. During a waning phase of activity, don't panic or give up hope. Pace yourself, take it in stride as part of the cycle of life; it will pass. Weather it with the others that stick around, focusing on the worthwhile projects you can undertake without a crowd around you. Use this period to consolidate what you've learned and built, and to develop new relationships and proficiencies so you'll be ready to take things even farther when the action starts to heat up again — as it will.

Don't let anyone tell you nothing ever changes. Revolutions always happen, as sure as the earth goes on turning. The only question is whether we participate in them unconsciously, washing our hands of responsibility for the choices we make, or deliberately, bringing our dreams into being with every step.

Affinity Groups

Ingredients

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

Instructions

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 al I kinds. An affinity group is a circle of friends who, knowing each other's strengths, weaknesses, and backgrounds, and having already established a common language and healthy internal dynamics, set out to accomplish a goal or series of goals.

An affinity group is not a permanent arrangement, but 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 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 ?x up into smaller affinity groups, and act outside the affinity group structure.

The size of an affinity group 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. In actions that require driving, the easiest system is to have one affinity group to each vehicle.

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 read instantly without waiting for orders, yet with a dear idea of what to expect from one another. The mutual admiration and inspiration on which they are founded make them very difficult 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, well 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, communication 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 duster. The duster formation enables a larger number of individuals to act width

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 mange 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 dusters 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 dusters 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 decide and act together. Indeed, the affinity group /cluster /spokes council model is simply another incarnation of the communes and workers' councils that 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 barnstorm 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. 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 down 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, built and burned down 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. One published this book.

Bottomlining

For affinity groups and larger structures similarly based on consensus and cooperation to Function, it is essential that everyone involved be able to rely on each other to come through on their commitments. When a plan is agreed upon, each individual in a group and each group in a duster should choose one or more critical aspects of the preparation and execution of the plan and offer to bottomline them. Bottomlining the supplying of a resource or the completion of a project means guaranteeing that it will be accomplished somehow, no matter what. If you're operating the legal hotline for your group during a demonstration, you owe it to them to handle it even if you get sick; if your group promises to provide the banners for an action, make sure they're ready, even if that means staying up all night the night before because the rest of your affinity group never showed up. Over time you'll learn how to handle crises, and who can be counted on in them — just as others will learn how much they can count on you.

Facilitating Discussions

Although one of the rules of thumb for affinity groups is that they should not be so large as to need formal structures for discussions, larger meetings — between clusters of affinity groups, for example — may require them. Be warned: using such protocol unnecessarily will bog down discussions and alienate participants, and can even foster needless antagonism and drama. On the other hand, if an assembly shares good faith in a given approach and works out its details together, such structures can make group decision-making quicker, easier, and more responsive to the needs and interests of everyone involved. No system is better than the people who participate in it; make sure in advance that everyone is comfortable with the format you use.

In one common format, the discussion goes around a circle, each person taking a turn to speak. In another, suited better to larger gatherings, the group begins by agreeing on a facilitator, an individual who will help keep the discussion constructive and on Affinity Groups topic. Another individual volunteers to "take stack, " keeping track of the order in which people raise their hands to speak; if people feel it is important to make sure different demographics represented in the group get equal time speaking, this person can take a separate stack for each, and alternate between them. Next, individuals propose items for the agenda of the discussion, then come to consensus on an order for these items and, if time is pressing, a time limit for the discussion of each. During the discussion process, individuals can ask to respond directly to questions, so the group doesn't have to wait until the stack comes around to them to hear their responses. Individuals can also make comments on the process of the discussion, urging people to focus when they are getting distracted, or proposing a break so people can stretch their legs or discuss matters in smaller groups. When it's time to make a decision on an issue, individuals make proposals, propose amendments, and then address concerns until the group reaches consensus or the closest thing to it.

** Antifascist Action

It always starts the same way. Racist fliers or stickers show up on the walls of local hangouts or are distributed to people's homes. Reports of attacks and acts of intimidation against people of color appear in the news. Rumors fly about Nazi boneheads hanging around local high schools. Queer-bashing incidents rise. Hip-hop kids, punks, and antiracist skinheads report run-ins with Nazis on the street. Shady characters start pushing anti-immigration campaigns. A local controversy erupts over race issues, and Klan and Nazi groups plan a rally to escalate the tension. Soon it snowballs: white power groups organize concerts, racists run for office, boneheads crash shows, start fights, and attack left-wing political centers, exerting dominance over local youth and street scenes. Pressure mounts … time to fight back!

Liberals and authorities will tell you that ignoring fascists will make them go away, or that the police will handle them. Bullshit. Ignoring a problem does not make it go away, and as often as not police have ties to fascists or are at least willing to look the other way -they may even be glad to have fascists around to take care of radicals for them. But if the fascists are exposed and opposed with both ideas and fists, their organizing efforts can be seriously weakened, even defeated. 35

Instructions: Know Your Enemy

Some people think fascists are inconsequential fringe groups whose ideas nobody takes seriously anymore. Think again. Neo-fascist movements are off the respirators and breathing with renewed vigor, making a strong comeback around the world. In the past ten years alone they've made electoral gains and taken over the streets in some cities (Europe),spurred ethnic cleansing (Eastern Europe), built up a million-dollar white power music and merchandising empire to fund their organizing (USA),and committed various acts of terrorism (worldwide) — and that's not counting the local efforts, including small-scale organizing, propaganda blitzes, and physical assaults.

There is a real movement of far right and neo-Nazi groups taking root? This movement is diverse, including contradictory and competing factions: legal vs, outlaw, mass organizing vs. leaderless cells, religious vs. secular, Christian vs. Satanist, white supremacist vs. nationalist, suit vs. skinhead. Some are unorganized crews who just hang out and occasionally attack the most obvious and defenseless targets. Others are highly organized and serious about changing society, using either clandestine cells or front groups to achieve their goals. Some are open about their racist beliefs and call for ethnic strife, while others mask their motives behind "cultural heritage" and claim to be acting out of pride and love for "their people." Their support base includes politicians, cops, academics, military personnel — perhaps even your neighbors. Many of their supporters remain secret, preferring to remain unknown but providing information, money, and other forms of aid, including guns and other weapons.

Fascism, past and present, has an undisputable history of racist terror and murder. Treating fascists as a serious threat is not paranoid — it's commonsense self-defense. Even small fascist groups can be vocal enough to force their politics into the public dialogue, shifting public opinion and debate to the right. Once fascists start to get a grip in an area, they will raise the level of violence to drive their enemies (including anarchists) out.

It's essential to challenge fascism by opposing our own liberating alternatives to it. Fascism appeals to people who are justifiably pissed off at our fucked up society ; rather than taking on

the complex roots of our society's problems-capitalism, patriarchy, hierarchy — they swallow the simplistic and scapegoating solutions that fascists offer. In a sense, anarchists and fascists are competing for the same constituency; both struggle to undermine the current social order, and propose ideas about how new communities should be forged. This suggests that fascism can only be defeated once and for all by successful anarchist organizing; we need to sway people by demonstrating the merits of mutual aid, non-hierarchical relationships, solidarity between cultures, and grassroots direct action.

There are times, however, when words are not enough, and you must act or risk being silenced forever.

Antifascist action is dangerous work. Not only do you have to deal with the usual police repression, you need to watch out for fascist attacks- on the street, at your home, and in your community.

How do you and your friends do this? Arm yourselves. Watch your backs. Train for self-defense. Plan for emergencies and set up a crisis alert network to summon your comrades. Establish bail and medical funds. Take this seriously. lives may depend on it.

Basic security measures are a must. Don't use your real names when engaging in work like this. Keep your phone number unlisted. Use post office boxes. Be careful about letting your personal information get out. Keep a low profile online. Use aliases, encryption, and throwaway email accounts. Check out the backgrounds of people who are interested in joining your group. Arrange to have security present whenever you have public meetings or events. Know what your response will be if fascists show up or if they attack.

Security

Militant antifascism means occasionally engaging in quasi-militaristic activities. If you're not prepared to think that way, you may want to choose another project. Sometimes you'll have no choice but to deal with the fascists. This doesn't mean violence is always the answer, nor that we should adopt a gang mentality of us against them. Realistically, however, martial preparation is necessary for this type of activity.

Investigation

Fascism's popularity varies depending on location and political climate. At the risk of overgeneralizing, it can be said that fascists are generally in a situation in which they know they are unpopular, so they "by to keep their activities on the down-low. Just because you don't have Nazis marching down your street with swastika flags doesn't mean you don't have a fascist infestation in your city. They're out there, anonymously leafleting, throwing up fascist graffiti, running mail order distributions, recruiting one-on-one, infiltrating other groups, laying plans.

Keep records. Whenever fascists are in the news, collect as much information as possible. Lookup names, phone numbers, and addresses. Use reverse directories and online search engines. If Nazis get busted, obtain the public copies of their arrest reports. Monitor their websites and message boards. Create fake email accounts, so as to pose as fellow Nazis and interact with them online. Subscribe to their magazines. Note rumors about where they hang out; go there and check them out. When they hold events, call them up and get the inside scoop. Monitor these events. Get license plates and vehicle models. Take close-up pictures, link names to faces. Send infiltrators

to their meetings. If you spot a Nazi on the street, follow him — sometimes it's better to collect information than to take immediate action. Share information with other trusted antifascists. Find out where fascists work, live, go to school. Note their relationships — who hangs with who, who takes leadership roles, who's likely to be a police informant, who's likely to bust out a gun and start shooting. Gather as much intelligence on them as possible.

Set up an info-line so that people can call, mail, or email in information on fascists and their activities. Post stickers or fliers about the line in areas where Nazis hang out, along with "unwanted" posters featuring photographs of the actual Nazis. You'll be surprised at the response, but don't trust everything sent in — verify all information first. This outreach might also put you in touch with folks who live near fascists, and with other potential allies.

Antifascist work is not something to charge into carelessly. If you don't have a plan, somebody is likely to get hurt.

Start by assessing your local situation and figuring out what you want to accomplish. Develop a blueprint. There are many factors you need to keep in mind — too many to list here. Your local situation is unique, and your plans will need to reflect this. Does the situation call for an organized community response, such as exposing a fascist running for office, or in office? Or does it make sense to have a tight- knit affinity group carry out its own plans, such as permanently shutting down a Nazi mail order business with an unannounced *fire* sale? Try to put yourselves in the fascists' shoes and imagine what would hurt them most. Also, consider the consequences of your actions. Will they prompt an outraged fascist counterattack? Are you prepared to fight back?

It will help to look at existing antifascist organizing models and see how others have carried out this work. Groups like Anti-Racist Action (US and Canada), Antifascist Action (UK), and the German Antifa movement have employed a wide variety of tactics and learned many lessons. These models will not work in every situation, but they may provide some ideas.

One word of warning: be careful of who you work with. Many "antifascist" groups out there have extremely sketchy politics and are no more your allies than the fascists are.

Planning

The Jewish Defense League, for example, is virulently Zionist, as is the Anti-Defamation League, who have also been known to collect intelligence on radicals and sell it to police and Israeli spies. Both the A.D.L. and the Southern Poverty Law Center go out of their way to convince people to ignore fascist activity and have denounced radical antifascists in the press as violent and worse than the Nazis, and the various communist antifascist front groups have unsavory agendas of their own.

The choice is yours whether to take public community action or clandestine direct action. Tips for both can be found elsewhere in this volume, but there is one aspect of antifascist action that must be covered here: direct confrontation.

Wherever fascists go, they should be confronted. Pick your battles: don't start a confrontation that is unnecessarily dangerous (say, in which the Nazis have guns at hand), that you will lose (in which you are outnumbered or less willing to fight), or that is better avoided (in which you would suffer serious arrests, or miss the opportunity to score some crucial intelligence by just watching instead). Most confrontations will start off verbally, but can easily escalate to something more physical. Keep the upper hand and set the tone of the confrontation. Have a plan,

stay cool, and don't let them off the hook! Confrontation is a psychological battle: you want to intimidate, humiliate, and make them uncomfortable, while simultaneously raising confidence among antifascists. A verbal rout can be just as demoralizing to fascists as a physical beat- down — both have their place.

On the other hand, don't make a spectacle of yourself for its own sake. If you start something that you can't finish, people will not take you seriously. Don't be afraid to back down if safely calls for it.

Sometimes fascists may bring the confrontation to you. Winning fights isn't always about being the biggest bruisers or having the most numbers, it's about having the will

to win (sounds like fascist propaganda, but it has an element of truth). Likewise, losing a battle doesn't always mean losing the war. You might not come out on top, but the way you fight can gain you respect and support.

If you're expecting a physical confrontation, be sure everyone is prepared for it. Keep tight and watch each other's backs. If you can get away with it, carry weapons, or if there's a chance you might get searched by police, carry items that can be used as weapons in a pinch — hefty flagpoles, thick placard sticks, batteries, Mag-Lites, bike locks. Have medics on hand, and know where the nearest hospitals are. If anyone gets hurt, use a cover story at the hospital to avoid police investigation. Know what everyone's limitations are, and have a plan to hit hard and get out fast. Be bold, and if you see an opportunity, take it! And don't forget your masks — see Blocs, Black and Otherwise (pg. 127) for information about how to act with the benefit of shared anonymity.

Antifascists and Corporate Media

The mainstream media is never going to be friendly toward militant antifascists. At best, you'll be viewed as violent vigilantes, or just an opposing gang. Liberal groups will do the their best to denounce your tactics.

This doesn't necessarily mean you should avoid the mainstream media. The militant antifascist perspective should be articulated as widely as possible. Pick articulate spokespeople to speak for your group, but be careful that they protect their identities. Fascists and police watch the news, too. Use fake names and wear masks.

Be aware that media will often go out of their way to interview fascists, providing them with opportunities to spread their ideology. Interfere with this whenever possible. If you get the opportunity to interrupt such an interview, be disruptive and make sure your counterpoints are delivered.

Scenario #1: Following Up on Fascist Activity in the News

Vandalism on a synagogue or mosque. An attack on a mixed-race couple. Racist leaflets dropped on hundreds of lawns overnight. A cross burned outside of a black family's home. Perhaps you've heard something like this in the news recently.

First, collect as much information from the source as possible. Get the date, time, location, and names of people involved or arrested.

Second, check similar sources. Look in other newspapers — especially the police blotters of smaller, local, weekly papers. Watch the news. Dig around online.

Next, get in the car and go check out the area of the incident. Look for signs of other fascist activity — graffiti, bumper stickers, nationalist flags. Note any places that fascists might hang out nearby — bars, parks, pool halls, etc. Talk to people in the area, particularly convenience store clerks and kids. Ask about skinheads or incidents involving race. Be prepared in case you run into some Nazis on the street.

If you have the address of a fascist involved in the incident, check it out, same as above. Hang around the area. If it's at night, you have the time, and you won't look suspicious, sit in your car and watch the address to see who comes in and out. Follow anyone who looks suspect. If you get the chance, take their trash and examine it elsewhere. You may score all sorts of personal information on the Nazi, or possibly even some fascist literature or correspondence.

If you have a phone number, call and pretend to be a reporter — but be careful where you're calling from, as it can be traced back. Ask about the incident, others involved, any groups the person works with, and so on. Pump them as much as you can. Alternatively, call and pretend to be from a large fascist group like the National Alliance. Say that you heard about the incident and wanted to see if they needed any kind of support. Try to get names and information of other fascists. See Infiltration (pg. 306) for more information about such tactics.

If a fascist was arrested, find out about the hearing and attend it. Take careful note of fascist supporters that show up; try to follow them when they leave. If you're a known or recognizable antifascist, you'll risk getting harassed or jumped out on the street, so be careful. Don't go alone. Tone down your look, or roll in as a large and visible antifascist presence, let them know you're watching, and do your best to intimidate them.

Another approach, though a trickier one, is to call up the victims of the incident. This needs to be handled with extreme tact Say, "Hello, my name is (alias)and I work with an antiracist youth organization called Anti-Racist Action (or whatever your group is called) and we heard about what happened. We do research and education to expose racism and racist violence. Could we ask you some questions about the incident?" Again, be careful the phone number from which you call can't be traced to you. The person may be up for talking, or he or she may be freaked out. If they don't want to talk, apologize, thank them for their time, and hang up.

If the incident is part of a rash of fascist activity, then you may want to organize some sort of public community response (see Scenario #3), If nothing else, you now have in- formation about the people behind the fascist threat in your area, and you can make an informed decision about how to respond to their efforts. You may also want to pass the intelligence you have gathered on to a national antifascist organization.

You've heard rumors that Nazi boneheads are hanging around a local high school. Is this just a case of someone wearing offensive and reactionary patches, or is there something deeper happening? Better find out

First, approach any contacts you have at the school: friends, younger relatives, a sympathetic teacher. Ask them what they know. Second, go to the school and hand out anti-racist fliers, stickers, and other cool free stuff. Make it known to the local kids that you are part of an antifascist group and you're following up on reports of local Nazi activity.

Scenario #2: Responding to Bonehead Crew Hanging Out Around the High School

Some cool kids will be more than willing to dish up some information, and may either want to work with you on "outing" the fascists or already have some plan in motion with which you can link your own efforts. If possible, encourage them to start up an antiracist group at their school.

Your goal is to find out who the fascist kids are, where they hang out, and if they're connected to any organized fascist groups. Sometimes you'll be dealing with misguided kids who just think the Nazi skinhead trend is cool, and can easily be persuaded otherwise. Sometimes you'll find that one or more of the kids (or maybe an older brother or friend) is linked to an organized group. You need to get to these kids quick — or, preferably, the ones organizing them from above — before more young people are pulled in.

You'll be taking several risks by going to the school. You may run into Nazis, so be prepared for a confrontation. You may also rum afoul of school administration or security. You may be cited laws and threatened with arrest for trespassing on school grounds and handing out fliers. If you handle this deftly, it can work in your favor: a controversy over holding out anti-Nazi information will get attention. It may be easiest to simply go to other places the kids hang out near the school, where you won't be harassed. You may even find some kids willing to pass things out inside the school for you.

Scenario #3: Outing A Fascist

You've gotten an active fascist's name and home address. Aside from some nighttime fun, what do you do with this info? Easy! "Out" the Nazi to his neighbors. This is especially effective if the fascist is trying to keep his activities secret.

First, confirm that all the information you have is correct. Make sure the Nazi actually lives there, and that he's actually the person you think he is.

Make up a flier with the fascist's picture, name, home address and phone number, and all of the information you have on his fascist and personal activities. On the back, put together some information on why fighting fascism is important, including practical suggestions for things that people can do to counter the fascists' efforts or otherwise get more involved.

Post this flier everywhere, particularly where the fascist lives, works, hangs out, shops, goes to school. Then gather a bunch of people and go door to door in his neighborhood. Talk to his neighbors about who the guy is and why he needs to be confronted. Encourage them to organize their own neighborhood against him. This puts pressure on the fascist and exposes him to the surrounding community. This kind of public notification can lead to spontaneous and interesting community action against him. Lots of people hate Nazis and racists, and if given the chance will serve street-level justice to them.

This canvassing needs to be handled carefully. Look at the class, cultural, and ethnic makeup of the community to gauge the response you will get. Travel in groups, and have some people keep an eye out for trouble while the others hand out fliers and do the talking. Your target may spot you or hear about what you're doing and call in his pals for backup. You might also run across neighbors who are friends of your target, who are possibly even fascists themselves. Other residents may simply be annoyed at being disturbed, accuse you of being vigilantes, or even call

the police on you. A confrontation may occur in which violence or arrest is a possibility, so be prepared.

All this risk can be worth it, however. You can make a positive impact and develop new relationships with neighbors, area residents, and youth. Some will appreciate your efforts and ask how they can help — be prepared to give practical advice. They may even offer you information about the Nazi's activities. These personal contacts can be very useful later on.

As a final stroke, you may wish to hold a demonstration and march it directly to the front door to confront the fascist at his house. The idea here is to intimidate him and let him know you're prepared to bring the battle directly to his doorstep. Encourage Antifascist

the neighbors to join you. If the Nazi fails to come out, leave him some messages he won't forget. The likelihood of violence or arrest is much higher in this situation, so be prepared.

Scenario #4: Shutting Down a Fascist Rally, Meeting, or Concert

Many fascist groups, such as the KKK, like to hold public rallies to gain attention. Others, like the National Alliance, hold secret organizing meetings to train their cadre. White power concerts serve to draw in youth. All deserve to be shut down.

Start by collecting information on who is planning the event. What is their history, where are they from, and who are their local contacts? This will give you some background on the fascists for propaganda purposes, and will help you to identify what and whom to target. Fascist groups often have a local member who invites the group to town, hoping to draw more recruits. The local is probably the one who reserved the event space. When fascists arrive from out of town, they are likely to visit this person's home. This is a perfect opportunity for surveillance and intelligence gathering, or to expose them early on and disrupt their plans beforehand.

Step 1: Call a meeting. Invite groups and individuals you think would be willing to cooperate on a tactical level, even if you have political differences. Be firm that the purpose of this organizing is to shut the event down, not just to protest or raise awareness. Make it a point of principle that the coalition will not work with the police, that it will support a diversity of tactics, and that it will organize on a grassroots, horizontal level. Develop a spokescouncil (see Affinity Groups, pg. 28) and get representatives from involved groups to take on roles. Get commitments from people. If others have already initiated an organizing meeting, figure out if it is worth attending. If it is, raise the same issue of direct democracy and the goal of shutting the event down. Unfortunately, there may be some liberals who will be outraged by your suggestions and will try to isolate you. Some people may not want to engage in confrontation, so space should be provided for them to participate safely — support roles are just as crucial as action roles, after all. Make your points and try to win people to your perspective, but be careful not to say anything potentially incriminating. Liberals have a long and sordid history of acting as police informants when they are confronted with more radical organizing attempts.

Step 2: Get the word out. Leaflets, stickers, spray paint, stencils, the internet, whatever it takes. If your area is multilingual, try to get your stuff translated. It makes a big difference to break down the language barriers and avoid the assumption that everyone speaks American English. This has the benefit of attracting people from different scenes to the organizing — both of this counter-event and of long-term antifascist actions.

Your main goal at this stage is to get the fascist event cancelled in advance. Sometimes simple exposure will do the job. Many businesses do not want to be associated with fascists and will

nix an event once it is publicized that they are hosting them; in many cases, they will not realize whom they are dealing with until they are informed, as fascists often conceal the true nature of their groups and intentions. Others will initially defend the event on misguided "free speech" grounds, but will cave in to public pressure if you organize a call-in campaign.

In some circumstances, you may want to avoid public organizing. A call to action is likely to get media attention, and the police will certainly take notice. This guarantees that the fascists will have a state-sponsored security force for the event, decreasing your chances of direct confrontation. You may not want them to know you're coming. In this case, organize by word-of-mouth among select antifascist groups, and catch them by surprise!

Public Rallies

It's very rare for the fascists to hold any sort of public rally without massive police protection defending their "free speech" while silencing ours. This may include massive numbers of riot cops — sometimes hidden out of sight nearby until needed — armed with tear gas, pepper spray, rubber bullets, and flash grenades, not to mention helicopters, snipers, command centers, dogs, horses, and tank-like vehicles. The fascists will often be defended behind fences, with supporters and opposition herded into caged-in protest pens. The main fascists will be escorted in and out by the police, often in police vehicles.

This doesn't mean there's no chance to get at them or shut the event down. First, try to find out where the fascists are meeting up beforehand. This may be a local's house, the fast food joint next to the cop station, or a gas station off the highway. If you gather enough people, you may be able to surprise them there. Second, fascist supporters may show up without the benefit of a police escort. Have teams of scouts ready to ferret out these fascists, so you can confront them and give them a reason to leave. Third, encourage the crowd to mobilize to prevent the cop-escorted fascists from getting in or out. If the fascists plan to march, try to block the route. You can also send infiltrators into the supporters' area, or rain projectiles on the fascists' parade. If all else fails, you can still try to drown the fascists out with your own noise, and have some rousing good fun in the process.

Remember, fascist rallies are recruitment and publicity opportunities. Take advantage of the situation and make it publicity for antifascist action!

Meetings

Some meetings will draw fascists in from out of town. Check out the parking lots of local hotels, looking for fascist bumper stickers or other telltale signs. If you know the names of any attendees, call around to hotels and see if they've checked in. Consider paying them a surprise visit.

Since they're not public events, fascist meetings usually lack the police presence that accompanies most rallies. This gives you a lot more leeway for confronting the fascists — especially if they don't know you're coming. If possible, march your group right into their event for maximum disruption. A few noisemakers and kicked-over tables will add to the chaos. The police might eventually force you out, but you can still be rowdy from outside, and make the Nazis run when they leave.

Concerts

After having many shows shut down, fascists have learned their lessons. Most white power concerts are held in venues that are sympathetic. This includes fascist owned bars, Outlaw motorcycle gang halls, and private property in rural areas. These places won't cave in to public pressure to shut the show down — but they are vulnerable to nighttime activities (see Utilities, pg. 585). Occasionally, fascists will misrepresent the show and book it at a regular club, in which case you have a chance of getting the owner to cancel. Some owners are just greedy, however, in which case you'll have to turn up the heat. Even if you do force a venue to cancel, they'll scramble to find another on short notice, so keep the pressure on.

Fascists often keep the show location secret, requiring attendees to visit a check-in point (or series of such points) where fascists will meet them in person, check them out, and give them directions. If you know of a check-in point, get a large number of people together and occupy it in advance. If it's in a park, for example, organize an antifascist Softball game and bring plenty of extra bats. If you scare off the organizers, you'll be able to meet and greet the fascists who show up and send them on their way back out of town. The organizers are likely to have publicized a backup cell phone number, so have some friends keep that number busy all night — heck, program a computer modem to repeat-dial it, using Caller ID-blocking of course. If you have a fake fascist persona crafted, or you want to pose as a reporter, you can also use that number to gather intelligence.

If the show goes on, try to organize an action at the show itself. In some areas, this may simply be too dangerous, especially as you can expect dozens or even hundreds of Nazis to show up. In other areas, you might have more success and support. And remember — all those fascists have to park their cars somewhere.

Other Applications

Many of these tactics are also useful for investigating and confronting other odious organizations, such as corporations that abuse animals or engage in genetic engineering.

Account

We learned that the National Socialist Movement and the Ku Klux Klan were to hold a "white unity" rally at the state capital in few weeks. A planning group formed, which held a series of covert meetings in the days leading up to the fascist rally. Our group included people of a variety of ethnic groups, genders, sexual orientations, and body types; also, just as importantly, it consisted of a range of participants from longtime militant activists to people who didn't consider themselves political at all. Sometimes, in their efforts to avoid alienating people, activists alienate everyone not familiar with activist protocol and procedure. We did our best to avoid this: our discussions were informal, we had no membership list, no one needed any prior knowledge of activist culture to feel welcome.

We decided we were going to do our best to prevent the rally from happening at all, or, failing that, to make it as trying as possible for the fascists and the city that was hosting them. But why, you ask — don't the fascists have the right to free speech, just like everybody else? And doesn't

confronting them just make their position look more attractive? Before we proceed with the account, let's go over these questions.

First of all, for an anarchist like me, the question of "the right to free speech" is a moot point. If you don't believe that any governing power should be able to grant or take away our "rights," but instead hold that social life has to be cooperatively determined by those in the thick of it, the question is not whether someone has the "right" to do something, but whether or not what they're doing is a good, socially responsible thing. The government might grant a corporation the "right" to destroy a forest or evict people from their homes, but that wouldn't make it right for us to stand idly by while they did so. The idea that any government can dole out rights impartially is a fallacy, anyway; since those in power inevitably use that power to represent their own interests, we might as well use whatever power we have to represent ours. Besides, the moment the Nazis and the Klan have the chance, they'll be thrilled to prevent people like you and me from exercising any so-called rights at all. Protecting their right to organize toward depriving others of rights, on the grounds that it's necessary to maintain the system of rights, is naive at best, if not outright duplicitous.

As for the "just ignore them and they'll go away" school of thought, that didn't work in Italy, Germany, or Spain a few generations back, and it hasn't worked lately in Europe either, where a powerful new fascist movement has been gaining a foothold. These fascist groups, once allowed to recruit members and get active, quickly begin targeting immigrants, radicals, and others with violence; the only solution that has worked is for activists to block their attempts to organize from the very beginning. In fact, scarcely two and a half decades earlier, a similar rally held by the same organizations in a city only an hour away from this one had ended in the murders of antifascist protesters, for which the police never found anyone guilty even though it was obvious who had committed them. Our reluctance to let this rally go unchallenged did not proceed from idle concerns.

Aside from the fascists themselves, we also had a bone to pick with the city. If they had not offered police protection, the fascists surely would not have dared show up to preach their hate and violence, for fear of a taste of their own medicine. As it turned out, the city must have spent tens of thousands of dollars, if not more, to make this rally possible. I know from plenty of experience at demonstrations that cities usually only spend that kind of money to prevent free speech. Having had some of my own attempts to exercise my "right to free speech" end in tear gas and rubber bullet attacks (which are not cheap!), I found it particularly insulting that the government saw fit to allocate so much taxpayer money to enable the fascists to recruit right on their front lawn. Couldn't that money have been better spent on education programs or social security, if it had to be spent at all?

What could be in it for them? Could it be that the conservatives in power were glad to offer the public the spectacle of these extreme groups, in comparison with whom they would appear moderate? Regardless, we decided it would be our job to make sure they had to work to earn every dollar they spent on security, and to cost them more than they'd bargained for if possible. This would discourage them from providing protection for future fascist rallies: if they knew the price tag would be even steeper than it had been this time, they might just tell the Klan and Nazis they'd have to go it alone, which would be fair enough. It would also highlight the willingness of the city to go to such great lengths to protect the fascists, which itself deserved public scrutiny. And in the course of our own efforts, we hoped to open a space for others to protest the rally as well, in whatever ways they saw fit.

When you engage in confrontational action, there's always the possibility you will step on a few toes in the process. There's a certain kind of activist organizer who gets really offended if everyone doesn't follow the guidelines his group has unilaterally set; in addition to that, though I'm not one to believe in the myth that the masses are so "moderate" that any kind of militant action alienates them, it can in fact happen that people are intimidated by a masked group whose goals and tactics aren't clear to them. We discussed the fact that we would be running this risk, and decided that in this case it was worth it: our first priority was not to convert people to our perspective, but to stop the fascists from getting a foothold for theirs. If we did make a bad impression on any other protesters, that wasn't going to turn them into fascists; and if every one associated fascists with chaos and trouble, so much the better. I can imagine the Nazi "Commander" in city hall trying to get a permit next time, and the functionary explaining: "No, last time y'all came here you brought your friends the anarchists, and it was a big mess."

Finally, apart from discouraging the fascists and unmasking the city's allegiances, this was a great opportunity for us proponents of direct action to put our experience at the service of other rightfully angry people, and get to know each other better in the bargain. As it turned out, by the time the event was over we'd made a lot more new friends than the Klan or the N.S.M. had.

Publicly, we took advantage of shows and other social events to announce that counter-rally actions of some kind would take place, and used the lists we gathered at these events to send out reminders; we also wheatpasted fliers and posted notices on the internet to the same effect. Privately, we worked on strategy and structure. Those of us whose friends had been involved in some of the better-known antifascist actions of the preceding years contacted them and asked for pointers. Some of us explored the area and made annotated maps, which were distributed at meetings. We gathered what materials we could, and brainstormed about what approaches to take. We did our best to spread word of our plans to everyone who might want to participate, adding specifics according to the degree to which we felt we could trust them, so as to prevent information from falling into the wrong hands.

Shortly thereafter, we learned that a permitted protest had also been scheduled. Some of us had mixed feelings about this. It meant, on the one hand, that there would be a safe zone for protesters who didn't want to risk police repression; on the other hand, in our experience in this city, whenever a permitted protest occurred it was some distance from the event being protested, surrounded by a thick line of police and metal fencing, and proved to be a disempowering experience for all who participated in it. As all areas except the permitted zone would be locked down by police, it was likely that the permitted protest would absorb all who showed up and the tone of the day would thus be set by the few who had organized it — which would mean all the energy we had put into our organizing was absorbed by their project, an outcome that would disappoint those who had accepted our invitation to the event in hopes of effectively contesting the fascist rally. To top it all off, organizers of permitted protests sometimes take offense to any other form of protest organized to take place alongside their own, so we had to be careful not to create discord simply by virtue of acting on our own initiative.

We concluded that we had to find a point at which to confront the fascists that was far from the permitted protest, both for civility's sake and to make sure no one was at risk who did not choose to be. Fortunately, our research had revealed that they would be using a parking lot on the opposite side of the rally site from the permitted zone. Those of us who were prepared for potentially dangerous physical confrontation planned to form a group that would advance on the parking lot. There were residential neighborhoods nearby, which we hoped would be far enough

outside the zone of police surveillance that we could gather there and approach with the element of surprise. Once in melee with the police and perhaps the fascists, this group would stick tightly together, and do everything possible to thwart arrests. As the police had no knowledge of our plans, we didn't expect they would be prepared to make mass arrests, so we figured our primary problem was to stop them from picking off individuals. If we were beset by serious police attacks, we would retreat into the residential neighborhood, maintaining our coherence on the way, and then disperse there where the greatest number of us would be able to escape. If all else failed, we decided we would break up into our affinity groups and act individually to cause disruptions. If we could create an unstable enough situation by any of these means, we expected the rally would be delayed or canceled.

A strategy alone is never enough. As things never go as expected, it is critical to have a structure that can remain useful when circumstances change. We divided into affinity groups, and buddied up inside of those; also, several individuals who were hoping to be noncombatants formed a communications team. Each of them was equipped with a cell phone or two-way radio, and chose an area to patrol or a task to fulfill — taking down license plate numbers from the fascists' cars, for example, or keeping abreast of areas free of police surveillance to which people could retreat if need be. They arranged an internal network so that information could be circulated as swiftly as possible and passed on to one of two contacts in the action-oriented group. During the event, they not only monitored the movements of fascists and police, but also distributed information to all of us when we were spread out.

The night before the rally, some brave souls went out with spray paint, dressed as civilians. This was a role that could be played by those of us who felt more comfortable acting alone than in the chaos of a big demonstration, and an important one. By morning, the political district of the city, especially the aforementioned parking lot and the actual site of the rally, was covered thickly in antifascist graffiti. No matter that the city, clearly hell-bent on their chosen project of being welcoming hosts to the fascists, went to the surprising trouble of sandblasting all the graffiti off by the time the rally was to begin; they were our primary target readership, and now they have one more serious expense to factor into their budget next time they consider welcoming fascists.

Just before dawn, others went to a hiding place that had been scouted earlier and stashed our secret weapons: several 4' by 8' plywood banners painted with antifascist slogans. These had handholds cut into them (though after one of us had his hand smashed by a police baton while holding one up, we decided back handles would have been better), and could be tied together at the ends to form a massive, jointed, mobile barricade. Carrying these around our group would make it difficult for police to snatch or beat us, or for that matter easily identify us or gauge our numbers. They were also festive, and made our goals dear. In the future, we'll probably use plexiglass instead of plywood, since one of them finally snapped in half after too much pressure from police on one side and protesters on the other — but we'll get to that story shortly.

We held a final meeting the morning of the big day, to fill in those who hadn't been present at earlier ones and make some last-minute decisions. We picked a convergence point out in the residential neighborhood, and a time we hoped would be just long enough before the fascists would cross from the parking lot to the rally site that we could stop them, but not so far in advance that the police could force us to disperse first, or that too few potential participants in our action would have arrived (since, unfortunately, those promoting the permitted event had announced the protest as starting at the same time as the rally, which would be too late to interfere with it). Until that moment, we would be scattered into couples and tiny groups, in hopes of avoiding

premature police attention. Our scouts would inform those of us with communications equipment if anything unexpected developed — say, the fascists were heading to the rally site earlier than expected, or there was already a police presence at the site of our planned convergence- and these spokespeople would pass word around to others, so we could react quickly.

We arrived a couple of hours before the rally was to begin to find the entire area swarming with police in and out of uniform, massive metal fencing surrounding the rally site, surveillance cameras set up, snipers on the rooftops, mobile command centers down the block, several officers on horseback and more in riot gear, and even a helicopter overhead. It was intimidating, and there was little sign of other protesters. Our scouts reported that fascists had already arrived, and were fraternizing with police officers in .a couple of areas; however, there didn't seem to be much chance of catching them alone, so we stuck with plan A.

We were all dressed as nondescript civilians, but carried bandannas and sweatshirts with which to render ourselves anonymous. Walking around the vicinity, we met people we recognized from other demonstrations and shows, and passed on to those we trusted the time and location of our convergence point — and maps, for those who had come from out of town. When the time came, we all made our way to the designated area, doing our best to appear to be nothing more than small groups moving randomly, and hoping not to hear the familiar thunder of helicopters overhead.

The moment was upon us- we pulled up our masks, grabbed the banners from their hiding place, and tied them together as we formed our bloc and made swiftly for the parking lot. There were perhaps forty of us, and we were going to take on at least one hundred and fifty police, not to mention the thirty-odd fascists that had occasioned all this trouble. One of u s had a great bass dram with which to maintain morale — morale is critical in such situations, it makes all the difference in what a group feels capable of doing. Others had emergency whistles, which make a loud noise while leaving the hands free (though you should be careful not to damage your hearing with them, if playing for a long time). Later in the day, the drums turned out to be extremely useful for centering our group when it was spread out, and directing motion en masse. More drums and drummers might have been even more effective at these purposes, and at least would have saved our drummer the welts sustained from having to play constantly.

In a couple of minutes we were across the street from the parking lot, jogging with our banners around us. At this instant, remarkably, we had the element of surprise on our side. Since neither the police nor the fascists were expecting us, we were throwing them into an unexpected situation and thus off-balance; the initiative was ours. For the rest of the day, we were not able to recapture this advantage; much of what we accomplished proceeded from the moment when we had it. Arguably, the mistake we made at this juncture was not to cross the street to the parking lot before the police reached us. In discussions after the action, it came out that those who had thought to shout out that it was time to move across the street held back for fear that there might be undercover police among us who would identify them as leaders. In retrospect, we probably had enough coherence as a group that we could have prevented police from snatching supposed leaders; but the real solution to such a problem is to have the feeling of entitlement to make recommendations more evenly distributed among participants. This happened as the day wore on and all of us developed more confidence; unfortunately, police preparations increased at the same pace our morale did. Strike all at once and go for it while you have the chance, that's the moral of the story.

Be that as it may, in the next instant a line of police charged forward and met us in the middle of the street as we headed for the parking lot. A struggle followed, with them pushing on the banners from one side, and us from the other. A couple of us were struck or dragged by the hair at this point; it's worth pointing out, though this is no surprise, that the police were in fact the ones who initiated violence that day. All those they tried to grab for arrests were pulled back by friends . Partly owing to the general lack of experience in our numbers, at this point we had not yet developed a strong sense of what we could accomplish, so many were not as ready to push the limits as they would be later after they'd gotten accustomed to the situation. Consequently, we were pushed back across the street; but we held our ground there, seizing the comer of the intersection between the parking lot and the rally site and holding it in the face of further police pressure.

A standoff ensued. We stood on the comer, banners up on the outside, with a line of police in front of us and more police massing behind them. The fascists in the parking lot were hiding behind a dumpster, totally out of view and out of range of projectiles. Over the next few minutes, our numbers swiftly swelled, as protesters from a variety of perspectives and walks of life came to join us. In fact, in taking this comer, we had opened up a vast space around the rally site for those protesters who didn't want to remain in the permitted zone, and scores rapidly filled it. This was definitely one of our accomplishments for the day, that we made it possible for protesters to move around the area at will, exercising their freedom of speech beyond the restrictions of the police cordon.

We had failed to meet the fascists in actual conflict, but now, having demonstrated our readiness for confrontation, we were between them and their rally site, and it was clear to everyone that there would be trouble if they came within range. They remained hidden behind their dumpster, with police around them for protection, and other police conferred on how to handle the situation, while still others reinforced the line facing us. This went on for perhaps fifteen minutes, until it was time for their rally to begin. It continued for another fifteen minutes, and then another, and then another, until we had succeeded in delaying their rally by a full forty-five minutes — no small achievement, under the circumstances! B/ this time, our group was dispersed within the much larger group of protesters that had gathered at the comer, most dearly understanding that they were delaying the rally by amassing there. Many were shouting furiously at the police for being willing to defend such opponents of liberty. The atmosphere was heated, to say the least.

In acting as a small, self-starting group, we had opened up the option of militant resistance to many others, who joined in enthusiastically ;but the downside to this was that our group lost coherence within the larger mass. Our banners and banner holders had been separated from one another in the chaos, and we never again that day formed a tight nucleus. A city bus protected by police finally showed up to collect the cowering fascists, and drove off in the opposite direction with them inside. We received reports from our scouts that it was headed to the opposite side of the rally site, on the far side of the permitted zone from where we were; we tried to move toward it, but moving in an even minimally organized manner through the assembled masses around the narrow perimeter of the rally site proved impossible. We didn't want to move through the permitted zone itself, anyway, so as not to draw heat to those seeking safety there or interfere with their chosen form of protest. This was the point at which individual actions by scattered groups could have taken place to heighten the atmosphere of uncertainty; whether any did is

unknown, but certainly not enough did. Best-case scenario, we would have had others ready to intercept the bus, but we had not prepared enough for that.

Surrounded by police, with us still hundreds of feet away, the fascists were able to leave the bus without being assaulted by anything more than the jeers of bystanders. Realizing that we had at last failed to prevent them from reaching the site, we changed our strategy: at this point our only hope of stopping the rally was to create chaos that seemed uncontrollable, so we attempted a fill frontal offensive. The police barring our path had been replaced by now with officers in full body armor, and officers with tear gas rifles and on horseback stood behind them. The great metal fence was between us and them; it was composed of massively heavy sections, almost inextricably linked together. Amazingly, we were able to get one of the sections free, and pushed forward with it and a couple of our own barricades against the lines of police that immediately rushed to meet us. This confrontation was much more pitched than the earlier one had been; the police rained blows upon us, and we struck back, lifting the visors of their helmets to even the odds where necessary. One particularly aggressive officer lost his head in the fray and found himself surrounded by us — his colleagues had to snatch him over the fence to safety. It was real pandemonium at times, when police and protesters were mixed up and the lines between them became unclear; I believe at one point I even saw a demonstrator make use of a stage diving technique to get into the action! Once again, those the police attempted to nab for arrests were freed, but we failed to make much headway against their lines . In the end, we lifted the section of metal fencing over our heads and passed it to the back of the crowd, where it was dropped into a pit at the foot of the building behind us so it would not block further advances on our part. This simple disposal of a large segment of the police barricade was gratifying, at least, but it was dear we weren't prepared to break through their lines frontally.

The fascist rally was in full swing, now, with the two dozen of them who had made it out of the parking lot holding their swastika flags and making their speeches, most of which were drowned out by audience noise. The police had prohibited even the few fascist sympathizers who had shown up from passing through their lines, perhaps as a result of our activities; it was only fascist would-be leaders, their children, and the cameras of the mainstream media on the site. Lacking other ideas as to how to interrupt the event, some who had brought smoke bombs attempted to deploy one. The plywood banners that were still in our possession proved useful here: by holding them up in the air, some were able to obscure the vision of the police ahead of us (though perhaps not of the rooftop snipers with binoculars) while others attempted to light and throw the smoke bomb. Under the circumstances this was imprudent at best, though, since at that point there were many around us who were not prepared for this level of risk. Some of us, not sure how we felt about what was going on, took it upon ourselves to form a buffer between the ones with the smoke bomb and everyone else. The inexperienced individual who attempted to hurl the smoke bomb once it was lit failed to get it past the banners, and it was something of a debacle, though no one was hurt (or especially frightened, with the possible exception of said individual). As my friend's high school band teacher always told him, practice at home!

Others among us took advantage of the sympathetic crowd cover to paint the buildings behind us with small slogans and artwork critical of fascism. Conversations took place, as well: people asked why we were wearing masks, and were generally understanding when we explained it was to avoid being profiled by the police — and, for that matter, the fascists, who were running surveillance of demonstrators for their own purposes.

The only decidedly negative reception any of us experienced came from two of the organizers of the permitted rally. One of them, a white man associated with the flagship state university, had come up to us when we were engaged in our standoff between the parking lot and the rally site, suggesting that we cease our militant activity and join the silent, passive protest in the permitted zone; he insistently persisted, providing no tactical rationale for why we should give up the gains we had made at that point, until one hotheaded young person finally asked if he was a police agent. The other, somewhat less absurdly, asked the demonstrator with the big drum to stop playing it in the proximity of the permitted zone, on the grounds that it was drowning out their silent protest; for a time, the drummer was silent, out of respect for her request. Some tempers did flare in the midst of the fray, it's true, and it is possible that others exchanged harsh words at some point during the day. If s very important that those of us who practice direct action demonstrate the utmost in civility and sensitivity in the process of doing so, so there will never be any question about what part of our hearts such actions proceed from, or whether direct action activists are generally welcoming and responsible people.

Back to the action. At this point, certain that we were not going to succeed in actually shutting down the rally, many of us made our way back up the perimeter toward the parking lot, to enact plan B: go after their cars. At the corner we had occupied before, we were met once again with a line of police, and there was another skirmish, this time involving mounted police as well. There were some blows and angry words exchanged between police officers and protesters — the latter now including a broad diversity of individuals, not just the organized demographic that had initiated direct action at the beginning of the event. Yet again, those the police grabbed were pulled free, but our progress was blocked. All the same, some individuals, moving stealthily outside the mass, subsequently managed to circumvent the police line and infiltrate the parking lot. The tires of a vehicle belonging to a fascist skinhead were slashed, and some scuffling and chasing ensued. The individuals involved managed to get away, but the rest of us on the comer could have done better to support them by making another charge at the police line around this time to create a distraction.

It was shortly afterwards that the day's five arrests took place; all five of them were the result of individuals walking around apart from the masked bloc while still wearing their masks. This made them obvious targets for police. Clearly, we should have gone over that lesson more thoroughly beforehand: wear your mask with the others in masks who can protect you, and change your appearance radically when you leave their company. One individual's collarbone was broken in the process of the arrest, thanks to a policeman's overzealous tackling. AH those arrested were bailed out of jail by that evening; an experienced civil rights lawyer volunteered to take their cases gratis, and succeeded in slipping them through the legal system with a minimum of hassles and repercussions.

Realizing that our morale was waning, our numbers dwindling, and the most dangerous period of the day approaching — when the permitted protesters would disperse, leaving only us and the police- we decided against attempting to assail the fascists as they were returned to the parking lot. It was time to quit while we were ahead, before any more arrests could be made. Those of us in masks and sweatshirts melted into the larger crowd, swiftly changing our clothing outside the view of the police, and then made our way in ones and twos out of the area as protesters from the permitted protest did the same. We suffered no more arrests in this process; we had successfully delayed the state-subsidized fascist rally, decorated the walls of the state

political district with politics of our own, fought over a hundred and fifty thoroughly equipped riot police, and lived to tell the tale.

Most mainstream media coverage of the event was deceitful, to say the least. They drastically underestimated the number of protesters, misrepresented the atmosphere by describing people as practically being amenable to the fascist presence, and made little to no mention of the way we delayed the rally or the violence with which the police responded. The fact that the mainstream cameras and reporters were the only ones allowed inside the police lines with the fascists was as telling as the spectacle many of us witnessed of the police chief and the fascist top dog smiling and laughing and chatting together behind the police lines.

Underground and independent media coverage was much more thorough and honest. Predictably, there was a post on a website from the white graduate student mentioned above, arguing that although he understood the value of diversity of tactics, this demonstration had not been the appropriate time for direct action. Such a statement is disingenuous: accepting diversity of tactics means recognizing and respecting that others are going to make their own decisions about tactics and act accordingly, not granting that diverse approaches are acceptable "when I say so"! He argued, essentially, that the most proper role any counter-demonstration could play was to involve the greatest possible number of people, especially those most seriously affected by fascist organizing — presumably assuming that non-confrontational tactics are always the most popular, that people of color are not interested in confrontational tactics (a patronizing, even subtly racist attitude), and that people of color are the only ones at risk from fascist organizing (when, in fact, people of anarchist and queer orientations, not to mention Jewish heritage, all of whom were present in our number along with people of color, are also significantly at risk from fascist activity). I would argue to the contrary that there were at least one hundred people at the protest that day, if not more, who went explicitly to confront the fascists and their protectors, and who wouldn't have been there otherwise — that is to say, the best way to involve the greatest number of people is for the broadest possible array of approaches to be applied without interfering with one another. For the most part, we took great care to keep well away from the area reserved for the permitted rally, and did a decent job of not hindering their chosen approach. With the exception of this individual, and a clown (yes, literally, a clown) the mainstream media found to say that it was unfair that our noise was drowning out the fascists' articulation of their ideas, few others expressed disapproval of the way our actions interacted with those of other protesters.

After the smoke cleared, we met again to discuss what had worked and what could have worked better. Spirits were generally high. We had demonstrated the power of a few individuals to come up with an idea, deploy it in the face of inedible odds, and influence the course of events. Acting on our own initiative, exploring our potential in practice, we had taken on the assembled powers of the Ku Klux Klan, the National Socialist Movement, and the state government, and scored some significant victories. Our initial plan for converging and setting the tone for the day's events had worked, and had we had a little more experience, numbers, or morale, we might well have shut the rally down entirely. Beyond this, we had all gotten to know one another much better, and learned a lot about the amazing things we could do together.

Asphalt Mosaics: A Hot Weather Activity for Lonely Asphalt Near You

This is a method for making colorful, permanent mosaic installations in asphalt roads and lots. like glass, asphalt appears to be a solid but is actually a liquid; this means that a design affixed to it with more asphalt will eventually settle in and become a part of it. We owe our awareness of this technique to a nameless mystic we have never encountered in person.

We saw the first one in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. We were walking along a downtown street when we spotted a colorful patch of text embedded in the asphalt of a crosswalk. It was dearly made of vinyl floor tile- but how was it attached? We found the piece pictured on the left at the comer of Smithfield Street and Oliver Avenue.

As we walked we saw more versions of the same design. While befuddled by the message, we were amazed by the technique, and avidly discussed how it might be reproduced. But a few blocks later, miraculously, we came upon the Rosetta Stone, a similar piece of the same material and text ... except that this one featured an additional block of smaller text: instructions! The words were old and badly damaged, but we could just make out the crucial sentence: ... I use asphalt crack filler...* We got right to work.

The next time we came through Pittsburgh we were on tour. Part of our program was a skill-share on asphalt decor, and we had already left a respectable trail of color across the country. After our workshop, we ventured downtown to visit the original pieces. When we got there, we found most of them — but the crucial piece, the one with the instructions, was gone. It had been buried under a fresh slab of asphalt. We had discovered it in the nick of time.

In a subsequent internet search, we found that the same text has been spotted all over the world, though mostly in North and South America. There even seems to be a fan club. According to one posting, a piece in New Yak starts with the same Toynbee text, then adds, “Murder every journalist, I beg you.” Well, we would never be so impolite, but between that and the kindly instructions provided in Pittsburgh, it’s clear where the artist stands on do-it-yourself media.

So, in the spirit of the inventor who was thoughtful enough to declassify his or her technique, we present the findings of our attempts to reverse-engineer it. Now, go make and glue tiles‼ You‼‼ As media‼!

Ingredients

The so-called “Toynbee Tiles” are made out of two kinds of floor covering material: Vinyl Composition Tile and true Linoleum.

Vinyl Composition Tile: The text is vinyl composition tile, also called “VCT.” VCT works because its color is solid, so when it wears down it still looks good. What will not work is the variety of self-adhesive, so-called “linoleum” tiles sold in hardware and tile stores. The surface of those

tiles, whether it is a color or faux marble, is a paper-thin veneer. When it wears down, it reveals its white substrate. For Christ's sake, don't even use those on your kitchen floor!

VCT is cheap, even brand new. It sells for less than sixty cents a square foot at hardware marts. The problem is that color selection is generally limited to a few bland options when you're only buying single tiles. They do come in exciting colors, though, and if you want to order a case you can get almost any color you want; however, a case is expensive, and it's unlikely that you will ever need forty-five square feet of any one color, so we have some other recommendations.

A lot of cities these days have salvage building-supply warehouses. They are often non-profit and community -run. These are a good place to start, as they usually have partial cases in a variety of colors. We have also had luck calling and stopping by floor covering stores and/or installation contractors. We ask if they have any partial cases in their storage area that we could have for an art project. Sometimes they are generous, sometimes they ask for a little money. Another method that has worked well with other materials is a classified "want ad" in the local paper. If someone has redone their own kitchen floor, they may have a partial box that they couldn't bring themselves to toss but don't really need. People love to donate these kinds of materials to starving artists.

Linoleum: The background of the Toynbee tiles is made of linoleum. Like VCT, linoleum is solid color through and through. But beware-the word "linoleum" is also used generically to refer to any non-ceramic floor tile. True linoleum is a very specific product made of flax fiber and linseed oil. You must use the real thing. Like carpet, linoleum mostly comes in rolls, and has to be cut and fitted into place when installed. For this reason, it is highly likely that you will be able to get cut-offs for cheap or free from an installation contractor or salvage lot.

Asphalt Crack Filler: Asphalt crack filler is acrylic-based liquid tar made for filling cracks in asphalt driveways. It is available in most hardware stores, especially in the summertime, when it is best applied. It comes in one-gallon jugs. We have found many brands, but just two basic types. The regular strength stuff says that it will fill cracks of up to half an inch. The maximum strength product says it will fill 3/4-inch cracks and last longer. Both work, but for the minimal price difference, we lean toward the heavy- duty stuff. It goes for around $7.50 a gallon. One gallon is good for a dozen or more one-square-foot designs.

- Cardboard or plywood board for an area as big as your design, in good condition 68 and flat with no creases or dents.
- Tarpaper
- Water-soluble glue
- Utility knife (with plenty of blades, as they dull quickly on VCT)
- Metal ruler or straightedge
- Stapler or tape
- Heat gun (optional, but helpful)

Instructions

You have two options for creating your design. You can make mosaics, or you can make what we'll call Toynbee-style pieces, in which your text or image is set into a solid background.

Mosaics

The advantage of the mosaic approach is that they can be made with VCT alone. You may find VCT to be easier to obtain than linoleum. Because of its brittleness, VCT is hard to cut into precise shapes such as small letters, and large pieces of it can crack apart as the road shifts with temperature and pressure. Mosaics circumvent these problems, piecing together small, randomly cut pieces of tile to form a design.

First, you have to make whole tiles into pieces. We've developed a method for producing durable pieces of irregular shapes. Using a utility knife and straightedge, score a line 1/2 to 3/4 inch from the edge of a tile (figure 1.1). Now gently work from one end of the line to another, bending the strip away from the score line. The clack will become deeper and deeper, until it finally breaks. Once you have removed the strip, score it crossways to make smaller bits (figure 1.2). It is best to make a wide variety of shapes: squares, rectangles, rhombi, triangles. The more variety you have, the easier it will be to put your image together.

Next, you need a flat surface. It is best to work on a flat piece of plywood or thick cardboard, so you can move your piece as necessary. Cut out a piece of tarpaper that is larger than your design, and tape or staple it to your work surface. The tarpaper needs to be flat and smooth; tears or wrinkles will mess things up.

Smear the surface of the tarpaper with an even coat of waterproof wood glue. The glue-covered area should extend one or two inches beyond the edges of your design on a 1 1 sides. Let the glue dry thoroughly.

Prepare the surface for layout. With a cloth, spread a thin layer of glue on the dry glue. This will cause the letters to stick to the glue surface.

Lay out your design on the glue-coated tarpaper (figure 1.3). If the glue dries before you get all the tile down, add a thin layer of fresh glue. Laying out the tile pieces will appeal to your compulsive side. Put them down like a puzzle, custom-shaping pieces if need be. Aim to maintain consistent 118-inch gaps between tiles; as the tile itself is 118-inch thick, you can use a piece of tile as a guide (figure 1.4). If the tiles are too close to one another, the tar will have trouble flowing between pieces; if they are too far apart, the tar will span the gap, but it will be a weak spot. A consistent layout will also make your design more readable. Keep your design at least one inch away from the edge of your plastic, staples, or tape.

If you are using text, lay it out backwards. This is easy to forget! What you see when you lay out your image will actually be the underside when it is installed.

Allow the second layer of glue to dry thoroughly. Before you move on to adding tar, make sure no tile bits are loose. If one is loose, glue it back down.

Shake the jug of asphalt crack filler thoroughly, and pour it over your design (figure 1.5). The ideal consistency of the crack filler is like honey. If the brand you are using is too thick, place the jug in the sun so it will flow better; you can also try adding a little water. The important part of this step is to get the tar between the tiles. The surfaces of the tiles need not be tar-free, but

you should be able to see the shapes and some of the colors of the tiles. When the entire design is covered, add a 1/2-inch border of tar beyond the edge of the tiles.

Cut a piece of tarpaper in the shape of your design and, while the tar is still wet, press the tarpaper into the tar. If the paper starts to curl at the edges, do something to hold it down. Once the tarpaper is stuck flat, spread another layer of tar on the back of the tarpaper, so it is completely coated with tar. This second layer of tar should be no more than 1/1 6-inch thick. *Refer to "Finishing and Installing" to complete your project.*

Toynbee-Style Designs

The Toynbee method is laborious, but it looks fantastic, and produces installations that are, by some indications, more durable than mosaics. For our example, we will assume you are using text, although you can use an image instead.

First, cut your text out of either VCT or linoleum {figure 1.6). It is worth your while to use a very sharp utility blade for this. Both linoleum and VCT become soft and easier to cut if left in the sun; if you are doing anything intricate, a heat gun makes the stuff cut like butter. If need be, you can make difficult letters in more than one piece.

Next, trace the text {figure 1.7). out a piece of linoleum (not VCT) and arrange your text on it. Using a fine-point permanent marker or dark pencil, make a close tracing of each letter, or place the entire text on the linoleum at once and use a light dusting of spray paint to transfer the letters precisely onto the background. If you use the spray paint method, lay out the text backwards, so the paint will be on the back side of your tiles.

Now, cut out the negative space. Use a sharp blade, and make sure your linoleum is warm. Cut out the traced letters as precisely as possible {figure 1.8). Save the spaces in letters such as "0" and "B" to put back in. Save the letters you cut out; you can use them with a background of a different color for your next design. Toynbee-style pieces do not require an 1 18-inch gap between pieces — in fact, the tighter the fit the better.

Staple or tape a piece of tarpaper on a flat portable surface — cardboard and plywood both work well. Cover the tarpaper with a thin, even layer of waterproof wood glue. Spread the glue so it covers an area larger than your design by at least two inches on all sides.

Next, place the design. the linoleum background onto the wet glue so that the readable side is stuck to the tarpaper. Fit each letter into place (figure- 1.9) , Thoroughly remove any glue that has made its way onto the side of the tiles not facing the tarpaper. When everything is in place, weight the piece down with a board, and allow twelve or more hours for the glue to dry completely; it takes much longer than usual because there is hardly any airflow.

After the glue is dry, apply the tar. Squeeze some tar on the center of the design, and use a piece of card to spread it to a 11-16-inch thickness. Add a 1/2-inch perimeter of tar around the edge of the entire design.

Cut a piece of tarpaper in the shape of your design, and press the tarpaper into the wet tar, just as you would in preparing a mosaic design. Once the tarpaper is stuck flat, spread another layer of tar on the back of the tarpaper so it is completely coated with tar. This second layer of tar should be no more than 11-16-inch thick.

Finishing and Installing

Let your piece dry. In warm sunlight, most crack fillers will dry sufficiently in eight hours; in the shade or indoors, it could take up to twenty-four hours. When you think it is safe to handle your piece, detach it from the board. The side that has been facing the board is the top of your mosaic. Trim the tarpaper on the top side so that it is a half-inch bigger than the tar-coated tarpaper on the bottom side. The layer of tarpaper on top of your piece will remain until it is washed or worn away.

Prepare the bottom surface of your piece. Different tar products dry to different consistencies. If your tar has dried like tire rubber — flexible, yet dry to the touch — use a paper towel to spread a very thin layer of fresh tar to the bottom side. The goal here is to create a sticky surface, not to make a layer of wet tar! If your tar has dried to be flexible and sticky, it is not necessary to add fresh tar.

Find a spot. Asphalt crack filler sticks only to asphalt such as is used to make roads, sidewalks, and paths. It does not work on concrete, brick, or cobblestone. Find a high- visibility location. We highly recommend crosswalks, as your piece is probably scaled for pedestrian viewing: pedestrians will be able to enjoy your work as they cross the road, and the passing cars will help mash the piece into the asphalt. Also, in their capacity as dumb and dangerous moving objects, cars will faithfully deter someone from kneeling down to pick at your piece. Yes, just this once, the cars are working for you!

Don't let your masterpiece be covered up in the prime of its life just because the road needed repair. Your tile can last for ten years, possibly longer than its asphalt host. Apply your piece on the freshest asphalt you can find that is also a good location. Also, new asphalt is softer and stickier, and thus more receptive to your decorations.

Install your artwork. You should install your designs during warm weather, when the asphalt is warm, soft, and dry. If the forecast calls for significant rains in the next few days, wait until they have passed. Bring a small brush to remove sand or debris from the road. Place your piece by simply setting it down, tar side to the road. Now walk, skip, jump, and run all over it to make sure it is firmly planted. The top layer of tarpaper will serve to camouflage and stabilize your piece for the first few weeks, when it is most vulnerable, while it begins to join with the road. Eventually, the top layer will wear through or wash away, unveiling your masterpiece.

You can give your tile more time set into the asphalt by adding extra layers of tarpaper on top of the design. Before you go out, cut two pieces of tarpaper a few inches bigger than your tile all around. Smear the pieces of tarpaper with a generous amount of glue, and stick them together glue side to glue side. This will keep them from drying out or sticking to things on the way to the installation site. Once you have laid the tile down and walked on it a bit, peel the two pieces of tarpaper apart and paste them — one on top of another- over the tile.

Brightly colored tiles look the best on asphalt; colors like dark green tend to be invisible unless they are used effectively with other colors. Make sure there is plenty of color or tone contrast between your figure and its background, especially if your design includes text.

Experiment with other materials! You have probably seen pennies, fasteners, and bits of brake light embedded in asphalt at intersections; thin bits of metal, mirror, or plastic will work too.

To make cutting easier, heat your VCT or linoleum with a heat gun or in an oven set on warm; make sure the area in which you do this is well ventilated.

As with stickers and stencils, pizza boxes are great for transporting pieces to their designated sites (figure 1.10).

This technique has a lot to recommend it over standard graffiti and wheatpasting: it can be more permanent, it makes use of a medium not yet often utilized creatively, it is still virtually unknown to the authorities and so can be remarkably easy to get away with. Here's a dare: make asphalt mosaics as popular — and unpopular — tomorrow as spray paint murals are today!

Banner Drops

Ingredients

- Paintbrushes
- Rope or chain
- Plastic water bottles or similar weights
- Extra-strong upholstery sewing thread or dental floss
- Fabric — you can use painters' drop cloth covered in white primer paint, or visit the laundry bin of a disagreeable institution one night to collect their tablecloths.
- Paint — preferably water-based, as oil paint takes forever to dry, house paint works well enough, and is cheapest.

Optional Materials

- Padlocks (no key necessary, if you come upon ten unlocked), or metal clips
- Sewing machine
- Gallon jugs filled with sand — for weights, if there is nowhere to tie the banner up
- Automobile

Optimal Deployment Locations

- Parking garages
- Highway overpasses
- Building roofs
- You could also try the balcony level of a church, movie theater, coliseum, auditorium…

Instructions

A banner drop can enable you to get a simple message out in dramatic style. Drop-banners take significantly more time to prepare, but significantly less to deploy, than graffiti of comparable size, and are less illegal. They can be most effective in crowded environments during special events, or to accentuate and clarify an action taking place nearby. You can make a really huge

banner by sewing together smaller pieces of cloth; be sure they won't come undone, though! Double- or triple- stitching with exceptionally tough thread is probably necessary. When deciding on the size, keep in mind the way it will be transported to the place of use, the dimensions of the area where it will be deployed, and the distance from which it will be seen.

To decorate your banner, you need not be an accomplished artist; simply draw a scale model of the image or statement you would like to paint, separate that image into equal sections, mark off matching sections proportionately on the banner, and use these as guides. You can trace the lines first with chalk. You will probably need an open space outside the surveillance of the authorities to work in, since when your banner appears you won't want it- or yourself — to look familiar to any agents of law enforcement. The paint will almost certainly soak through the material and onto whatever is beneath it, so be prepared for this as well, in terms of security as well as tidiness. Be careful above all not to spell any words wrong (!) or bunch up your lines of text near the end, and make sure your colors are striking and high-contrast and your images similarly easy to discern. Don't use spray paint to paint your banner unless you are especially talented with it.

Fold the edges of both sides of the banner over equal lengths of rope or chain, and sew the fabric around it. Run the thread through the rope or chain and the banner, so the banner won't just slip off when it is vertical, and make sure to leave plenty of rope or chain at the top. Chain is heavier and thus provides more stabilizing weight for the banner than rope does, but is also much harder to transport and use quickly (and more expensive, unless you're hunting/gathering it) ; it is much more difficult for police to break, but they will probably pull the banner up before cutting it off, anyway, so unless you can somehow anchor the bottom of it as well as the top, using chain will probably not add to your banner's time in the limelight. If your banner is exceptionally long, it's probably wise to sew a length of rope or chain along a segment in the center of the top side, too, leaving some of it on each side, so the banner can be hung from four points rather than two.

At the bottom of the ropes or chains, attach your water bottles, full of water. Attach them very firmly so they won't drop off, as that could cause problems. These are weights to hold the banner in place (the first banner we dropped, off the balcony of a restaurant at which we had bought a root beer as a pretext, simply tangled up in the wind and was useless). For further protection against the wind, make U-shaped cuts in the fabric — the wind should blow through these without troubling the rest of the banner (figure 2.1). Roll your banner up bottom first, with the water bottles inside and the text facing the inside of the roll; practice being sure which way your banner unrolls before you are in the moment of truth, so you don't lose time panicking or, worse, get it wrong. Be careful not to roll your banner too tightly, especially as the paint, even dry, can make it stiff and a little sticky: it may not unroll all the way when you drop it, forcing you to pull it up and unroll it yourself in perhaps less-than-optimal circumstances.

For deployment, a team of two is usually best. Pick a time and location where the visibility balances out the risk. You'll have to get the banner there, somehow: if it's a freeway overpass, you could pull over and hop out, or just run up the ramp with it if you don't want to risk a license plate number being taken; if it's at the top of a busy corporate office building patrolled by guards during a terrorism scare, you're probably better off not carrying a huge, suspicious parcel up in the elevator — are there stairs in the back? If you find an abandoned building that you can get in and out of easily enough and that isn't frequently checked upon, and you don't have anywhere else to work, you could theoretically smuggle in the materials and go through some or all of the banner-making process inside before dropping the banner(s) off the roof — and securing the hatch behind you with your own padlock for extra longevity. The hard part is always going to

be getting out of the place after you've dropped: generally speaking, the more conspicuous the location is, the more people know immediately that you're there, and the longer it will take you to get down and out — and the less likely you are to have any kind of crowd cover as you do so. Dress as nondescriptly as possible (or as maintenance employees!),and practice moving quickly up and down stairwells without getting suspiciously out of breath. Check the area out ahead of time; if you're going to be on security cameras at any point, bring a change of clothes, glasses, a hat, a reversible jacket, or other accessories to disguise your identity.

Transport your banner in such a way that you know exactly how to orient it when the moment comes. Unless you think you'll have time to tie knots at a leisurely pace, consider using padlocks or carabineers: have a loop pre-tied at the end of the rope so you can simply loop it around the bar or pipe or whatever you're securing it to and snap the lock or clip onto the loop and the rope on the other side. If there's nowhere to attach a rope or chain, you can use heavy weights — plastic jugs filled with sand, for example — to anchor the banner. Make sure the ropes or chains suspending your banner are stretched tight apart at the top, so it won't bunch up-check in advance to make sure this is possible, and that your anchor can handle the weight you're suspending from it. Then walk or run like hell and keep your cool.

There are a variety of other approaches to bannering. If you can toss a weight with a string attached from one rooftop to another across a street, and your friend on the other side ties a rope to the string for you to reel back and secure, you could then pull a banner across the rope to hang in the middle of the street on carabineers or shower curtain loops; some hardware stores stock a little dart-gun device that electricians use for getting wires across cramped spaces, which might be useful for such situations. There is a banner-dropping technique in which people are suspended in the air with the banner, as a form of civil disobedience to ensure the banner will remain up for as long as the individuals are willing to hang there; this has been applied, among other places, in Seattle just before the W.T.O. meeting in November 1999. Such a technique is dangerous enough that it should only be taught in person. For another application of banners — launching them with hot air balloons — see Corporate Downsizing (pg. 205).

Account

For our final test run before composing this recipe, we dropped a 27' long by 18' wide banner (fourteen stolen tablecloths triple-stitched together by sewing machine, a gallon and a half of house paint, 100 feet of rope, two water bottles, and four metal clips which were the only items we had to pay for) off the top of a six-story parking garage in the middle of a Fourth of July parade in downtown Greensboro, North Carolina. The banner could be seen from down two streets along which the parade proceeded, on one of them up to a distance of many blocks. We tailored our message to be accessible to an audience attending a patriotic event, an audience composed largely of white and African-American working parents and their kids, while responding dearly to recent government propaganda encouraging people to accept curtailed freedom in return for "protection" from the "terrorist threat": Those who trade liberty for security will end up with neither, with Ben Franklin's name (as the dubious author of an earlier version of this quote) and a circled A at the bottom. That same government propaganda had made us quite nervous in the days leading up to the event: every time the radio was on, it was some announcer talking about how police and plainclothes F.B.I. agents would be out in force and on full alert this Independence

Day to prevent terrorist strikes. We were afraid that, running up to the railing above the crowd and dropping a great bundle toward them, we could look even more dangerous than we were.

The parking garage was closed, off limits to the public (police line do not cross) on the day of the parade, but we had noted in advance that some vehicles were left parked there for many days at a time, and parked a car with the banner in the trunk on the top deck there the preceding day. When the parade began, two of us, dressed in our nicest clothes, snuck past security and walked up the first couple of decks; a man drove past us in a staff vehicle, but for some reason did not stop us (our story would have been that we had left something in our car, which was parked there before the area was dosed off, but I'm glad we didn't have to tell it). We then took the elevator, which we hadn't been expecting to work, to the top deck, which was — amazingly — unguarded, took out the banner, lost precious instants debating which side was the front and struggling to lock a car trunk neither of us had ever locked before, clipped the ropes around a metal pipe, threw the banner over the side, and realized that it hadn't unrolled all the way. We had rolled it far too tightly, especially since it hadn't needed to be all that compact, waiting in the car trunk! We had to pull it back over the edge, having already made our presence known on the street below as well as on the security cameras, and unroll all twenty-seven feet of it into the parking lot, before struggling to throw the banner, bunch by bunch, back over the edge, with great difficulty (and more than a little vertigo, as a vertical shaft opened between us and the wall). All this induced feelings of panic, but there would have been no reason to leave then and render all the work we had done and risks we had taken for naught; we got it right, finally, and made for the stairs. We took these to the second floor, but, on opening them, saw police; we ran back up to the third floor, walked across one length of the garage and took a single flight of stairs we had scouted out in advance, and managed, against the odds, to escape without even being questioned. One of us changed clothes immediately after the banner dropped, but still in front of the security cameras, the other after we reached the street and the safety of the crowd, which was perhaps a better strategy.

It took them an amazing half an hour before they began to pull up the banner — that is, it hung above the parade for most of its duration! There were two sympathetic groups participating in the parade — the Greensboro Peace Coalition, and the more radical anarchist contingent — and both made sure, as they passed, to emphasize the presence of the banner to any who might have missed it before, by pointing at it. Several photographers took pictures or footage of it, and there were many others at the parade who were visibly thrilled about its appearance. Best of all, later that day, when the banner had been brought down and thrown under the police truck in attendance at the festival following the parade, someone managed to sneak it out from under the noses of the pigs, to be returned to its makers! So when they least expect it, it will hang again over the city.

Banner Hoists

This method works on any horizontal beam, pipe, or limb that is low enough to toss a rope over but high enough so no one can reach the bottom of your banner. It is particularly well suited to the ridged arms of traffic light posts in busy intersections. Power lines may electrocute you, so leave them be. Hoisted properly, a banner can only be removed by a crane truck, which will block traffic and make a further spectacle. With practice this method can be carried out in a matter of moments, so busier intersections can be targeted.

Ingredients

- 3 Bundles of plastic-coated clothesline — *Two of the lines need to be four times as long as your target pole is high. Refer to "Tips" at the bottom for how to measure the height of the pole.*
- 2 Large molly bolts — *Molly bolts must be able to fit through carabineers when folded but not when open (figure 2.2).*
- 2 Cheap hardware store carabineers
- 1 Roll of duct tape
- 2 Tube socks — *bottoms filled with grain, pebbles, or any weight that can be tossed high*
- 1 banner — *see preceding recipe*
- 2 Thin pieces of 2" by 1" wood — *to keep the banner straight, one should be about 8" longer than your banner, the other the same length as your banner.*
- Staple gun
- 2 Pairs of sharp scissors — *utility scissors are best*
- 2 PEOPLE W/ GOOD THROWING ARMS — *aim helps too!*

Instructions: Some Assembly Required

Paint a hell of a banner — you won't get it back. Center the banner on the longer piece of wood and staple it securely. You should have 3 or 4 extra inches of wood on each end. Attach the other piece of wood along the bottom for weight. No need for the bottom wood to overhang figure 2.3).

Cut two 5 1 lengths of clothesline. Make a 6" loop at one end of each piece and rein- force with duct tape.

Tie an overhand knot 4" from each loop. Run the clothesline through the molly bolt so that its jaws close away from the loop. Tie another knot on the other side of the molly bolt to keep it in place. Make sure the bolt can still open and close figure 2.4).

Tape the end of the 5' piece of clothesline to the front of the piece of wood and the carabineer to the back {figure 2.5). Be firm with the tape. You need to be certain that the carabineer will stay perpendicular to the banner as shown. You also don't want the end of the line to come loose. Repeat on the other end.

You have two more packs of clothesline, one for each side. Feed a clothesline through one of the loops. Don't stop feeding until it is exactly halfway through. Now you have the same amount of line on either side of the loop. Tape the two ends of the line together. Use duct tape to attach weighted socks to the two ends of the clothesline. Repeat for other side figure 2.6). Now your banner is all set!

Position the banner facing oncoming traffic and set it down on the road so all hands are free for tossing. Both people simultaneously throw the weighted socks over the pole (figure 2.7). Be careful not to cross the lines. Look out for tangling spots like trees, power lines, or hanging traffic lights. When the weighted socks have successfully delivered the ropes over the pole, each person grabs their weighted sock and clips its clothesline into the carabineer.

Now use your scissors to cut the weighted socks off the clothesline, while keeping a firm grasp on both ends of the line.

Each person pulls both ends of their clothesline so that the banner rises evenly. Pull until the molly bolt passes through the carabineer and snaps open. This can be the most difficult part. You may need to jiggle the lines to get the molly bolt through, but don't panic… if it gets stuck, keep jiggling {figure 2.8).

Once your molly bolt is caught on the carabineers, pull just one end of the clothes- line until the other end falls free of the loop. Then .. — you're done! If everything goes smoothly, the entire hoist should only take a minute or two.

The Hoist

Practice throwing! Once you get out there, traffic lights can be higher than you thought Tips Maybe you'll be a little nervous. Gain confidence by practicing your throws beforehand. Take a doubled clothesline with weighted socks attached and practice on a quiet street at night.

Scout out your area ahead of time. Figure out who is going to stand on which side. Look for possible problems like power lines or tree branches. Monitor traffic flow. Walk and talk through all the steps to make sure you and your partner get it.

If you are doing this anywhere near power lines, wait for a dry day!

To determine the height of a pole … Stand around fifty feet from the pole. Hold a small ruler at arm's length. Position the ruler so that the zero is at the base of the pole. Banner Now measure the pole's height in inches as if you were measuring a photograph of the pole {figure 2.9). Let's say that, in your view, the pole is "9 inches" high. Stay in the same space and keep your arm straight. Pivot the ruler so that it is horizontal {figure 2.10). Measure from the base of the pole to some point on the ground that is "9 inches" away. Make note of something at that point — let's say there's a crack in the sidewalk there. Now you know that the crack in the sidewalk is the same distance from the bottom of the pole as the pole is high. Use a tape to measure the distance — or, if you know the length of your stride, you genius you, pace it out.

Remember — the doubled clothesline must go over the pole and all the way back down to the ground. That means each line must be at least four times the height of the pole.

You can convert this method for solo operations. Fix one carabineer in the center of the banner. Connect one line to both ends of the banner so that it is loose like a picture- hanging wire. Tie the molly bolt rope to the center of the loose rope. Otherwise, follow the same directions as above and you should be able to hoist the banner by yourself.

Banner Toss

This small-scale banner-hanging technique takes its cue from that perennial feature of suburbia, sneakers wrapped around power lines. Add text to a strip of cloth, plastic, or Tyvek about four inches wide by about three feet long. At each end, sew or glue a loop big enough to fit a four-inch section of broom handle. Cut two such sections, and use waterproof glue to secure them in the loops. Tie about four feet of string to one end of the banner, and tie a third section of broom handle to the other end of the string. Roll the whole thing up — it should fit in your pocket — and take it out to the streets. Practice tossing until it only takes one try to get your string wrapped around the power lines and your banner hanging down {figure 2.11).

Behavioral Cut-ups

Our civilization prizes linear progress and development, in which an individual sets goals and pursues them; but there is another kind of growth, another kind of learning, in which an individual broadens her frame of reference. Focusing only upon linear progress, a person might work his whole life and attain all his objectives without ever expanding his awareness of life's possibilities. Indeed, in this objective-oriented society, it is difficult not to develop tunnel vision; and even if you pledge yourself to a life of exploration, in which every day is to be an adventure, routine is bound to set in sometimes.

That's where behavioral cut-ups come in. A behavioral cut-up is a method for making the familiar unfamiliar, and thus jerking yourself out of the grip of inertia. In contrast to product-oriented activity, the practice of behavioral cut-ups implies that it could be important to achieve something you can't anticipate. Unlike most of the recipes in this book, behavioral cut-ups are not useful for achieving specific ends, but rather for establishing perspectives that can indicate new beginnings. Behavioral cut-ups offer a way to uncover the adventure and potential hidden within activities that are normally shrouded in habit.

Behavioral cut-ups are comparable to literary and artistic cut-ups, in which existing texts and materials are disassembled and reconstructed in new ways. Dadaists used to cut up newspapers and books of poetry, and generate new poems by drawing the pieces out of a hat at random; likewise, the behavioral cut-up artist applies scissors and glue to personal or social text, reconfiguring commonplace aspects of life in extraordinary ways.

A behavioral cut-up is not a randomization of life so much as a means of departure for unexplored territory; as such, it can require careful deliberation. Choosing the most promising adjustments to make is a rigorous science, if not an exact one.

In the most basic form of behavioral cut-up, you attach a stipulation to some formerly mundane aspect of life: for example, you decide not to pay for food for a fill month, or dedicate yourself to climbing every single oak tree in the county, or commit to sending your family one postcard every day for a year. Such stipulations focus fresh attention on matters you had taken for granted, sharpening your awareness, limbering up your sense of self, and revealing new possibilities. Venturing outside the circuit of your daily life, you temporarily enter a parallel world in which you are a different person, and learn all the things that are banal to that person but brand new to you.

Behavioral cut-ups are not as unusual as their esoteric name makes them sound. In traditions stretching back to the dawn of civilization, warriors and shamans have practiced them as a form of vision quest: mimicry of animals, ritual use of intoxicants, ecstatic dancing, public nudity and other taboo acts, rituals of exhaustion, deprivation, and pain — these are time-honored techniques for psychic and social experimentation. Even in our prosaic age, people engage in similar activities, to varying degrees: fasting during the month of Ramadan, building a fort out of cushions in the living room and refusing to come out all evening, going to a Halloween party dressed up as Fidel Castro and spending the whole night in character, all these are cut-ups, however un-

conscious or unoriginal. Many people have first-hand experience with simple food cut-ups: becoming vegan, for example, focuses new attention on food, transforming social interactions and often resulting in increased interest in cooking or gardening. It only remains for us to develop a deliberate practice of behavioral cut-ups for their own sake, as tools for education, inspiration, and liberation.

Behavioral cut-ups need not be grandiose; indeed, the most powerful ones rarely sound good on paper. It may not seem like a big life change to commit to something trivial like initiating a conversation with a stranger every morning, but the cumulative effects can be startling. More extreme behavioral cut-ups can bring you into conflict with your fellow citizens — indeed, the other meaning of "cut up" is misbehave- but in the long run, such conflict serves to keep life interesting for everyone.

Behavioral cut-ups may sound like the province of performance artists and others of the privileged class, but it is a mistake to write them off as such. Taken seriously, the behavioral cut-up is an exercise in self-expansion, a practice as essential for revolutionaries as mutual aid or self-defense.

Make two lists: things that bore you, and things that are terrifying to you. The former should be easy to compile, while the latter may be difficult even to admit to yourself. Randomly select an item from each list. Invent a practice that combines them: for ex- ample, if you picked "commuting" from your boring list, and "public speaking" from your frightening list, you might dare yourself to deliver an oration every morning on the subway. Keep a journal of your experiences and interactions.

Select an activity that has always struck you as absurd or unjust and refuse to participate in it, no matter how complicated this proves. This may sensitize you to tragedies that were once invisible — a few months into veganism, you enter a leather market and experience it as a grave robbers' bazaar — or reveal the excesses of your society to your fellow citizens, as in the case of the ascetic who carries with him all the trash he produces.

Give yourself a special relationship with a location by associating it with a specific activity. For example, you could decide that whenever you are in Germany, you are a runner who gets up at dawn to jog around the city.

If your outward appearance has always provided you with the privilege of passing as a "normal" human being, paint or dye your skin, or shave off your hair and eyebrows, or dress in drag. Don't make any attempt to explain yourself if you want the full benefit of learning what life is like for those who attract attention whether they want it or not.

Go without something you have taken for granted your whole life. For example, learn to recognize all the edible and medicinal plants that grow in your region, and spend a season living outside, subsisting on them. Refuse to set foot in any buildings for the duration of this period.

Take a well-known tool — for this example we'll use a toaster — and turn it back into an object. Take it far from the kitchen, perhaps to a mountaintop or a n abandoned grain silo. Say its name continuously for thirty minutes: say it fast, say it slow, spell it out, sing it to the tune of your favorite childhood song. Now take it with you to the bank. Wear it as a shoe. Run a mile in it. Exhausted, curl up with it for a long nap. Remove one of its shiny panels and write a letter upon it to a friend with whom you have lost touch. Invent a dozen other uses for it, and utilize it thus until these are habitual and toast seems strange.

Violate unspoken social laws about the application of space. Squat one of those vast 24-hour super-marts for a few days. Conduct experiments, play games, graze on food in your "pantry,

“find a quiet comer to sleep. Pick a neglected category of items (green plastic things, paraphernalia of insecurity, materials not produced by slave labor) and, cartload by cartload, establish a new section for it. Use stationery to write letters to friends, use the phone to invite them over. Throw a party — guests need not bring food or gifts. Take a disposable camera off the shelf; after taking some unusual photos, repackage it as a gift to its future owner. Add to this list of things to do as the days go by and your derangement intensifies.

Become a guru. Go to a public place where you can set up camp, and establish a constant presence there. Bring a project. It will have to be a project that creates ripples of notoriety — rumors should spread about your presence. People will approach with stories for you: give them time, listen. You, above dose friends, will be told of injuries, secrets, dilemmas, desires. Do not try to solve problems or offer advice: your role is to hold the stories as if you were a hiding place. Your visitors will return to sort through them, to make amendments and new deposits, to revisit old ones. They will offer you food. Occasionally they will ask about your life — but remember, they do this only out of politeness and habit, for they know that you are a magic person, you have a project. As your relationships grow, your needs will be increasingly met by the offerings of your visitors. These gifts carry with them the power to cast spells on their behalf. Heal them, make them well.

Concoct and carry out your own rites of passage. Invent a series of games to play with your friends, and announce a month during which you w]l change your own lives in preparation for the following years of changing the world. You could begin with elaborate scavenger hunts, and conclude with a sequence of challenges: Starting at noon Friday at Danielle’s house in the placid suburbs, who can get arrested first? (This particular example is tailored for the privileged children of the bourgeoisie; there are other equivalents.) Who can write the most fantastic novel? (This is how Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein was written — it was her first.) If the world were to end tomorrow, what would you do today? OK, on the count of three, go do it. What do you fear most of all? For the final exam, confront it, live through it. The ones who survive will be ready for anything.

Account

Schwabisch Hall, Germany was a world away, but when we left home we brought along our clothes. We packed our language, and friends with whom to speak it; and since we brought all that, we couldn’t forget our habits, personalities, and histories. We dragged along grudges, we smuggled in crushes. On the runway, the airplane fought to gain speed, its belly stuffed with our baggage.

As I stared out of the window, the trip began to seem less like an unimaginable voyage and more like a visit to the ocean floor in a little submarine. It seemed clear that for the full promise of travel to unfold, we needed more than an unimaginable place like the small town in Germany for which we were headed; we needed to be unimaginable ourselves. After some deliberation, it struck me: “In Germany, I am a runner.” Selma thought it was a good plan — and like me, she had the qualification of not being a runner anywhere else. So we made a pact to behave as though we were runners from the day we arrived until the day we left, a full two weeks.

The next morning, for the first time in our lives, we woke up at a quarter to eight and embarked on an hour-long run. Afterwards, exhausted, we sat down with pen and paper to make maps.

Though our two maps were of the same path, they bore little resemblance, but both showed the waterfall. We had taken a long and overgrown trail to the west of town. Just as I was aching to turn around, the air had become mysteriously cool; the sound of rushing water pulled my mind from my suffering and my eyes from my toes. The waterfall was luminous and green, thick with moss that guided the falling water and made the face of the little cliff look like the bearded face of a gnome. Too winded to speak, we let the scene wash away the words and the pain. Yes! We had traveled.

To be in an unknown place is to be disoriented, inspired, exalted by the unknown. But being receptive to the unknown means becoming unknown. Traveling to Germany presented an opportunity to be free of inertia, free of the part of myself that only notices what I expect to notice and only does the things I know myself to do. What I searched for there was a possible me, a version of myself who, in that case, ran every morning. In that foreign space I noticed what he noticed and thought his thoughts. I found a waterfall on a tangled path, an abandoned tunnel covered with vines and graffiti, the ruins of a castle, and a foggy morning on which, at the peak of our run, the mountaintops looked like islands. I found my body reinventing itself for new challenges.

In going to Germany, I could have stopped speaking, I could have dreaded to dance in the streets without reservation, I could have confined myself to a wheelchair, I could have become a poet or a stand-up comic. I can only imagine the places where those experiments would have brought me. I do how that there are people who will live and die in Schwabisch Hall without ever seeing the things we've seen. I am also reminded that there are just as many waterfalls, sanctuaries, and castles in Pittsburgh — I've simply not yet been the runner to find them.

Bicycle Collectives

Ingredients

- Some dedicated and selfless volunteers — *and the will to learn and perfect more*
- Decent mechanical skills — *Space — adequate, dependable space*
- A supply of bicycles
- The kindness of strangers — *which will more often provide one or more of the above.*

Instructions

Oh, my god. You want to start a bike collective. You poor thing. You have these fuzzy visions of eager children gathering around you, awed by your masterful use of the truing stand and so happy about the awesome BMX bike that you're about to give them — give them — in perfect working order. You imagine streets dogged with bikes generated by your energetic crew, radical bike posses going for midnight rides, more respect for bikes on the road, and hundreds of newly empowered bike riders who have learned how to completely overhaul their bikes from your noble organization, bypassing the bike shops entirely I'm sure you're smart enough to realize that all of these hopes are impossibly exaggerated. I should also point out that some or all of them are at least partly in reach, however, and being part of a functioning, effective bike collective can be very satisfying.

So, to start. You already apparently have at least one dedicated and selfless volunteer — yourself — but you would be wise to recruit more if you haven't already. At least one of these should have some idea of what they're doing when it comes to bike repair, and should begin teaching some skills to those members who lack them. Even basic lessons in patching and changing inner tubes are a good start — you don't have to start out overhauling hubs. People will obviously learn things as they go along, but it will be demoralizing to you and perplexing for your first customer if you get most of the way through fixing the bike and then get stuck when confronted with a loose bottom bracket. When repairing for the public, there should always be at least one person around who can take care of a particular problem, so they can take over when necessary.

You should also figure out what the goals of your organization are: this should seem fairly obvious, but you'll want to know if your focus is repairing bikes, distributing them (and to whom?), teaching bike repair, starting and maintaining a yellow bike program (distinctive bikes scattered for public use around the city), activism, something else, or some combination of the above. Even crafting a mission statement, hokey as it sounds, can help clarify your ideas. Not everything you decide on has to be attempted immediately — there's nothing wrong with starting small — but having larger visions can also push you to branch out once you've started to get the hang of things, instead of continuing just to fix bikes for the six kids who live on your street.

Choose a name. It can be as explicitly political or as excruciatingly unthreatening (The Fuck SUVs Collective, The Bike Garden) as you wish, but try not to pick something that's going to embarrass you in a year or two. Also, a reliable way to contact the group is important — if your phone numbers change a lot, open a free email account. Your contact information will be circulating far and wide once you get started. Finally, decide what kind of structure you want the organization to have. Do you want to be an official non-profit, with bylaws and a board of directors, or do you want to be a loosely organized group of grimy mechanics, sharing nothing but a driving passion for bikes and bike repair? If you're fixing bikes for other people, or giving them bicycles, how much legal responsibility can you take on as an organization if anyone is injured? Do you want to draw up a waiver (a good idea, probably, just to discourage lawsuits, even if the waiver wouldn't hold up in court), or do you want to just cross your fingers and hope that no one is mean enough to pick on such a cuddly group? Do you want to charge money for your services? Recommend compensation? Establish a sliding scale? Work out a casual or carefully calculated system for exchanging people's labor for your skills and tools and parts? Depend on donations? Do you want to schedule a particular day of the week (or two or three) to meet, especially if you're providing repairs or workshops or some public service, or do you want to leave it up to individual whim?

Much can be improvised when it comes to bike collectives, but you're definitely going to need some bikes. Luckily, they're generally pretty easy to come by. Universities and police departments often collect abandoned bikes; landfills and dumpsters see their fair share; and once the word gets out about your organization, you will get more bikes than you will ever need from middle-class families whose kids have grown too big for their old Huffys, or who no longer ride those nice commuter bikes that have been sitting in their basements for fifteen years. If you establish a good relationship with a bike shop, they may send everyone on to you who hopes to sell an old bike that isn't worth enough for any shop to be interested: having been rejected by the shops, people will often be eager just to get the bikes (which are usually in better shape than the ones you dig out of a dumpster) off their hands, and will drop them off wherever you tell them. A lot of the bikes you get will be of low quality and in horrible shape, and many should go straight to the dump (clean metal recycling, if they offer it), but before long you will have more than you can keep up with that are perfectly good machines.

Also not negotiable is at least one full set of bike tools. Expect some of these tools to disappear every once in a while, especially if you're working with kids, and be prepared to replace them. You can do without a few things (a truing stand, bike stands, a headset press) to start out, but you will definitely need a full array of wrenches (cone, box, Allen, spanner), pliers, tire levers, chain tools, wire cutters, freewheel removers, screwdrivers, bike pumps, lubes, etc. You can improvise substitutes for some tools, like using an adjustable wrench to remove pedals, but ideally you should be able to repair an entire bike with whatever you've got. Tools, you will discover, especially the specialized tools needed to repair a bicycle, are very expensive, which is one reason that most people will never learn to repair a bike, and will instead continue to rely on bike shops. Coming by these tools cheaply is not easy. You can hope for generous donors, a miraculous day at the bike shop's dumpster, serendipity, an experienced and fearless shoplifter, or whatever form of Robin Hood you prefer, but it may turn out to be necessary to buy some things with your own money at first — in time, donations your organization receives will probably be enough to pay back anyone generous enough to lend some money for start-up costs. Such are the laws of karma.

Luckily, you do not necessarily need bike parts. I say "not necessarily" because if you desperately need to cut comers, you can always cannibalize parts from other bikes. Keep in mind, however, that this will probably not be very effective on a large scale. If you decide to do it when you're just starting out, instead of purchasing [also expensive] bike parts, or wheedling them out of someone, make sure that the parts you're taking off that old junker are actually safe and functioning pieces. Cracking tires, worn brake pads, crusty chains — you're not doing anyone any favors by keeping those parts in circulation. Also, if you do this for any length of time you will inevitably discover that certain parts tend to be wrong more than they are right (rear wheels waffled, cables and chains rusted beyond usability, tires dry rotted), and you will end up not fixing a lot of bikes because you can't get parts for them. Bike shop dumpsters are good places to look for parts, but keep an eye out for tires with slits in them from a careless box cutter, and other common ways that parts are damaged — they're probably thrown out for a reason, after all. It may just be company policy to discard any returns, no matter how pristine, but safety is an important consideration when other people are relying on your services. Also, if there's a distribution warehouse for bike parts in your area, it may be a good source for gently used (or, sometimes, apparently untouched) parts.

One of the most frustrating aspects of starting a bike collective can be finding a space for it. Perhaps it is so frustrating because it doesn't seem like it should be such a stumbling block: it's a big world, after all, and you'd think some small part of it would be available to altruistic bike fiends. Generally, though, and especially if you don't have the money for renting a space, it can be tough to find one adequate for your needs. You may not care if it's indoor space (shelter from rain, wind, and cold, and a nice concrete floor are definitely good things) or outdoor space (mmmmm, sunshine); you don't need fancy, and don't mind grungy. You're flexible in so many ways. But you need to be able to access it whenever your organization has decided you'll want to use it (no agreeing to share a practice space with a band if they're given to interminable jam sessions on your preferred work day). like your contact information, you should try to have semi-permanent plans to remain in your space, so don't choose your boyfriend's backyard if he's moving out in two months. Obviously, any space will do as a stopgap measure, but if you do things right, people will be returning to you, so make it as easy for them as you can. You need to be able to leave things (bikes, tools, parts, etc.) at that space, and, if it doesn't have a locking door, you want to be able to leave things there without having them mysteriously vanish during the night (so vacant lots are probably not a good idea). And you need a decent amount of space. Nothing is more irritating than being in the middle of some complicated, not-quite-mastered repair, and leaning over to pick up a dropped wrench only to bang your head on something. lots of things on a bike bite, and some bite hard. You need to be able to keep a respectful distance, as biting back is rarely an option.

A garage or backyard is frequently your best bet: they're free, relatively secure, and generally roomy. Grass is nice and cushy, but easy to lose tiny nuts and washers in (gravel is not cushy at all, and perhaps even worse for losing parts in), so consider using a tarp or some other kind of cover for the ground. Try not to alienate landlords and neighbors with egregious messiness. Consider the security of the home fronting the garage or backyard, as you will be unable to control who hears of and comes to the property, and need to be respectful of the needs of the people who are so generously offering the space (even if it's just you and your housemates).

Those are the basics. Other needs will come up as you go along, and you will be alternately amazed and appalled by people's generosity and selfishness. Some people, including some of

your friends, will look at your collective as merely a place to get free shit, and some will join the ranks of its selfless and dedicated members. When you spend a grueling day repairing bicycles for 53 howling children at a local community center, your exhaustion will be eased somewhat by the sight of 36 of them swooping around the parking lot, still shrieking, on their newly repaired bikes. But you'll probably still have a headache. You will feel a flush of pride when you repair your first headset, and then shudder inside when you remember that you still need to learn how to true a wheel. You may see no decrease in the number of cars on the road, but you will start seeing bikes that you recognize locked up outside the local grocery store, or at shows, or passing you in town. Then you can quit for good and let your minions continue your work.

Account

We started our bike collective in the summer of 2000, choosing at first the name The People's Bike Stop. The Marxist overtones were no longer cute after a while, so we changed our name. There were five of us initially: some who had big ideas about distributing bikes to children from low-income families, some with bike shop or collective experience, some with vague allegiances to a shared worldview and others with strong opinions and commitment. I myself had only learned the year before how to repair inner tubes and adjust brake pads. We set out a mission statement that we have rarely looked at since, as it appeared that we largely shared the same vision, and agreed that having an organized structure was way more professional than we were ready to be. We were willing to miss out on grants and other benefits of a more codified approach in order to try to avoid hierarchies and power struggles and other attendant hazards. (Some of that might also have been laziness.) We have also decided that the logistics of maintaining a yellow bike program would be too much for our small organization to handle unless we had no interest in doing anything else. While it's a fine idea, it's not something we've found a way to fit into our plans at this point.

Bicycles came from various places. Our first big haul was picking up the remains after a campus bike auction — needless to say, that method left us with a lot of useless junk, but it was an exhilarating start. In a short time, bikes and tubs of parts overwhelmed the tiny backyard in which we were working. In our area, the college population generously provides a large number of neglected bikes, and we also get lots of old three- and ten- speeds. The mountain bikes are the ones that find homes the fastest, although they tend to be lower-quality department store bikes, and their fat tires are inefficient for standard around-town and commuting purposes.

One of us financed much of our first couple of years out of his pocket, and was eventually paid back. We started working with community centers and battered women's shelters, fixing up and giving out bikes for the kids that lived there. To the general public, we gave away bikes and repairs in exchange for labor and halfhearted attempts to learn how to do some repairs. We were, and still are, pretty lenient about this: we have discussed the possibility of applying for non-profit status, writing up "prices" (hours worked, perhaps) for a list of repairs and other services, and a number of other recurring issues, but we never have. We generally inform anyone that isn't willing to work with u s for a bike that we charge $50, which helps us make back some cash, but that is a pretty small number of people. We have also traded bikes for stickers that we use to track the bicycles we repair, and for food and other useful things. The real windfall for us came

when a local bike shop agreed to sponsor u s with a decent yearly contribution, enough to get us some tools and parts, which enabled us to expand our efforts.

We spread the bike gospel on the local television channel. We had articles written about us in the paper. We raffled a bike at a local film festival. We moved to a bigger backyard. It was the fucking American Dream. Next, we hope to acquire a two-car garage!

We also gave away all our Saturdays. Our core group of members, while people have come and gone, remains at a constant four to five people. It has sometimes appeared that we were going to be left with few committed members, a couple of unfortunates desperately trying to get everything under control, but that hasn't happened yet. We have distributed more than 450 bikes in the past four years, and we have thrown out what feels like ten thousand rusty Murrays and Huffys. I don't feel like a bike collective is a way to accomplish big things: for that, you will need lobbyists or molotov cocktails, and lots of time. But bike collectives can accomplish very concrete things, even if they're small. I hope that we can claim some responsibility for the bike racks at the local co-op always being crowded. And if a couple dozen people now patch their own inner tubes rather than paying a bike shop $15 to do it, well, then that's enough for me.

Bicycle Parades

Ingredients

- Bicycles
- Riders

Instructions

Perhaps you're familiar with Critical Mass, the Food Not Bombs of bicycle parades. In or out of that context, the bicycle parade format has much to recommend it. Bicycles offer a legal opportunity to establish a presence in the street; in contrast to cars, they're much cheaper, don't automatically reveal their owners' identities, represent a participatory and environmentally friendly technology, and create an atmosphere of togetherness, since riders are not separated from one another or those around them by metal and glass. A group mounted on bicycles can take up a lot more space than the same number of pedestrians, and usually makes for a more impressive spectacle; they can also move much more quickly together or when it's time to disperse. Bicycle parades are flexible: they can be festive or confrontational, or switch back and forth between the two. A bicycle parade can bring together locals for a fun community event, or draw attention to a particular issue (local transportation policies, global environmental concerns, the crushing monotony of city life), or interfere directly with something objectionable by serving as a slow-moving barricade — or provide a blank canvas to which each participant can bring her own intentions. Last but not least, riding bicycles is fun.

Following the Critical Mass model, some cities host regular bicycle parades on a given 100 day of every month, leaving from a well-known destination. Lacking this infrastructure or desiring to forego it, you can promote a bicycle parade by stapling fliers around the handlebars of bicycles parked around town, stickering or marking on anything bicycles are often locked to (or anything bicyclists often visit — say, a popular grocery dumpster), or postering at bicycle shops. If the police in your area have repressive tendencies and you don't want them to show up and ruin the atmosphere by limiting your movements or threatening participants, avoid putting up fliers where they will see them. If police show up before the event with the intention to control it, they will probably succeed, but a single officer who discovers a parade already in progress may be powerless to stop it.

Make things exciting. Unusual bicycles — home- welded double-decker bicycles or "choppers" with exaggerated front wheels, for example — are always a hit. Bicycle trailers can carry everything from small children to sound systems. To identify your purpose to the world, string a banner between two bicycles; this might make the most sense in the back of the parade, where it can be read by motorists behind you and discourage them from driving forward into the mass of cyclists. Musical instruments and other noisemakers attract attention and keep things cheery —

when cars trapped behind your parade honk their horns, join in with a chorus of bicycle bells and whistles, refraining frustration as affirmation. A parade of costumed bicyclists or, better, bicycle floats is perfect for Halloween — or any other day of the year. Have handouts for pedestrians and drivers stuck in traffic. Keep these accessible and positive: one Critical Mass bicyclist in my hometown used to pass out oranges with pro-bicycle messages written on them.

Both your route and your method of determining it will depend on your goals. Your parade could lead to the site of a party or festival; it could wander according to the collective whims of the participants; it could be secretly plotted in advance by a rotating cabal of strategists. A bicycle parade can pass through a neighborhood, or interact with rush- hour traffic; it can take over a highway, or even storm through a shopping mall. Well-attended, long-standing Critical Mass groups have often determined tactics and policies by "xerocracy": everyone who has an idea hands out fliers promoting her suggestion, and decisions are determined by a kind of de facto consensus.

Regardless of your approach, there are some general rules of thumb that can help to keep a bunch of bicyclists safe in car territory. You'll see a lot of dangerous, stupid driving in the course of the average bicycle parade. First, stay close together, so you present a mass rather than a string of individuals; the ones chiefly responsible for this are the bicyclists in the very front, who have to set a pace slow enough for the slowest of the others. The most impatient, impetuous cyclists tend to end up in front, so don't be shy about passing messages ("slowdown! tighten up!") up to them from elsewhere in the mass. Don't let gaps that might tempt motorists open up anywhere. When there are two lanes of traffic, if s actually safer to block both, so you don't have a line of cars whizzing carelessly by you on one side. The most level-headed riders should probably stay at the very back and sides of the mass, as this is where confrontations with moronic drivers can take place; don't engage i n verbal sparring, don't act superior, let your self-assurance and obstructive presence be your revenge on insulting motorists. It's often best to ride through red lights en masse, so they don't break up your group or interfere with your mission; while passing through an intersection, the aforesaid level-headed riders should pause at the sides of the mass, their bicycles and bodies blocking cars from driving into the others. Assuming you and your cohorts are proponents of public transportation, you may want to let city buses (not to mention ambulances) pass you, being careful to fill in the space behind them immediately so other cars don't attempt to charge through it. Finally routes should be determined with the needs of all participants in mind: if they are too long or strenuous, or obscure enough to get people lost, they're no good.

You may want to make plans for breaking up (deliberately or not) and regrouping. ides Riders with cell phones can keep up with one another to organize this ; alternatively, you can designate in advance points at which to reconvene.

The police will inevitably demand that you tell them who is in charge; "no one" or "everyone" are tried and true answers, though you can also buy time if need be by saying you don't know but you'll try to find out, or promising to present their orders to the "central committee" to whom you all answer. If you have a regular ride and they start making things hard for you, surprise them with an unannounced ride to show who's boss. Don't let them intimidate you with fines or other legal harassment — if you know sympathetic lawyers, have them help you beat these in court; if you're more the disobedient type, ride in costume or incognito and don't stop to answer questions or receive tickets. You're not blocking traffic, you are traffic, right?

Another ridiculous oil war had started, just in time for our monthly bicycle ride. Owing to the lovely spring weather and the indignation of local radicals and — let's call a spade a spade — borderline liberals, we had a high turnout for our small college town: perhaps fifty bicyclists. We gathered at our usual spot in front of the post office; one of us had brought a banner ("no blood or oil"), which was jerry-rigged between two bicycles by means of somebody's shoelace. There were two police waiting at our convergence point, but somehow they lost track of us once we got going on our usual route; Critical Mass had a long history already in this town, and with police ticketing, legal struggles, positive and negative publicity, and the inexorable slide toward predictable routine already years behind us, they'd come to tolerate our fairly tame monthly rides.

This one was destined to be different, however. Some of us locals were determined that there be no business as usual while the war was on, and there were also some traveling kids in attendance, one of whom had a boombox slung over his handlebars blasting '80s metal, who were willing to take things further and had the advantage of not being known by local law enforcement.

Account

As we moved, individual conversations took place about what our route should be. Near the customary halfway point of our ride, we all pulled into a parking lot, and someone called out the question. A couple of people suggested we head to the state highway, and after minimal deliberation we were off, one of us tooting a trumpet, others ringing bells.

There was a stoplight at the main access point to this highway, and we took advantage of it to get onto it in a mass, blocking both lanes; had there not been a stoplight, it would have been extremely dangerous to get on the highway with cars speeding at us from behind. As it was, we were on the area's main artery at rush hour, blocking it entirely and moving at a snail's pace. A vast line of cars immediately backed up behind us, some stoically accepting the inconvenient consequences of living in a liberal community while others leaned on their horns and screamed. The police, strangely, were nowhere to be seen yet.

Over the following minutes, things became more and more tense at the back of our group, as a couple of particularly belligerent motorists exchanged threats and recriminations with the similarly hotheaded bicyclists bearing the banner. Suddenly, as the next exit appeared in the distance ahead of us, there was a commotion at the back of our party, followed by a screeching of wheels. Two SUVs drove right into the middle of our group. People leaped out of the way in terror as the vehicles swerved unpredictably. The one in front struck one of us from the side, knocking him off his bicycle, and then bore down directly on a volunteer at our local bicycle repair collective. He leaped from his bicycle at the last instant, out of the way of the SUV, which plowed right over the bicycle, catching it and dragging it forward in a stream of sparks. A split second later, the thud of crunching glass rang out; the back windows of the SUV had been broken with bicycle U- locks. The vehicle swerved again, pulling up crazily on the grass median in the middle of the highway, and zoomed off down the exit ramp, followed by the other SUV.

It was all over in a few seconds, but it took several more for us to take stock of what had happened. The injuries of the person who had been struck were minor, but his bicycle was unrideable and the other one had been reduced to a twisted hunk of roadkilled metal. Dragging

these, and providing emotional and physical support to the ones who had nearly been run over, we made our way even more slowly to the off-ramp. There, at the bottom of it, we saw the two SUVs stopped, along with a few police cars.

We paused at the side of the highway to figure out what to do, permitting the rest of the traffic to pass us. All the drivers that had waited behind us and seen what had happened now waved, cheered, honked, even made hand gestures signifying "peace" or "victory" — they had witnessed the brutish behavior of the first two drivers, and it had won us their sympathy and support.

We made a few mistakes at this point. We were in a vulnerable position, and needed to decide quickly what to do, but in our confusion and lack of organization, we bogged down trying to make a group decision while a couple of us went to speak to the police. The kids from out of town, feeling at risk and fearing police surveillance now that a crime had arguably been committed, decided after a couple of minutes to ride ahead along the side of the highway to the next exit and make their getaway from there; this they succeeded in doing without complications. Some really foolish questions were asked by inexperienced people with no sense of security culture (see Security Culture, pg. 461 — please!) about who had broken the windows of the SUV, but these questions were swiftly dismissed. It came out that the bicycle that had been destroyed had been a free one from the local bicycle collective (see preceding Bicycle Collectives, too!), so the main cost to us was in shock.

Meanwhile, the report from the police was that though the murderous SUV driver had announced that he wanted to press charges, he had come across even to the police officers as such a dangerous lunatic that for the time being they were simply concentrating on keeping him and u s separated. We took advantage of this confusion to make our way back into town, and finally stopped to discuss the situation. Some of us wanted to press charges against the drivers, while others doubted that the legal system could ever be used to our advantage; no charges were ever filed from either side, as it turned out.

Many of us were freaked out by the experience of danger — few had been ready for such risk, and in retrospect we should have at least been better prepared psychologically before we took to the highway- — but we were also catalyzed by it, shaken out of the routine into which our Critical Mass had fallen. We dreaded to have another ride the very next week, and that one was as thickly attended as any had been in years. There was a police officer there, who insisted he was there to "protect us," a justification the department had used before for sending police with us who then attempted to herd us, threaten us, and charge us with traffic violations; deliberately playing dumb, we reassured him over and over that, though he was new to the Mass, we would be sure to protect him. He was so demoralized by this that he eventually left! This time, we rode the opposite direction through town, taking over the main street and demanding as much attention as we had on the highway but at less risk. We gave out fliers all along the way about the behavior of the motorists the week before, and what it indicated about the kind of people who drive SUVs and support imperialist wars — and the people who got the fliers, some of whom had heard about it already, were sympathetic and receptive.

Hanging out at the local organic food co-op after that ride, we discovered that in the wake of our misadventure a local liberal who had long ago ridden with Critical Mass was trying to get a motion passed that would allocate a police escort to every ride. With some effort, he was talked out of this, on the grounds that it wasn't anyone's business to make decisions that would have permanent implications for Critical Mass in our town. This was the last of the aftermath of our

brief takeover of the highway. Things certainly would ides have played out much differently in a less liberal town, but you always have to tailor your approach to the local environment.

Painting by Bicycle

This is a recipe for leaving trails of paint on streets and sidewalks. These can lead to buried treasure or secret rendezvous points, chart surprise parade routes, or outline figures and characters that can only be made out by people willing to track the trails on a map — believe us, it happens!

Ingredients

- Bicycle bucket
- Tubing
- Paint
- 2” x 4”
- Standard-size milk crate
- Drill
- Waterproof glue
- Cable ties
- Screwdriver
- Screws
- Cork or plumbing valve
- Sandpaper
- Washers

Instructions

1. Get a bucket. I found a great one — the same diameter as the standard five-gallon, but shorter. You can use a five-gallon bucket and cut it down to a reasonable size, but you’ll have to find a way to seal the top so paint doesn’t slosh out. Remember to poke a small hole in the lid so a vacuum won’t build up.
2. Cut a square block from the two-by-four.

3. Slather the top of the block with a generous helping of waterproof glue-construction adhesive will work nicely (figure 3.1).

4. Fasten the block to a flat place in the bottom of the bucket, off-center, by screwing through the inside of the bucket into the block {figure 3,2). Drill pilot holes to avoid splitting the wood, and use washers so the screw heads won't pop through the plastic.

5. Get some tubing. After a lot of trial and error, we settled on white plastic tubing that was flexible but hard. We got it in the plumbing section. A half-inch inside diameter provides a good rate of flow — producing a stream of paint about a quarter-inch wide when you bicycle at approximately seven miles per hour — but you could go bigger.

6. Drill a hole in the bottom of the bucket, through the center of the block of wood. The hole should be the same diameter as the outside of the tubing you have chosen.

7. Use coarse sand paper or a rasp to rough up the surface on the outside of the top two inches of your tube.

8. Coat the inside of the hole and the outside of the tube with plenty of waterproof glue, using a brand that sticks to plastic and wood. Stick the tube into the hole until it is flush with the inside of the bucket [figure 3.3). Let this dry thoroughly before you move it.

9. Mount a milk crate very securely to your bike rack. Cut out a part of the bottom of the crate to accommodate the block and tube. A five-gallon bucket fits perfectly in most milk crates. Attach the bucket to the crate firmly — paint is heavy!

10 . Use cable ties to fasten the tube in place. We fastened a steel rod to the seat-stay to guide the tube to just above street level and hold it firmly behind where the back wheel touched the road (figure 3.4).

11. Your savage street smarts should tell you not to start or finish your line right in front of your secret hideout. Stop up the end of the tube with a custom-shaped cork or piece of rubber; you should duct-tape the cork into place, because all that paint will ap- ply a lot of pressure. If you feel tricky, add a plumbing valve to the end of the tube — of course there's one made to fit your tubing. If you really want to impress, make a control for it that allows you to stop and start the flow on the fly.

12 . Paint the tube black and do something to disguise the bucket. Make it look like a bag of groceries with celery and French rolls sticking out.

13. Use any old paint you can get. Stores have mis-mixed paint for cheap. Many cities maintain an old paint exchange, because it is so expensive to dispose of it. Take out a classified ad asking for paint donations for your art class. If the paint you get isn't brand new, mix it well and filter it through panty hose — otherwise, gummy paint and dried bits will dog your tube immediately.

Since completing the testing and development for the original version of this recipe, we've discovered that one can easily dumpster multi-gallon detergent containers that have a built-in spigot at the foot of one side; these might offer quite a shortcut. Come to think of it, you can get water in similar containers, though those are generally transparent and perhaps less durable.

Low-tech pedestrian re-mix: pierce the bottom and top of a can of paint with a large nail, and-quick! -go for a walk.

Account

The street arrived as a liquid; it was poured and mashed into place. Asphalt may seem solid, but it yields, listens, and records. Here, parallel black streaks run past a stoplight and into the intersection; it's a recording of tires screeching between some moment of reflex and impact. Someone died here and it was noted with a smudge of rubber — unless I'm reading it wrong and he just peeled out i n a blaze of glory. Over here the asphalt is ripped open by a weed with a tiny flower screaming, "Orange!" There is a splash of windshield in the gutter, and a slick greenish stain; when cars get hurt, they bleed. And just a few feet away — thanks to that speed bump, a gallon bucket must have tipped over in the back of a painter's truck. Now a thin trickle of robin's egg blue follows her halfway home forever. We follow, too, until the trail turns to drips and vanishes. "It's a stating point," we think.

Six days later, we are perched proudly on our own writing implements, a little fleet of bicycles carefully designed to leak paint. On a map of Montreal, we have drawn human figures, the outlines following streets and sidewalks; from the map, we've converted our drawings into written directions, and in following these we drip out drawings ten and fifteen kilometers long.

An hour into our second picture, we are overtaken by flashing lights. Oh shit! We double back onto a side road then roll into the safety of a little park. Only then do we see that our pursuer was a truck, a truck painting lines ! Hearts in our throats, we watch the groaning beast lay down a thick yellow no-passing zone. It is a river beside our trickles of yellow, red, and blue, but we are unabashed. Everyone works at the scale they can afford; tonight, we spare no expense.

How to Make a Record Player from a Bicycle

There are hundreds of ways to make a bicycle into a record player, just as there are hundreds of items that can be turned into record players. For that matter, you can turn just about anything into just about anything else — just think about what they've done with soybeans. Please take this recipe as an example of how to cash in your suspicions of an object's constructed identity.

We made our record player during a thinktank. You can read about thinktanks in this book too. We had quite a time figuring this all out and we wouldn't want to take that opportunity away from you. Also, a step-by-step guide would be absurdly long and boring, not to mention unadventurous to follow. Instead, we will start with the basic concept and move on to a few specific aspects of our design. With the fundamentals in mind, you can get busy on anything within reach.

When I was twelve, my friend David demonstrated something to me; you should try it Instructions too. He pinned a needle into a piece of paper as if it were a lapel, so the sharp end ex- tended past one edge of the paper. He turned his record player on and, holding the paper up, allowed the needle to drag gently in a groove. Led Zeppelin 11 rose faintly but clearly out of the piece of paper. I was dumbfounded.

But there's nothing too crazy about it. If you want to talk about crazy, crazy is get- ting sound off a compact disc! A record is analog. In the case of a record, analog means that the texture inside the groove fluctuates the same way air molecules moved in the the recording studio when the music was played, and the same way your eardrum vibrates when you hear the sound. The surface of the record is the texture of the sound. The only trick is making the leap from one medium to the next. The needle David used was tiny enough to fit inside the groove. The paper it was stuck into had enough surface area to put those vibrations into contact with enough air that it would be audible. Simple shit.

Fifteen years later a good friend and I locked ourselves in an abandoned office with food, water, a shit bucket, tools, Zegota's first record (with "Bike Song," natch), and, of course, a bicycle. With the latching of the door, we vowed not to leave the room until we had played that song on the bicycle. We could "by this because we knew any piece of paper and any needle could make it possible. Our job was simply to make a machine that could turn the record at a steady speed and an apparatus to hold the needle in the groove while the record turned.

Field Notes

Our speaker cone was made of paper and glue. A standard sewing needle was pinned into the end of the cone and superglued in place. The angle between the needle and record surface was around 45 degrees.

Our record player was vertical. This made the weight of our paper cone easier to deal with, because most of it was supported by a hook. The cone was further supported by a few stabilizing threads that prevented it from flopping to one side or another.

We made a Masonite platter, which we attached to the wheel of the bike with threaded rods, nuts, and washers. We used another threaded rod as the center post. We kept the record in place using a wing nut and washer.

We isolated the hand-crank apparatus from the turntable and cone by building the record player in two parts. We decided on separation because in our first attempt the vibration and jiggle caused by hand cranking made the record skip. After splitting the machine in two, the crank side could be wobbly and the record side would still spin dean. We connected the two halves with a thin rubber belt. The pulley on the crank side was fabricated from scraps; the pulley on the record side was a 27" bicycle wheel with no tire. We made the belt from thin strips of inner tube.

At first, the belt had trouble staying in the trough of the pulleys. It would gradually climb up the side and jump over the edge. We solved this problem by sewing the flat belt into a tube.

Gearing the machine was important. We wanted to be able to turn the pedal at a comfortable speed and still have the turntable going approximately 33 1/3 RPM. It turns out that is a really slow speed for a hand to turn. That's why we used such a big pulley with such a small pulley. We coupled the 27" front wheel with a 10 " pulley that we cobbled together from scraps and fixed to the bottom bracket where we took off the other crank.

Being made of bike parts, the entire drive train weighed very little. That seemed good at first, but it wasn't. Lew mass means low inertia, so the record could change speeds quickly in response to slight changes in cranking speed. To add mass, we ran a chain from our crank pulley to the sprockets on the back wheel. We froze the sprockets in place, as on a fixed-gear track bike, so the back wheel functioned as a flywheel. The fly- wheel smoothed out the inconsistent power of hand cranking, making the pitch easier to control. It also allowed you to stop cranking for a moment or change hands without too much drop in pitch.

You might break through this technological barrier, but we found that old records played louder and tracked better than new records. This is because the groves are deeper and more widely spaced.

Billboard Improvement

Instructions

Short Version: Get some paint (see Graffiti, pg. 258) or posters and wheatpaste (see Wheatpasting, pg. 598) and alter advertisements in public places to be more honest or at least humorous. This is not all that complicated; don't be intimidated by the more comprehensive instructions that follow. They are for those wishing to take this strategy to new heights of precision and visibility.

Selecting a Billboard

In choosing a sign, keep in mind that the most effective alterations are often the simplest. If you can totally change the meaning of an advertisement by changing one or two letters, you'll save a lot of time and trouble? Some ads lend themselves to parody by the inclusion of a small image or symbol in the appropriate place — a skull, radiation symbol, happy face, swastika, vibrator. On other boards, the addition of a cartoon thought bubble or speech balloon for one of the characters might be all that is needed.

Once you have identified a billboard message you wish to improve, you may want to see if there are multiple locations displaying the same advertisement. You should determine which ones give your message optimum visibility. A board on a central freeway will obviously give you more exposure than one on an obscure side street. You must

then weigh the visibility factor against other crucial variables such as physical accessibility, potential escape routes, and volume of foot and vehicular traffic during optimum alteration hours. Of course, if you can improve more than one board in the same campaign, so much the better. In a really coordinated effort, the materials and skills for a given alteration could be distributed to affinity groups, and all the billboards displaying a certain advertisement could be revised one night.

There are several standard sign types in the outdoor advertising industry. Knowing which type of sign you are about to alter may prove useful in planning the operation:

Bulletins are large outdoor sign structures, typically situated alongside federal high- ways and major urban freeways. They measure 14 1 x 48' and are usually leased in multi- month contracts, meaning that an advertisement will stay in place for at least 6 o days.

30-Sheet Poster Panels measure 12' x 25' are situated along primary and secondary roadways, and are usually updated every 30 days.

8-Sheet Poster Panels measure 6' x 12' and are usually found in high-density urban neighborhoods and suburban shopping areas. They are designed to reach both pedestrian and vehicular traffic, and are leased in 30-day increments.

Out-of-Home Media is the industry term for advertising targeted at people on the go, including bus shelters, the sides of buses and tops of taxis, subway stations, street furniture (newsstands, benches, kiosks), painted walls, and "indoor out of home" locations like airports and malls.

There are of course many non-standard formats as well, and these frequently make the most intriguing targets. Oversized bulletins, animated signs, painted buildings, and boards with neon all offer unique challenges for advanced operations. Signs featuring large, illuminated text can often be improved simply by turning off a few letters.

In choosing a target, consider how long the advertisement has been up, so you don't end up modifying a billboard the day before it is scheduled to be replaced anyway.

Planning the Improvement

A) Accessibility. How do you get up on the board? Will you need your own ladder to reach the bottom of the board's ladder? Can you climb the support structure? Is the board on a building rooftop, and if so, can it be reached from within the building, from a fire escape, or perhaps from an adjoining building? If you need ladders to work the board, they may occasionally be found on platforms on or behind the board, or on adjacent boards or rooftops.

B) Practicality. How big are the letters and/or images you would like to change? How dose to the platform at the bottom of the board is your work area? On larger boards you can rig from above and hang over the face to reach points that are too high to reach from below. We don't recommend this method unless you have some climbing and rigging experience. When hanging in one position your work area is very limited laterally. Your ability to leave the scene quickly diminishes in proportion to how convoluted your position has become. Placing huge words or images is much more difficult.

C) Security, After choosing your board, be sure to inspect it, both during the day and at night. Take note of all activities in the area. Who is around at two a.m.? How visible will you be while scaling the support structure? Keep in mind you will make noise; are there any apartment or office windows nearby? Is anyone home? Walk lightly if you're on a roof top who knows over whom you're walking.

What is the visibility to passing cars on surface streets and freeways? What can you see from your work position on the board? Even though it is very difficult to see a figure on a dark board at night, it is not impossible. Any point to which you have line-of-sight vision is a point from which you can be observed. How dose is your board to the nearest police station or highway patrol headquarters? What is their patrol pattern in the area, what is the average response time to Joe Citizen's call? You can get an idea by staking out the area and observing. Is it quiet at night or is there a lot of foot traffic? When the bars let out, will this provide cover — i.e., drunks keeping the cops busy — or will it increase the likelihood of detection by passersby ?Will people care? If you are definitely spotted, it may pay to have your ground crew approach the observers rather than just hoping they don't call the cops. Do not let them connect you with a vehicle. Have your ground crew pretend to be chance passersby in order to monitor their reactions. We've been spotted at work a number of times, and most people were amused. You'll find that most people, including officials, don't look up unless given a reason to do so.

Go up on the board prior to your hit. Get a feeling for being there and moving around on the structure at night. Bring a camera — it's a good cover for doing anything you're not supposed to: "Gee, officer, I'm a night photographer, and there's a great shot of the bridge from up here ... Check your escape routes. Can you cross over rooftops and leave by a fire escape across the block?

D) Illumination, Most boards are brightly lit by floodlights of some type. Most large boards are shut off some time between 11:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m. by a time clock control somewhere on or near the board. Smaller boards frequently are controlled by photo- electric cells or conventional time clocks, also somewhere on the board. If you find the photoelectric cell, you can turn the lights on the board off by taping a small flashlight directly into the cell's "eye." This fools the unit into thinking it is daytime and shutting off the lights.
As noted, most larger boards are controlled by time clocks. These can be found in the control panels at the base of the support structure or behind the board itself. These panels are often locked, particularly those at the structure's base. Unless you are familiar with energized electrical circuitry, we caution you to wait until the clock shuts itself off at midnight or so. Many of these boards run 220 volts and could fry you to a crisp.

E) Daytime Hits. We don't recommend this method for most high boards on or near freeways and major roads. It works well for doing smaller boards lower to the ground where the alteration is relatively quick and simple. If you do choose to work in the light, wear coveralls (company name on the back?) and painters' hats, and work quickly. Keep an eye out for parked or passing vehicles bearing the billboard company's or advertiser's name, as well as police cars. Each board has the company emblem at its bottom center.

Producing Graphic Overlays

Though powerful improvements are occasionally executed with nothing more than a spray can and a sharp wit, some actions require the production of some type of graphic overlay to alter the board's message. The more professional these overlays look, the greater the impact your modified ad is likely to have on the public. This is not to say that every hit needs to look exactly like an original — that would be prohibitively expensive for most groups. While technical competence is a worthy goal to pursue, the success or failure of your alteration will ultimately depend more on the quality of your thinking and the power of your altered message than on how well you can match a font.

A) Choosing a Production Method. Before you get too deep into the design process, you need to decide how the overlays will be produced. If you're lucky enough to have access to commercial sign-printing equipment, you can go the professional route and opt for industry-standard vinyl. Vinyl overlays are strong, light, easy to transport, and easy to apply — but unless you have an industry insider on your team, they will probably be too expensive to produce. If you or a collaborator have late-night access to the facilities of a commercial printer, neighborhood copy shop, or advertising bureau, you may be able to output your overlays on a large-format color printer or plotter.

Printing on paper nearly always requires a process known as "tiling" — cutting the image up into smaller pieces that are then reassembled into a whole. With some popular computer programs you can perform this function automatically, by selecting the "Tiling" option from the Print menu. If you don't have access to a wide-track printer, try to locate a machine that can handle 11" x 17" tabloid-sized paper: the bigger your printer's output, the fewer pieces you'll have to tile back together to create a finished overlay. Most neighborhood copy shops and many corporate offices now have color printers and copiers with 11" x 17" output.

For low cost and maximum durability, consider canvas. When impregnated with oil- based lacquer paint, a canvas overlay has the potential to last longer than the sign surface to which it is

affixed. It is heavier to carry and more difficult to secure to the sign, but it is a reliable, low-tech alternative that can be implemented inexpensively.

We don't recommend using overlays much larger than 4' x 3' . If your message is larger, you should section it and butt the sections together for the finished image. It gets very windy on boards, and large paste-overs are difficult to apply.

B) Scale. If you are changing only a small area — a few letters, a small symbol — you probably do not need to go to any elaborate lengths to match or design your "overlay," the finished image /lettering you'll be applying to the board. Just take actual measurements or tracings directly off the board. If, however, you intend to create overlays of great size and/or number of letters and you want the finished image to look as much as possible like the advertisers themselves had made it, you should plan on more elaborate preparation. Find a position roughly level with the board and looking at it square on, between zoo' and 1000 1 away. Photograph the board from this position and make a tracing from a large print of the photo. Using measurements you have taken on the board (height, width, letter height, etc.), you can create a scale drawing of your intended alteration. From this, it will be possible to determine how large your overlays will need to be and what spacing will be required between letters.

C) Cola* Matching. There are two basic ways to match the background and colors of the lettering or image area:

1. On painted or paper boards you can usually carve a small (1" x 1") sample directly off the board. This does not always work on older painted boards that have many thick layers of paint.

2. Most large paint stores carry small paint sampler books. It is possible to get a pretty close match from these samplers. We suggest sticking to solid colors and relatively simple designs for maximum visual impact.

D) Letter Style. If you wish to match a letter style exactly, pick up a book of fonts from a graphic arts store or borrow one from a self-serve print shop. Use this in conjunction with tracings of existing letters to create the complete range of lettering needed for your alteration. You can convincingly fake letters that aren't on the board by finding a closely matching letter style in the book and using tracings of letters from your photo of the board as a guide for drawing the new letters.

E) Producing Overlays From Computer Output. Computers with desktop publishing software offer many advantages to the modem billboard liberator. Fonts and colors can be matched precisely, professional-looking graphical elements can be added to your text message, and scale and spacing become much easier to calculate.

After you have designed the overlay and printed out your tiles, you'll need to assemble the individual printouts jigsaw-style and glue them onto some sort of backing material. Heavy pattern paper works best for this, but you can also use 1/8-inch foam core for overlays less than 30 inches on a side. Start in one comer, adhering the first tile with spray adhesive to the backing material. Carefully assemble the rest of the tiles, trimming off unprinted margin space as required and laying them down one at a time, making sure all the edges are well-secured. If you get a little off-kilter at some point in the process and the pieces don't line up with absolute precision, don't worry — large-scale work is more forgiving, since people will be viewing it at a distance. When all the tiles are secured, reinforce the edges with clear packing tape. If it's going to be a wet night,

or if there's a chance your work may stay up for a few days or more, consider weather-proofing your overlay with a coat of dear lacquer.

F) Tiling With a Photocopier. If you don't have access to a computer with desktop publishing software, but do have access to a good copy machine, you can duplicate the procedure described above using the copier's "enlarge" function. First, create a scale original of your overlay on a single sheet of paper. Next, pencil a grid over your drawing, with each section being proportionate to the largest size of paper the copier can accommodate (letter, legal, tabloid, etc.). Cut the original into pieces along the penciled lines, then enlarge each piece on the copier, going through as many generations as necessary until each piece fills its own sheet of paper. Assemble the pieces as described above, adding color with lacquer paints or permanent markers. Weatherproof if desired. Some photocopying franchises feature machines for making large-scale photocopies, up to four feet wide and an unlimited length.

G) Producing Overlays by Hand. We recommend using heavy pattern paper and high- gloss, oil-based lacquer paints. The lacquer paint suffuses the paper, making it tough, water resistant, and difficult to tear. To make overlays, roller coat the background and spray paint the lettering through stencil templates of the letters. For extremely large images or panels, use large pieces of painted canvas. The canvas should be fairly heavy so it won't be ripped to shreds by the winds that buffet most billboards. Glue and staple i "x 4" pine boards the entire horizontal lengths of the top and bottom of the canvas. The canvas will then roll up like a carpet for transportation and can be unrolled over the top of the board and lowered into place by ropes.

H) Methods of Application. Although there are many types of adhesive that can be used, we recommend rubber cement. Rubber cement is easily removable, but if properly applied will stick indefinitely, and does not damage or permanently mark the board's surface. This may become important if you're apprehended and the authorities and owners attempt to assess property damage. Application of rubber cement on large overlays is tricky. You need to coat evenly both the back of the overlay and the surface of the board that is to be covered. Allow one to two minutes drying time before applying the paper to the board. To apply the cement, use 10" paint rollers and a five-gallon plastic bucket. Have one person coat the back of the overlays while another coats the board's surface. Both people will be needed to affix the coated overlay to the finished board surface. On cool nights there may be condensation on the board, in which case the area to be covered needs to be wiped down first — use shop towels or a chamois for this.

To level overlay panels on the board, measure up from the bottom (or down from the top) of the board to the bottom line of where it needs to be in order to cover the existing copy. Make small marks at the outermost left and right-hand points. Using a chalk snap fine* with two people, snap a horizontal line between these two points. This line is your marker for placing your overlay.

If you have a canvas or paper overlay as described in (F) above, you can either tie the four comers and middle (top and bottom) very securely, or, if you can reach the face of the board by ladder or rope, attach the panel by screwing the r x 4" boards to the bill- board. A good battery-powered drill is needed for this. We recommend hex-head ff Tek* sheet metal screws, #8 or #10 size. Use a hex-head driver bit for your drill. These screws work well on either wood backboards or sheet metal.

Executing the Hit

Once you've completed your preparations and are ready for the actual hit, there are many things that can be done to minimize the risk of apprehension and/or injury:

A) Personnel. Have the smallest number of people possible on the board. Three is about optimum — two for the actual work and one for lookout and communications. Depending on your location, you may require additional spotting personnel on the ground — see below.

B) Communications. For work on larger boards where you're exposed for longer periods of time, we recommend compact CB units or FM-band walkie-talkies. Low cost CB walkie-talkies are available from Radio Shack and elsewhere, and can be fitted with headsets and microphones for ease of use.

Have one or two cars positioned at crucial intersections within sight of the board. The ground crew should monitor oncoming traffic and maintain radio contact with the lookout on the board. Do not use the popular CB or FM channels; there are many other frequencies to choose from. A verbal code is a good idea since the channels you will be using will not be secure.

It's crucial that the members of the ground crew don't lounge around their vehicle(s) or in any other way make it obvious that they're hanging around in a most likely desolate area late at night for no apparent reason. A passing policeman on patrol will notice them much sooner than he will the operatives on the board. Keep a low profile. We've found that lookouts dressed as winos or homeless couples are virtually invisible additions to the urban landscape. Park all vehicles out of sight of the operation.

C) Safety The risk of apprehension on a board pales in comparison to the risk of falling, and safety concerns should always prevail over security Remember, the wind can be powerful up on a tall billboard. If you're not an experienced climber, you're better off helping out on the ground as a security lookout, graphic designer, or publicist. Even if you are an experienced climber, we don't recommend solo actions on any board larger than 8 panels (6' x 12'). Ideally, all field actions should incorporate the buddy system, but particularly those that require any sort of rigging. If you're going to lean over the top of the board to affix any overlays, you should have a secured partner belaying you. It's a long way down, so be careful up there.

D) Cleanup, Billboard structures are urban garbage as it is; don't make matters worse by leaving your empty glue tubes, discarded vinyl backing, cigarette butts, and empties on the property. The responsible billboard liberator leaves nothing behind, not even fingerprints

E) Escape. If you've done your homework, you'll how the terrain surrounding the board quite well. In the event of detection, prepare a number of alternate routes out of the area, and a rendezvous point with the ground support crew. If a patrol is approaching and you are in a difficult spot for quickly ditching and hiding — say, you're hanging on a rope in the middle of the board — it may be better simply to stay still until they pass. Movement is more likely to catch the eye.

Once on the ground, if pursuit is imminent, hiding may be your safest bet. If you've covered the terrain carefully, you'll be aware of any good hiding spots. Stashing clothing in advance at your hiding spot might be wise- a business suit, perhaps, or rumpled leisurewear. Keep in mind that if the police do a thorough search (doubtful, but not impossible), they will use high-powered spotlights from cars, as well as flashlights if they're on foot. See Evasion (pg. 234) for more hints on how to outwit and outrun them.

Publicizing Your Action

Like the advertisements they improve, your actions should aim for the greatest possible reach. Try to time your improvement so it stays up for as long as possible and is seen by a wide audience. Actions executed at the beginning of a holiday weekend tend to stay up longest, since repair crews are less readily available. You can also add to the notoriety of your work by seeking media attention.

A) Photographs. Color slides are best for magazine and newspaper submissions, but online publishers prefer high-resolution JPEG files. Be sure to get a good "before" picture of the board to be altered, ideally taken from the same camera position and at the same time of day (or night) as the "after" photograph. An "after" picture should be taken as soon as possible after the action is completed; if you want a daytime shot as well, come back for it later.

B) Press Releases. These can be serious or surreal, according to your motives and whim. They are essentially cover letters for your photographs, which comprise the essence of the story (see Mainstream Media, pg. 358).

Other Applications

Movie theaters, bus stops, and similar locations often display poster advertisements behind plexiglass frames. Some such frames can be opened by universal keys. If you can reverse-engineer such a key, you can remove these advertisements and alter, replace, or at least destroy them, just as you would the more easily accessible advertisements in subway cars, buses, and student union buildings. If you also paint a message on the surface behind the posters, when they replace the posters you can simply walk around opening the frames and removing the posters, revealing your message. The companies renting these advertising sites will have to paint over your work and ultimately change their locking systems to secure their precious private property against free expression.

Then you can come back with a roller and cover the plexiglass itself in black paint. No peace for the pushers of corporate propaganda!

Account 4: Ingredients

- Digital camera
- Computer
- Water
- Imagination
- Printer
- Bucket
- Ruler
- Scissors

- Paintbrush
- String
- Black crayon
- Black spray paint
- Weight
- Flour
- Ladder

I took a picture of the words close up next to a ruler strung up next to the sign with string and a weight. On my computer, I put that picture in Photoshop and used the ruler as a reference point to make the letter life size on the screen. Then I stretched the word "Addicted! f f over the picture and made it the right font, etc. Next I printed out an outline of each letter, coloring the blank spaces and outer spaces with the black crayon. I cut out the letters so there were no sharp corners or hanging dots.

I made wheatpaste. About 2:30 a.m. the lights on the billboard were out. I put the ladder up next to the sign and spray painted over the word "Ready?" in black to hide it. The paint dried. I went back with the wheatpaste and the letters, slapped on the wheatpaste, slapped on the letters, slapped on more wheatpaste — and voila, my own billboard, free of charge.

Blocs, Black & Otherwise

As one middle-aged mother observed while members of the Quebec black bloc hugged each other before going off to battle the cops, "I always thought this was going to be sinister, but these are just brave kids!"

Ingredients

- Matching clothing that conceals the wearers' identities*
- A mission
- Trust and communication

Optional Ingredients

- Provisions: water (plenty, especially if you'll be dressed in hot gear or expect chemical weapons attacks), food (don't rely on shops or shopkeepers in contested zones)
- Camouflage: different layers of clothing for different purposes or stages of the action
- Defensive gear: banners, shields (possibly disguised as puppets or placards), steel-toed shoes (should still be comfortable for running!), body armor or padding, gas masks or goggles and bandannas soaked in lime juice (store in zip-lock bags until necessary), rain coats or chemical protection gear {if there is a risk of chemical attack), whatever relevant medical supplies you know how to apply
- Offensive gear: spray paint, projectiles, slingshots, signs or flags on thick poles (or just plain poles), molotov cocktails, bright lights (to obscure police or camera vision during night actions), ladders and/or bolt cutters for scaling or breaching barriers
- Communications equipment: hand radios, cell phones, police scanners, flags, drums, shared codes for making internal announcements
- Transportation: bicycles, enough change for the subway, keys to your SUV (easy there, killer, it's just a joke!)

Instructions: What is a bloc? Are there Other kinds besides the black bloc?

You may have heard of the notorious black bloc, a venerable, if not doddering, anarchist tradition in which a mass of direct action enthusiasts gather, all wearing black clothing and masks,

and engage in some form of illegal activity. This tactic has won some famous victories in the past two decades, and failed utterly more times than anyone can count, too. The specific cultural characteristics that are associated with the black bloc tactic today can make it easy to overlook the long history of the bloc tactic and the wide variety of applications for which it can be used The Boston Tea Party, for example, was a perfect example of a bloc in action: the participants organized secretly, wore matching disguises (though their choice to costume themselves as "Indians" wasn't exactly politically correct), and engaged in a mass act of provocative property destruction; presumably their strategies for communication and mutual defense weren't much different from those used by the famous black blocs that, a couple hundred years later, attacked similarly noxious coffee corporations in Seattle. Those who practice direct action would do well to keep in mind the wide range of scenarios in which a version of the bloc approach can be useful.

What is a bloc good for?

Acting in a bloc is especially useful when some of the participants in the action expect they may break laws. When everyone in a group looks the same, it is difficult for the police or others to tell who did what. Most criminal activities are better carried off in a less obvious manner, of course, but there are situations in which it is necessary to step outside the limits in public. The bloc tactic as it's known these days is best for conditions in which the action called for occupies the gray area between overt and covert, and as such it must be applied carefully: if you participate with a bloc in an entirely legal action, you may make a police target of yourself unnecessarily, or needlessly frighten bystanders; on the other hand, if you intend to engage in serious organized criminal activity, you might be better off doing so outside the traditional bloc format, in a totally dosed group, with the element of surprise and so on. It's not an accident that people don't liberate animals from fur farms in black blocs.

One of the positive sides of public bloc activity is that, unlike entirely underground activity, it can create open-ended situations, in which the actions of a few can open the floodgates for others to join in. One of the many objectionable qualities of clandestine terrorism is that, at best, it is still a spectator sport; a bloc, on the other hand, can be a participatory and contagious radicalizing experience. The most obvious way to facilitate this is to organize an open or semi-open bloc.

In an open bloc, a general call goes out to all interested to gather and act in a bloc; open meetings are held to discuss goals, strategies, and so on. The benefits of such an approach are that more people can be involved; the obvious drawback is that security is so compromised that the possibilities for action are severely limited. In a semi-open bloc, the organizing takes place in secret, between people who know and trust each other, but when the bloc itself comes together, others in bloc attire are welcomed to it; in the past few years of black bloc activities, this has been the most frequent format. In such blocs, it is still necessary that the participants be prepared to deal with infiltration, but they at least have the benefit of secure planning and internal structures.

In an entirely closed bloc, the participants prepare in secret and do not welcome the participation or company of any outsiders during the action. Even when such a bloc is called for, it can still be valuable to act openly, as a bloc, rather than covertly: the public nature of the action may send an important message, others outside the bloc may be inspired to engage in similar actions of their own, and the crowd cover itself might enable an escape that would actually be more difficult for those opting for a clandestine approach.

Besides getting away with public criminal acts, there are other reasons to act in a bloc. Bloc participation can be really exciting, and good for morale — acting in a mass of people who are ostensibly prepared to do what they believe is right regardless of police intimidation is often a hell of a lot more empowering than chanting weakly with the liberals, and matching battle-dress is a ritual for inspiring courage that need not be abandoned to our uniformed enemies. A bloc presence may convey important information: to the powers that be, don't fuck with this march, or don't you dare rig that jury; to allies or possible allies, don't despair, we're with you. Finally, anonymity: there are countless reasons to conceal your identity at mass actions. Even if you do not plan on committing any crimes, even if you don't mind the secret police capturing your image for their files, you still do a great service to others by masking up and increasing the number of people who are disguised, thus making it more difficult for the police to keep up with all of you. Those others might not just be criminals, either; they might be foreigners who don't want their participation in radical activities to be used as grounds for deportation, or teachers who don't want to risk losing their jobs. Sometimes a masked crowd is unnecessarily intimidating to the public; sometimes few enough people are masking up, or police attention is so focused on the bloc, that you may deem it safer not to draw attention to yourself by doing so, even if you may engage in illegal activities; and sometimes it's better to show your neighbors where you stand, or let the public and the cameras see that not everyone involved in radical activity is young, white, and male. Otherwise, if others are masking up, you might as well do the same.

Those masks don't necessarily have to be black ski masks, anyway; there are plenty of more fun, family-oriented ways to obscure your identity. Beyond the black bloc, endless possibilities open up: pink blocs, clown blocs, doctor blocs, maintenance worker blocs … Wherever a bunch of people are wearing identical clothing or costumes, the bloc tactic could be deployed, utilizing the matching crowd for camouflage. Halloween, for example, could offer a great opportunity for bloc action — as could a high school graduation!

When and how can the tactic be applied?

Black bloc actions have been a hit at mass actions over the past couple of decades: there have been blocs in the protests at meetings of such despicable gangs as the World Trade Organization, at political events such as debates between presidential candidates, at antiwar demonstrations and solidarity marches with communities that are suffering police brutality. Wherever there is a mass gathering of protesters, it may make sense to deploy or call for a bloc.

In such environments, the bloc can serve many purposes. As mentioned before, it can simply be present as a promise of solidarity, or a threat. It can act as a line of defense for or a distraction from other activists doing civil disobedience actions such as lockdowns and blockades, who will be unable to defend themselves from the police. It can engage in property destruction — this can achieve economic ends, such as inflicting financial losses upon wicked corporations, or other practical goals: a city can be persuaded never to risk hosting another vivisection conference, or alienated workers (and even activists) can experience firsthand that the stranglehold their oppressors seem to have on reality can literally be broken. A bloc can attempt to prevent delegates from reaching an unwanted meeting, or trap them inside the meeting space to make sure they get the message that their shenanigans are not welcome. It can reclaim urban space, opening up and protecting a street or park for others to reinterpret and enjoy, or rerouting a permitted march into unpermitted areas. It can engage the police in conflict, and thus disrupt business as usual —

a meeting in Quebec City to discuss the Free Trade Area of the Americas agreement had to be halted temporarily when tear gas from the street fighting below entered the vents of the building hosting it. It can offer the possibility of contesting power and control in immediate actions, rather than mere words, and thus keep spirits up and appetites whetted. A bloc might attempt to set off full-scale rioting, in hope of precipitating an insurrection — or it could simply create a spectacle, to emphasize the anarchist presence and foreground its romantic appeal: liberal carping about "alienating the public" notwithstanding, the black blocs in Seattle and afterwards did as much to increase the mass appeal of anarchist action as any propaganda publication. If nothing else, a bloc action can be good practice for similar future actions that may achieve more.

When choosing goals for a bloc at a mass action, it is critical that the intentions, needs, and comfort levels of locals and others who will be present be taken into account. Alienating people needlessly is not only counterproductive, but endangers bloc participants; the police are already enemies enough for anyone breaking the law. The last thing you want to do is endanger others with your actions — so don't throw stones at the police from the back of a crowd, or risk provoking police attacks on peaceful marches, especially if you're not planning on sticking around to bear the brunt of them. If you're operating in a mostly out-of-town group that will be acting in a residential neighborhood, don't be so arrogant as to think you should be the ones to decide what level of conflict is most appropriate for the situation — far better you show that you respect the needs and perspectives of the locals, and are willing to follow their lead. There may be cases in which it is appropriate to bring a level of intensity to an action that others aren't prepared to — for example, if liberal organizers are addressing a gross injustice with useless gestures that will do nothing to put things right — but it's good form to make sure that the first ones to pay the piper for whatever goes down will be you and your companions, not innocent bystanders.

Similarly, it is important to be realistic about what you can hope to accomplish in the situation at hand, given your experience, numbers, and other resources. If the local populace hates the arrogance of the leaders who are meeting in their city, but mistrusts the equally foreign hordes who have gathered there to protest them, it might make more Blocs and sense to target those leaders than to smash corporate windows in what the locals might perceive as an outsiders' attack on their home streets. Take everything into account: the personality of the police force, the current local political climate, how aware others will be of what happens to you and your companions, whether the authorities will want to teach you a lesson this time or avoid inopportune media coverage, whether the police will be trying to secure the whole area (in which case you can expect them to attempt mass arrests, if they have the numbers) or simply protect a part of it (in which case they may resort to dispersal or defense tactics, if they are outnumbered or uncertain). Is your action intended for media coverage, for those who witness it in person, for those who participate in it, or for those who foot the bills? Is your goal worth the risk, is it appropriate to the event in question?

Outside the mass at mass actions, acting in a bloc is a much riskier proposition, for the bloc can be easily surrounded and neutralized by the police. Historically, at demonstrations, almost every bloc that has mixed well with a much larger mass of law-abiding protesters has managed to maintain some degree of safety and coherence, while almost every bloc that has attempted to operate in their absence has suffered or at least risked serious police repression. Some lessons we can draw from such previous successes and failures are:

1. The bloc should not operate without either the element of surprise or the benefit of broad crowd cover, at least not unless it is expected to be of vast numbers, high morale, and great defensive experience, or unless the purpose of the action is to get a lot of participants arrested.

2. Announced direct actions (blocs, unpermitted marches, etc.) at mass events should always take place on or before the big day of general protest, never after them. When direct action precedes or coincides with massive marches and gatherings, it often sets the tone for everything that follows, upping the ante and radicalizing the event in general; when direct action enthusiasts are the only ones left out on the street after the law-abiding activists have gone home, the police know they can isolate, abuse, and arrest them without fear of stepping on the toes of the "wrong" citizens, or being observed by such citizens as they do so. The presence of others who would witness police brutality is an important deterrent; work without it at your peril.

3. Those operating in a bloc need to have the support or at least the respect of some, if not most, of those outside the bloc, so as to ensure their safety on the field, let alone general good will in the activist community. In one historic instance, a black bloc was surrounded and cornered by police, who were moving in to finish it off when a march organized by a liberal women's organization was re-routed to pass through the area and provide members of the bloc with an opportunity to blend in and escape. To this end, it helps a great deal if the goals or targets of the bloc are instantly comprehensible to outsiders, so whether or not others agree with the tactic itself they can at least understand why it is being employed.

On the other hand, there are cases in which none of these rules of thumb is relevant. Entirely outside the realm of mass actions, there are many other environments in which the bloc tactic can be applied; indeed, such applications may be the most promising for the future of the bloc, now that police are very familiar with and prepared for bloc presence at demonstrations. A bloc operating swiftly against an unprepared target can accomplish a great deal. Consult the account at the end of this text for an illustration of how a bloc can be deployed outside the demonstration format to wreak havoc on corporate and governmental property.

When acting in a bloc with no demonstrating mass for cover, the most important advantage you have to work with is surprise. If you organize in such a way that the authorities don't see your action coming, you may be able to get everything done and escape before they're able to respond. Even when they do arrive, chances are they will not be prepared to make mass arrests, so you can expect them to attempt only to seize individuals; in this situation, the individuals carrying out high-risk actions may be able to disappear in the commotion (enthusiasts of civil disobedience could even snarl the police up in petty arrests to facilitate this, though they might risk a conspiracy charge if they were connected to the bloc) — or, if the group is able to act with a high degree of solidarity and audacity, staying dose together and not permitting police to get their hands on individuals within it, it might be possible to negotiate a departure en masse, though you can expect to be followed at the very least. It has happened before that groups of activists breaking the law together, who showed that they would not be intimidated nor allow members to be picked off, have been permitted by unprepared police to leave an area in return for concluding their action. It's also happened that they've had rubber bullets shot at them, though! If some of you are planning illegal activity of a serious nature, it may be a good idea to have

others in your group applying a wide range of less confrontational tactics, so the police won't be as likely to treat you all as hard-core criminals. Whenever it's possible without compromising security, "by to make sure everyone in your trusted affinity group, especially the ones who aren't keen on taking great legal risks, knows what the highest level of possible illegal activity is, as you never know whether the police will choose to hold others responsible for the actions of those they couldn't catch!

If you're showing up at a corporate office at sunrise, you can expect to be practically the only ones there, and you'll have to count on speed and clever escape routes for your liberty; but there are other situations in which, just as at a demonstration, there will be crowd cover — even potentially supportive crowd cover- to melt into. Who knows, a sports fan bloc mixing with the jubilant crowd celebrating a home team football victory might be able to touch off hard-core anti-corporate vandalism and looting!

When making plans and setting goals for a bloc action in a particular context, it is always important to look back in history for precedents. If the last time someone tried something similar to what you are trying was a disaster, you had better figure out what new element you can throw in to give yourself a better chance. History tends to repeat itself — at least when w^ don't use our ingenuity to derail it! Get familiar with the history of bloc actions over the past few years; whenever you're considering joining in one, pick out and consider the previous example that best indicates what you can expect from this one — keeping in mind, of course, that your adversaries have been doing the same, so counting on a particular stratagem to work twice is a risky proposition. It is at least as important to know when not to do a bloc action as it is to know when to try one: unsuccessful attempts to act in bloc, when there are not enough participants available or the conditions are not favorable, can sap energy better applied elsewhere. When you strike in bloc, strike hard and impressively, then wait for the next realistic chance to do so again.

Structure

Naturally, the affinity group is the basic building block of any bloc. It is impossible to overstate the importance of engaging in bloc activity as part of a small group capable of fending for itself and making decisions; to do otherwise is to abdicate responsibility for yourself to the mass, and to deny that mass the benefit of your participation as an equal. Blocs made up of self-sufficient affinity groups can make democratic decisions quickly, can split up into equally effective smaller groups, and can handle stressful situations without the added stress of herding a flock of confused followers. Within your affinity group, you should establish common expectations about what goals are, what level of risk is acceptable, what kind of security is appropriate. Security is especially important in bloc activities, because of the sketchy mix of public and unlawful activity that may be involved; be sure everyone has an understanding of security culture (see Security Culture, pg. 461).

Regardless of the total size of the bloc, each affinity group should be totally self- sustaining, at least with regard to the goals it intends to achieve. Escape routes, legal resources, emergency backup plans, knowledge of the area — every affinity group should have all of these, A buddy system inside a group is useful: if the group itself is dispersed, individuals can take responsibility for the safety and whereabouts of their partners. Internal roles can be assigned: for example, scouts who keep track of activity and police presence (these can be equipped with hand radios or cell phones for communicating with the main group, and can ride bicycles for extra speed and

mobility; it usually makes sense to position them at least a block or so away from the group, so they can provide early warnings and broader perspective on the area), communications people (also with radios or cell phones, and perhaps a police scanner) to exchange information with the scouts and other groups, runners to communicate new information to nearby groups, experienced folks to correlate and consider information and take responsibility for making split-second decisions, persons to carry out the actions planned, lookouts to cover them, perhaps a flag-bearer or marching band to maintain morale and keep the group visible from a distance, and so on. It might be wise to have one person in non-bloc clothing to attend the bloc, to handle such tasks as explaining to spectators that they should not take photographs, since the police can seize their cameras and use the pictures in court. The role the affinity group plays in a larger group can also be specialized: an affinity group could serve as scouts for a larger bloc, or set out to blockade a particular intersection, or concentrate on maintaining a banner at the front of a large group.

An affinity group can form a small, ad-hoc bloc on its own, but a cluster of affinity groups can form a larger, more powerful bloc. In this case, it is critical that efficient and democratic structures be set up within the duster. It should be possible for news, questions, and answers to be communicated swiftly within and between affinity groups, even in the tensest situations. Some have argued in favor of a more militaristic bloc model, that would presumably operate more like the hierarchical regiments our enemies pit against us, but the very strength of the bloc is its decentralized, unpredictable nature; it seems foolish to try to beat our oppressors at their own game rather than capitalizing on our own strengths. Better we improve our coordination than focus on control: we are conductors setting the stage for improvisation, not military tacticians with underlings and commanding officers.

In a bloc made up of affinity groups from different areas, the local group will inevitably have the most information about what is possible, and may well consequently have done the most thinking and preparing. This is not necessarily a problem, as long as others trust them and are organized enough themselves to retain their autonomy. The local group should make provisions for sharing as much information with others as is safe, and also be sure not to assume unthinkingly a position of authority over the other groups: a local group attempting to lead an uninformed mass on an unrevealed secret mission can be a real recipe for disaster. On the other hand, as the element of surprise is the most important factor in almost all bloc actions, provided that there is a high level of trust between organizers and participants a secret plan that only becomes clear to everyone at the instant it comes to fruition can be a powerful thing.

Preparation

One of the most important things to do before an action is learn the area. As many members of each group as possible should spend time traversing it, taking careful note of escape routes and dead ends, cameras, places where the police may mass or that they may seek to protect, possible targets, possible resources (barricading materials such as moveable fences, etc.), and above all making sure they will not get lost. Those who cannot be there in advance should at least memorize maps. For locations for which street maps are unavailable or do not suffice, it is possible to get aerial maps off the internet.

Make sure you have a safe place to stay before the action if there's any chance the police are expecting it. Far too many times, the police have raided activist housing before an action and arrested hundreds of people; do everything you can to find a place to sleep and prepare that

is off their radar, so you won't run that risk. Stay with a friend of your uncle, or rent sleeping space at a YMCA Don't be stuck trying to sleep in your car on the streets they're patrolling in preparation for the next day's riot! If you're from out of town, make equally sure your traveling group (which may not be the same as your affinity group) has planned a safe regrouping and departure from the area, and has a backup plan in case of emergency. Keep in mind that if things really go off, certain parts of the city may be dosed off to you after the action, so you'll need to regroup elsewhere.

Advance meetings are a critical part of the preparation for most blocs. Again, how secure or public these meetings are will depend on how many people (and with what level of direct action experience) you hope to involve, and what degree of legal risk you're willing to take. If you're trying to organize a massive but largely symbolic open bloc, you might choose to circulate meeting times openly; if you're organizing the core of a bloc that will be open in the street but needs some preparation in private, tell others you trust to pass on an invitation to the meeting only to those they trust; if you're preparing an entirely dosed bloc, not only should you only reveal the time and place of the meeting to your companions in the action, but you should also make sure they all know not to mention the existence of the project itself to anyone, and to have alibis ready so their other friends won't wonder what they're up to. For more vital information about security precautions, consult the Security Culture recipe on pg. 461.

If you are part of an affinity group participating in a larger bloc, you'll want to have your own meetings first, so when a representative of your group attends the larger meeting she can present the information you have, the resources you have to offer, the goals you hope to achieve, and the plans you propose, according to how much of this you trust a larger number of people to know. If this is a mass action and there is a larger spokes- council meeting taking place, at least one person from the bloc or in communication with it should attend; it may or may not be safe for this person to identify herself as such, but she should at least be there to take note of what else is going on. A representative of the bloc could attend the spokescouncil presenting herself as a part of an affinity group hoping to do support for those involved in bloc activity, and thus test the waters or even meet others interested in the bloc.

In the meetings with your affinity group and the bloc, you'll want to establish a plan of some kind for the day (these almost never come off as intended, but they help to get everyone in practice thinking about the situation, and it's good to be prepared to have something to do in case everything does work out), and a structure to facilitate communication and quick, democratic decision-making within the bloc, as described above.

Structure will make you adaptable and thus effective, whether or not your plans come to fruition. You should establish a meeting point for the bloc, plans for dispersal, and a possible time and place for regrouping, if that would be desirable should the bloc be divided early. Share legal information, what resources will be available for those who are arrested. Go over every possible scenario, what you can expect from each other in each of them. Psychology is important here: plan for the worst, but don't demoralize your- selves — you're considering the possible problems so you'll be ready for them, not to talk yourself out of action.

Finally if there will be more than one language spoken among demonstrators or locals, make sure to learn a few important phrases in each of them: "we are not against you, we want no trouble with you," "don't run, walk!," "medical assistance needed!"

Action

It is often wise to write the phone number of a legal contact on your body in permanent marker shortly before an action, so you can be sure it will be available to you if you are arrested, regardless of what else transpires (see Legal Support, pg. 329) You may need to know other cell phone numbers and so on for the day's actions: try to learn them by heart or, failing that, write them on your skin in an ink that you can rub off if necessary.

You'll also want to have enough money on you for food, transportation, and phone calls, 140 but no more, as it will probably disappear in the event of arrest. Remove piercings that could be torn out. Do not carry your address book, unnecessary anarchist propaganda, or anything needlessly incriminating or illegal. Take your ID. with you if you want to be processed as your "true" identity in the event of arrest; if you plan on withholding your identity from the police, make sure you have no identifying papers on you. Carry plenty of water and high-energy foods with you; be prepared for emergencies — if you get separated from everyone and have to spend the night hiding out in a dumpster, you don't want to be starving, too- but don't weigh yourself down with anything unnecessary. Carry with you whatever first aid supplies you know how to use that might be useful. Be aware of what medical assistance — such as street medics and clinics — is going to be available in the streets, and have a plan if you have to go to a hospital (a fake name and social security number, and an alibi, if you fear you might encounter police there); be similarly aware of whether legal observers and media will be present in the streets, and whether you'll want them around or far away from you.

Be prepared for the situation at hand. If the police outnumber you and are waiting for you and there are reporters and civilians in the area, don't come in a gas mask and body armor like the folks in your favorite street riot photographs — they're not going to gas and beat you, they're going to try to encircle and arrest you, and you'll need to be able to move quickly and blend well to avoid it.

Clothing is the one essential feature of the bloc tactic, and the rock upon which it rests or founders. Far away from the action itself, you may want to practice moving and acting freely in your bloc gear, so you won't still be getting used to it when it's too late. The whole idea of a bloc is to look indistinguishable from each other, so make sure whatever your bloc theme is, everyone is on the same page about it, and that your own clothing doesn't bear any features that distinguish it. In a worst-case scenario, you can make a t-shirt into a mask: use the neck hole for your eyes, and tie the sleeves behind your head.

Your clothing should protect you from the hazards you expect, while not weighing you down unnecessarily; it should be adaptable should unexpected situations arise. Layers are key: if possible, wear an outer layer in which to travel to the bloc action, a layer of bloc clothing, and then another layer of getaway clothing beneath this — without risking heat stroke, of course. In some situations, it may be more sensible to carry the outer layer of your getaway layer in a sealed bag, in case you are covered in paint or tear gas by the time you need to use it. Consult the Health Care recipe (pg. 275) for information on how to handle chemical weapons attacks, if you risk incurring them. I've read that ear plugs can offer some protection against concussion grenades, but how one is supposed to know when to put them in and when to have them out so as to be appropriately attentive is beyond me. If you expect to risk receiving blows or projectile fire, wear body armor of some kind (protective sports gear can suffice) and foam or padding, and a bicycle or motorcycle helmet.

A bloc that intends to defend territory in clashes with the police may decide to use shields. These can be made from trashcan lids or cut traffic barrels, layered (superglued together) and reinforced plexiglass, or inflated rubber rafts heavily reinforced with duct tape and possibly a layer of tarp or good old-fashioned cardboard. Wrap duct tape thickly around the handles so the shock of impact won't break your wrists, and provide plenty of room between the handle and the shield so your knuckles don't take the entire blow. Larger shields are better for protecting against projectile weapons or functioning as a mobile barricade, while smaller ones provide better mobility and serve better in hand- to-hand combat. A line of individual shield-bearers can form a shield wall, especially if they are practiced at moving together; alternatively, massive multi-person shields can be constructed, such as the insulation board placards mentioned below. The latter shields should have enough joints in them to navigate narrower streets; keep in mind that these joints are also their weakest points.

Slapstick as it is, it often happens that comrades who discussed and prepared together will not be able to recognize each other in their bloc gear on the day of the action. You may want to identify yourselves to each other early on, especially people from different cities and affinity groups who intend to work together, so it will be easier to keep up with each other in the chaos.

The moment the bloc forms can be pivotal. Where and when to mask up is a hard question. If you do it too late, once you've joined the bloc, you risk being identified; if you do it too early, before you've joined the bloc, you risk being nabbed by the police. Little masked groups walking around before or after events are perfect targets for their enemies. At a big demonstration, one of the best options is to get in your gear in the midst of a large crowd that is not yet under much surveillance, with people around you that you trust, and to move in the body of the crowd to a meeting point with your fellows in the bloc. Wearing layers is important here, too: if you can start in a disposable outermost layer that makes you look like a civilian or liberal activist (if perhaps one overdressed for the weather), masking up will simply mean discarding it and simultaneously pulling up your mask. At an action in which you have the benefit of surprise, you can always pick a safe, quiet place near your convergence point and mask up there.

In a mass action situation, the convergence of the bloc should never occur before other protesters are out in the streets; once again, the police will simply pick off the bloc when no one else is there to provide crowd cover or bear witness. Don't mill around for long at your convergence point — be timely, and get moving. It can happen that the bloc has a difficult time getting out into the field of action, once it has gathered. At a mass action, one of the best solutions for this problem is to have the bloc form somewhere outside the area of heavy police presence, and move into that area as part of a much larger mass — if there's nothing more interesting to do in the other direction, that is ! When moving with a mass of others, a bloc should keep close to them as well as tight internally; police may try to push in and isolate the bloc.

Once together, stay tight spatially (with the obvious exception of the scouts, who need to be further out): you need to keep police out of your ranks, prevent snatch squads from getting in to grab individuals, and also keep your friends at your sides rather than strangers or possible undercover officers. Banners down the front and sides of a group can offer useful barriers to this end. You can reinforce cloth banners with PVC pipe or wooden planks; far better, use tough but limber insulation board to construct great placards — these can be tied or chained together, to create a mobile, jointed full-size barricade. Remember, your physical presence and togetherness comprise your strength, your readiness to repel police charges and foil arrest attempts is your marching permit. If you strike when they're not prepared to make mass arrests or attack with

chemical weapons, they'll be forced to try to intimidate you by singling out individuals for attack or arrest; make this impossible, defend each other and don't back down.

If s possible to conceal useful materials in an area in advance — a dumpster can be filled with sticks and rocks or spray paint cans, and all the better if it's on wheels. Sensitive materials (such as projectiles) can be transported to the action concealed in puppets, and puppets built from paper mache over stronger stuff can serve as effective shields — though those poor puppeteers get enough shit from the authorities already without suffering on your account, too. Keep in mind that carrying a bag of rocks, bottles, gasoline, etc. will not look good if you get arrested. Don't forget, also, that with a simple tool it's always possible to break concrete or asphalt up into projectiles on the spot — beneath the concrete, the paving stones, isn't that how the old French saying goes?

Everyone in your group should have a one-time-only nickname for the duration of the planning and action, so you can address each other without giving away your identities. Those communicating over cell phones or hand-held radios should assume that the police are listening in; it may be wise for those doing communications to learn a code of some kind, or at least keep in mind what not to say over the air. It can also be good for an affinity group or bloc to learn coded announcements in advance, so you can communicate openly without anyone else understanding. "Tighten up!," "The pigs are moving in!," "We need to breakthrough their lines!," "It's time, let's do it!," "Split up and regroup at convergence point B!" are all examples of typical announcements you might want to code. Don't use codes unnecessarily, or assume that if you just say "cookie" every time you mean "molotov cocktail" if s going to protect you; clumsy use of code can actually put you in greater danger, for the authorities can claim that your coded terms stood for more serious things than they actually did. Also, don't be afraid to make uncoded announcements to everyone: "Don't panic, stick together!," "We need to get closer and fill in this space here, slow down up ahead!," "Medic!," "Who can verify what he's saying?," "Hold the fucking line!" The more everyone feels entitled to do this, the better, so long as it doesn't create more confusion than it solves; this will make it hard for your enemies to single out supposed leaders they perceive to be giving orders.

In the heat of action, it's easy for all the structures you have set up in your affinity group to dissolve as individuals get caught up in new developments. Don't lose your head and let the mob mentality take over; make sure to stay spatially dose with your group at all times, keep in communication with them about what is happening, don't get distracted from your role. It might help to have an informal formation — you can stay a few paces behind a particular companion at all times, with another friend always at your side, and another behind you, for example. Moving in lines can maintain cohesion and make police snatches and infiltration more difficult. Plans will change, but don't lose the structures that enable you to change them in unison.

Don't panic, don't believe unsubstantiated rumors. You probably won't get a dear idea of what was going on everywhere else during the action until the day after, if you ever do; in the midst of everything, it will be easy to get buffeted about by waves of faulty information, so resist acting on news until you've double-checked it. Don't spread rumors yourself, and don't just tell others your conclusions based on what you've seen or heard — tell them what you've seen or heard and let them draw conclusions too.

Scouts should practice using communications equipment without being obvious, and while bicycling, if applicable; those recognized as scouts can count on police harassment, which will be all the more problematic because they are alone and critical to the success of the group. They

should be particularly quick and alert. Those using radios should make sure they have decided together on a channel to use in advance, and a backup channel should there be problems.

Barricades can be made out of anything from newspaper dispensers to burning dumpsters, and can serve to slow police progress or simply halt traffic; if you've scouted in advance, you should be able to get them in place very quickly, amid crowd confusion. Don't ever completely block off an escape route you may need! In a less confrontational situation, you can make it more difficult for the police to follow you in an organized line by simply moving the wrong way up a one-way street, provided there's still traffic coming down it. Offensive use of projectiles is serious stuff — one can go to prison for many years, if arrested — but it can serve to keep police at a distance in order to protect an area, or provoke them into using tear gas (which may actually be a tactic they hoped to avoid). Don't begin throwing projectiles in a small group that can be surrounded — save it for massive dashes in which the city belongs to the police in one direction and the protesters in the other. When you throw, do so as part of a large group, from the front of the crowd, and maintain a steady hail in the contested area. Those behind the throwers can provide more ammunition via bucket brigade.

If you're planning to do property destruction, come equipped with the appropriate tools. Make sure you're informed about your targets and their weakness or strength; if you get in position and strike that felonious blow only to find you're unable to break the shatterproof glass, you've just risked a lot for nothing. Sometimes spray paint can be more eloquent than broken glass: "Network TV, keep your eyes on the issues" across the front of the smashed corporate storefront they'll want to film — or, of course, if possible, you can always just spray paint their camera lenses! Stay abreast of the different stations' coverage, so you can offer a pithy retort to the reporter who accuses you of interfering with free speech: "We saw your coverage of the social forum last night — you know as well as I do you don't care about free speech." Then disappear into the crowd while he angrily telephones his boss.

The most dangerous weapons you should probably ever consider using in a street confrontation are molotov cocktails. Understand that if you use these, you can expect serious reprisals from the police; only do so when you've got a police-free zone behind you and a sympathetic crowd dose by that you can escape into without unnecessarily endangering anyone. Best-case scenario, a small team splits from the angry mass, applies a cocktail or two, and disappears. Is it right to throw molotov cocktails at police? With the government spending thousands of dollars on each officer's special storm trooper suit, throwing stuff at cops is practically a victimless crime* — but you might be better off throwing paint bombs at them (see "Distance and Projectile Painting," Graffiti, pg. 258), or shooting paint gun pellets from your slingshot. If they get paint over their dear visors and shields, no one's injured, but they're rendered blind in their expensive armor and have to retreat.

A variety of police weapons may be deployed against you: pepper spray, tear gas, water cannons, concussion grenades, rubber bullets, dubs, charging horses or vehicles. Know what to expect in each situation, and be prepared. Sometimes the best defense really is a good offense: a bloc prepared to act more quickly and courageously than law enforcers expect might be able to disable a water cannon before it is employed against them. Tear gas canisters can be thrown back at the police, but they will be extremely hot when they land; if you expect to be doing this, make sure you have on welding gloves or other serious protection from heat, and that you have a good enough throwing arm and aim to get them out of the area entirely. Don't pick them up until they begin releasing gas — they may explode and injure you. Horses may balk at approaching an area

where things are on fire; a less confrontational mass can deter a horse charge by all sitting or lying down.

Police will endeavor to disperse unwanted crowds when they are not prepared to arrest them. Tear gas, concussion grenades, horse charges, stun guns, rubber bullets, etc. may be employed first, if the mass seems particularly rowdy; then, when they deem it safe, the officers will move in. They will probably do so in lines, charging and falling back to regroup and consolidate their gain before charging again. Violent arrests of individuals will take place at this time to intimidate the mass, unless the side of the throng facing them is tight-knit and protected by barricades or united by linked arms at the least. While the crowd seems volatile and daring, the police may well keep a distance; if the crowd is confused, passive, or disintegrating, they may move in to form lines in its midst, to speed the process along. At no point should you panic and run — this can only increase your chances of charging into trouble, and endanger others in the process; if others start running, shout out "Walk, don't run!" At the same time, keep moving quickly, keep things chaotic to prevent the police from getting a sense of where their opponents are or what to expect. Never let police come together inside the mass.

If you are on the street, they will attempt to force you onto the sidewalk: this thins the crowd, lowers morale, and puts you a step closer to being cornered, If you are forced onto the sidewalk, you can use a street crossing or turn onto a side street to retake the asphalt; banner-carriers can rush forward and block the space to be taken while it is filled with people, as can bicyclists. The same goes for other lanes of traffic, if they are endeavoring to limit you to the one you have seized. If the police cannot get everyone onto the sidewalk, they will at least try to scare the less militant in the crowd into moving onto it and adopting a spectator role, so they can then deal with the hard-core contingent; in this case, try to keep moving and circulating so the "spectators "can be absorbed again, though of course if you are moving in a tight bloc you don't want to lose your cohesion in such a situation. In an urban environment, it can be possible for an organized, alert group to move more quickly on foot than even mounted police officers; always keep moving and stay ahead of your foes. Sudden bursts of speed and changes in direction can keep them particularly confused — just make sure your group can engage in these without itself becoming confused or divided. To coordinate simultaneous action in large groups, you can shout out a countdown from ten to one.

Police snatch squads can be sent into a crowd to grab individuals the police consider leaden or dangerous (or who have been observed committing a crime). Sometimes you can dearly see the commanding officer point out an individual to be snatched (this can also he the case if there is an officer firing rubber bullets — another officer may be picking out the targets for him, and by watching you can tell who is about to be targeted). The squad will attempt to surround the target, while keeping an open corridor back to police lines. To protect against this, keep a close watch on police movements — they may form a straight line perpendicular to the mass before pushing in. If you know who the target is, get them out of the area and into different clothing. Put your body between approaching officers and the target; keep moving and obstructing their path, while making it seem as accidental as possible, so as not to become a target yourself. If a group can isolate and surround individual officers that have entered a crowd, these will back off if they don't feel in control.

Others can attempt to unarrest individuals who have been nabbed. The time to do this is as soon as the police strike, before they have made their way back to their lines. You'll need a few people to break the officers' grip and others to block their path. As soon as your comrade is free,

link arms and disappear immediately into the crowd. The squad will probably try to snatch again, and will aim for the unarresters, too, this time; keep in mind that unarresting may result in more serious criminal charges than the original target would have faced, so only hazard it if you have a good chance of success or the stakes are too high not to. It has happened before that police vehicles surrounded by an angry crowd have been forced to release arrestees, but they have to be trapped there, not just heckled. If their tires are punctured (stick the sidewall, not the tread), that will force them to a halt, but popping tires can be loud — again, don't try this unless you're in a trusted crowd with cover in range.

If you are grabbed by police, keep in mind that even self-defense of the mildest sort can result in assault charges. If you expect your companions to try to snatch you back, keep the arresting officers' job difficult by continuing to move, or else go limp: this will not result in assault charges (though "resisting arrest" is not unheard of), and will force the officers to work much harder to move you. Bear in mind that going limp may provoke them into being even more violent to you; but if every arrest they make costs them a lot of manpower and time, your friends will be in a better position to escape or attempt to rescue you.

There's always the chance that the police will totally surround your group and arrest you one by one. If this occurs, you're in trouble. The best defense is to keep abreast of police movement by means of scouts: they may attempt to move up side streets to surround you, or lure you forward while sending a line around to cut off your retreat. If you find your group surrounded by police lines that are thin in one direction, you can attempt to charge out: use your own tight front line, protected with a banner (banner, shields, fencing, linked arms at the least), to push as a solid wall, potentially with a plow point at the very front to divide them. A bloc once used a wheelbarrow appropriated from a construction site to front a charge that broke through police lines. Apply this tactic as soon as possible after you've been encircled, before they are entirely sure of the situation, and with maximum confidence if you want it to work. Often your best chance to escape will be all together as a cohesive group; this also allows you to keep your equipment and clothing in the process, so you can maintain your effectiveness as a bloc, even if you only choose to use it to escape. On the other hand, if you are part of a crowd that is moving into what you think is a trap, it may be wisest just to disappear onto the sidewalk and out of your bloc gear before you enter a space you can't escape. If you are hopelessly trapped, make sure you ditch all incriminating items before you are arrested, hopefully in such a way that they cannot be connected to you.

Remember that the police won't be able to make mass arrests unless they have lots of plastic handcuffs and vans or buses in the area, so these can be a good tip-off for what to expect. The same goes for chemical weapons; if they're ready to use tear gas, they'll all be wearing gas masks themselves.

Think about what the goals of the police will be, and how these affect your options: if they are trying to keep a parade route or fenced area secure, you may actually have free run of other areas for some time. If they are trying to keep a massive march under observation, they will have to split their forces to keep up with a breakaway march; this will only be difficult for them if they are unprepared in numbers, of course, but in certain situations it may be true that ten groups of fifty are much more effective than one group of five hundred. There will be moments during unexpected developments when they are paralyzed waiting for orders; take advantage of these — but if an unusually long period passes without police activity, it may be an indication that they have a trick up their sleeves, such as a new, more heavily armed and armored force massing nearby.

At an action the powers that be have seen coming, you can expect to be under surveillance by undercover officers, and you may have to deal with agents provocateurs, too. Stay aware of those around you, especially strangers; undercover agents may be easy to identify (pairs of big men with two days of stubble on their faces, nice wristwatches, and communications equipment), or very difficult to. Keep your companions aware of every person you suspect, but don't "out" undercover agents unless you are absolutely sure they are agents (for example, one of your scouts has been following one, and seen him chatting with his coworkers), and something concrete can be gained from it. Unsubstantiated accusations between demonstrators can only make situations more tense and demonstration environments less welcoming. As for agents provocateurs and just plain stupid people, they may be moving among or near you, smashing locally-owned stores and private vehicles; whether or not you can prove they are cops or allies thereof, you can certainly make it dear to them that what they are doing is unacceptable and has to stop. Don't get snarled up in a tactical debate in the middle of an action, just make your point (or, in a worst-case scenario, intervene) and get on with things.

Stay aware of others, too, besides the police. Other demonstrators of more "liberal" or authoritarian bents may take it upon themselves to interfere with your activities, unmasking you, assaulting you, or pointing you out to authorities; the same goes for local civilians. It's almost never advisable to respond to this with violence; walk away, or run if necessary. A direct action that turns into a brawl with locals or other activists is disastrous for everyone. Attempt to talk out differences, if this appears possible and worthwhile, when tempers have cooled, in a safe space removed from the immediate action; send a spokesperson if necessary, preferably a supporter from outside the bloc. At the least, this can distract the meddlers while the rest of the group moves on to other actions.

As crazy as things get, remember that the police have firearms, and there's rarely any reason to risk getting killed for an action. A street confrontation with better-armed police officers is almost always going to be something more of a spectacle of confrontation than a no-holds-barred, life-or-death battle. There's no shame in this. The police are restricted in what they can do by what public opinion will decree about it; you are limited in what you can do by a similar question, for whenever you move up to a more confrontational

tactic the police will immediately upgrade their tactics to a level higher than yours. In this sense, street fighting is a matter of chivalry for us radicals: we always permit our opponents the more powerful tools, in order to keep the violence from getting too out of hand — and, of course, to show off how much more noble and courageous we are ! If the papers read (as they have before), "Violence erupted when activists began throwing back tear gas canisters fired by the police," it will be clear to everyone what's going on.

Stay flexible, tactically. If you showed up in riot gear for a confrontation with the police, but find yourselves totally outnumbered and unprepared, you can turn the other direction and move through nearby neighborhoods picking up trash and beautifying the area — that'll give the media a confusing message to distort!

Once again, all this will be very different if you are applying the bloc tactic outside the demonstration setting. Rather than provoking a confrontation with the police that you hope will be contagious, you will probably be doing everything you can to avoid encountering them at all. Scouts, in this case, will serve more to warn you about the approach of the police than to monitor the lumbering movements of nearby police forces, and, accordingly, may be better posted at freeway overpasses or in disguise outside the liquor store than on bicycles.

Escape: at the end of the action, the final remaining challenge is to get out of your gear and disappear. Layers, once again, are key: under your bloc clothing, you should be wearing clothing that will make you blend easily with whatever liberal protesters or civilians will be in the area. You may have to get down to this layer at an instant's notice: for instance, if the police have singled you out and are pursuing you. Make sure it's a quick and easy transition to make (though not one that can happen accidentally, in the midst of the action!). Try to do this in a mass of inattentive people, or around a comer or in a bush: if you're seen or caught on camera changing, all that trouble you went to masking up may be wasted. Hopefully you have a clever escape route or two already planned out: an inconspicuous alley, an open space too wide for any police barricade to block, a fence you can climb more quickly than any police officer (see Evasion, pg. 234). If possible, you might want to lock a bicycle somewhere nearby, so once you've gotten away you can hop on that and move quickly; in urban environments, you ca n also try to get a taxi (provided they're out and about), get on the subway (though in a serious situation this may be shut down, or the police may be checking people coming in), or duck into a restaurant and just eat fries in a quiet comer in your civilian disguise until things quiet down. Unless things have gotten really hairy, you should still be with your partner, if not a few members of your affinity group.

Finally, the number one rule of all direct action: quit while you're ahead. Take things as far as you can, but live to fight another day, unless this really is the Last Battle.

Afterwards

After the action, gather again in your affinity group at a place and time safely removed from danger and surveillance. Give everyone a space to share how they're feeling. Discuss and critique what happened, what you learned from it, what it means for the future. If applicable, make sure to report on your conclusions to other affinity groups who were involved, and seek their feedback as well. If any of you have been arrested or are facing other difficulties such as injury, discuss how to handle this. Celebrate your achievements, offer emotional support, swear and plot revenge if need be. Make sure above all that all participants know they are loved and supported.

Don't ever brag about your achievements in a bloc, or share anything others don't need to know, especially if it could incriminate someone. Keep in mind that it's possible you've been caught on camera and, however carefully disguised you were, identified by the authorities. In Sweden, a few months after a street confrontation at a meeting of the European Union, early one morning the police arrived at the residences of a couple dozen activists who had been involved and arrested them all at the same moment. That's a worst-case scenario — don't let it make you paranoid. Just stay aware of the dangers; if you're doing a lot of heavy stuff , or organizing for it, you might want to live in such a way that your enemies would be hard-pressed to know where to find you any given morning.

Local anarchists and partisans of Earth First! wanted to make an offensive strike against a biotechnology company whose crimes had not been brought to public attention (in fact, the corporation had bribed the local town government). There was considerable discussion about what tactics to use — and there was a wide variety of tactical differences, with some of us committed to non-violence and others being wild militant anarcho- primitivists! Being from small towns in an area not known for having lots of activists, we had to work together to allow everyone to participate at whatever level they found comfortable. The non-violent folks could have dropped

a banner, or someone might have come at night and shredded the crops, but what could be done that would allow us to work together, be safe, damage this evil corporation, and provide a wake-up call such as our placid small towns had never seen before? What better than a bloc? Who says we need a major mobilization or a giant antiwar protest to use such tactics? We can have the excitement and the action of any global day of action any day of the week in our own hometowns. It's not like there's more state to smash in Washington DC, Genoa, or Seattle than there is in our own neighborhoods. Not only that, but this time the cops wouldn't be ready for us.

Since we were going to combat biotechnology, it made more sense for us to dress in biohazard suits than in black: not only did they disguise us, but they got our message across by themselves. Bought in bulk, they cost less than three dollars each. The suits lacked face masks, so we made a quick trip down to the hospital for them. We started spreading news of the action to our friends by word of mouth, keeping our bloc limited to only those we trusted.

Account

Committed folks drove in from out of town and set up a "base camp" for the action at a local farm, building banners, preparing flags, and writing fliers and media releases. The excitement was contagious: local puppeteers brought down a gargantuan puppet of an indigenous farmer, a local farmer wanted to dig up the front lawn of the biotechnology company to plant organic seeds. Work was spontaneously and naturally divided among teams. The media team made different pamphlets for different people — one for the corporate media, one for people driving by, even one for the employees working there to explain to them what was happening. As time progressed and more and more carloads of people drove down the dirt road to the farm, we realized that the action was going to be larger than we had anticipated.

We had picked our target in complete secrecy, and only a few people knew its name and location. If somehow word had leaked to the biotechnology company that we were planning something, our action would have been ruined. Unlike many blocs at protests, we didn't have a horde of protesters to serve as a distraction, so the main element in our favor was surprise. We told everyone else to trust us — it was going to be a biotechnology target somewhere nearby — and that we had scoped it out. Indeed, we had discovered that the entire complex, one of the main research centers for this biotechnology company, had only a few security guards !

This company had genetically engineered corn to feature "traitor seeds," seeds modified to be dependent on their expensive pesticides . Farmers would purchase these cheap seeds, and then go into debt buying the pesticide, losing their land and livelihood. This destruction of small and indigenous farming and of biodiversity was leading to huge demonstrations in Brazil and India in which these crops were ripped from the ground and the seeds burnt, in public ! These seeds were being designed right down the street — and no one even knew about i t The company was so smug they didn't even hire much security. Everyone agreed that it was a worthy target, and everyone was happy with keeping the exact location secret until the day of action.

The night before, we went over a map, including aerial photos (easily downloaded from the internet) and detailed maps. We didn't give away the precise location except to one driver from each of the cars. People were given an all-too-quick training on unarresting and bloc techniques, and communications equipment was distributed among the affinity groups. This lack of training, especially considering most of the participants had never been part of a bloc, was a great mistake.

Still, affinity groups had come together naturally over the few days before the action, everyone joining groups with close friends who wanted to risk the same level of arrest and participate in the same type of action. Without any argument or coercion, autonomous groups had formed for a truly diverse range of actions: climbing on the roof of the building and dropping banners, digging up the front yard of the biotechnology company to plant seeds, doing independent media work, passing out fliers on the sides of nearby highways to the traffic that would be snarled by the spectacle we were to create, performing in a play involving the giant indigenous farmer puppet, acting as police liaisons (a police liaison is a person whose job is basically to delay the police by acting as the "spokesperson" for the group), and, of course, property destruction. Surprisingly, there was no predictable conflict about violence versus non-violence: everyone felt that they were participating in a collective action in which every group and every action was vital to the overall success of the whole project — the project at hand being to humiliate a biotechnology company that had counted on no one even knowing they existed.

At the crack of dawn, everyone put on their biotechnology suits, double-checked their props, and jumped into their cars. We parked in the parking lots of a nearby hotel and family restaurant, and ran into the front yard of the massive biotechnology complex. Immediately groups scrambled up onto the roof and dropped banners; other groups began spray painting "Fuck Biotechnology" and "Free the Seed" on the walls of the building. Giant banners were unfurled, and within minutes an unearthly play began, with groups of biotechnology-suited people and a traditionally-dressed farmer tearing up the carefully manicured lawn of the company, planting organic seeds, while giant biotechnology corn visuals were erected facing the highway. The employees of the company must have thought one of their own experiments had gone horribly awry, and fled inside, locking their doors and staring out the windows. The security guards, vastly outnumbered, just watched with mouths agape. This entire action was visible from the highway, and more participants dressed in biohazard suits handed out fliers and carefully talked through the issues with passing traffic — traffic that soon ground to a halt. Within fifteen minutes, our action had completely paralyzed one of the largest biotechnology companies in the world and had frozen traffic on one of the major highways in the United States. Of course, it was the cops that actually shut down the highway — maybe in fear the public would see the spectacle ahead.

Of course the cops did come eventually — although, due to the element of surprise, we had free run of the place for almost an hour. Even when the first cops arrived, they realized, as the security guards had, that they were outnumbered by a large mass of maniacs in biotech suits. They tried talking to our police liaisons, who repeatedly told them we had to consult with each other on any decision, a delaying tactic that enabled us to get more of the action done-a mistake in retrospect, since that was when we should have re-grouped and prepared for the inevitable police assault. Even after reinforcements arrived, the cops were afraid to act until some of the businessmen came out of the office and whispered in their ears. A few of the officers began trying to arrest people, starting by arresting the only person they could identify — the farmer. Unfortunately, all the affinity groups were so absorbed in carrying out the actions they had planned they

let some precious seconds pass before they could act — and by then the police managed to pepper-spray one individual in the face. However, through quick thinking, our white biotech suit disguises, and some ridiculously brave unarresting techniques (including giving cops wedgies and pulling people free from their grasp), we managed to protect almost everyone from arrest.

At this point the bloc had become a very loose cluster of affinity groups, most folks nor even spatially near each other, which played into the hands of the cops. When calls to "bloc up" were

made, it soon became apparent most people didn't have any idea what we were talking about, and had little grasp that by gathering together as a larger group we could stand off the cops. Still, when cops came out on bikes, protesters nimbly jumped over fences to avoid them, leading one cop to a near-collision with the fence! For a good fifteen minutes pure pandemonium reigned, with cops unsuccessfully chasing protesters and protesters swarming outside the cops' grasp without evacuating the premises of the company. The farmer chose to be arrested non- violently while the person who was pepper-sprayed was finally cuffed after a considerable battle. Finally, the cops settled down and agreed to let us move our protest off the premises. Rescuing our giant banners, we managed to regroup our scattered forces and make a quick getaway to our cars. Altogether, out of fifty-some people at the action, there were three arrests.

We tried to make it back to our secret hideout, only to find out the city had sent undercover cops after us. After some quick driving, we escaped the police and pulled into a truck station — we had to dispose of our biotech suits, which we were still wearing! We went around back to an isolated dumpster and began throwing our biotech suits and other incriminating evidence inside. Then, to our surprise, we noticed a trucker watching us through his shades. He gave us a thumbs-up and a shady smile. Our victory was all over the CB radios!

Reunited at our secret hideout, we headed to march downtown to the jail. Everywhere, people were talking about our action, at diners and in shopping centers, old men and young women — no one had seen it coming, and people got the message! Not only that, but almost everyone was supportive: "I don't believe they're putting that in our food," "They're messing with God's creation," "That company's just out to make money regardless of the cost to this town or the world." I had never before seen such a positive reaction to an action. When we finally got to the jail, our boring little town was scandalized was the biotech company!

A lawyer agreed to represent the defendants for two hundred dollars, and we raised the money through benefit concerts in which every style of music from punk to blue- grass was played. In court, the cops admitted that due to everyone wearing white biotech suits they were unable to identify exactly who did what, so they couldn't really make any charges stick. At the end, the defendants were let off with community service and the cops even apologized!

As in any action, there were things that went wrong and things that went right. We definitely had free run of the place for a while, and could have inflicted much more serious damage on the biotechnology company than we did — at the risk of possibly alienating some people. Given the weight of the issue, it probably would have been worth it. We definitely should have done more unarresting trainings — the methods we used, like jumping and wrestling with cops, may be courageous, but are not recommended. We also could have used a good bloc training, which became distressingly obvious when people didn't respond to calls to "bloc up." The fifty of us together definitely could have stood up to the cops, but when people panicked and began running around as lone individuals, the cops managed to nab them. Lastly, we should have had a lawyer ready ahead of time (see Legal Support, pg. 329). Still, hindsight is always dearer than foresight, and the creative use of bloc tactics with great public outreach made this an action people in

our small town will be talking about for years — and one that's caused the biotechnology company considerable grief and expense.

There are some that say the bloc tactic is dead, but it is only as dead as the ideas that give it life. Trying to repeat Seattle is going to fail: those ideas died after they were employed, but they were well and alive at the time because they were new and creative, and the cops couldn't see them coming. Don't just think about previous blocs, look around you for living inspiration. The

real question is not whether the bloc is dead or alive, but what new ideas we can dream up for striking the next blow against capitalism. May that blow be a killing one!

Blockades and Lockdowns

There are many reasons to blockade: to call attention to or prevent an injustice, to support other direct actions by securing a space or creating a distraction, to decrease traffic fatalities. There are many sites that can be blockaded: highways, factory and shopping mall gates, business districts, the front doors of restaurants that are to host corporate dinners or party delegates. Intrepid blockaders can lock themselves to the equipment that is to destroy a forest, or lock authorities out of a building that has been occupied in a political action. One of the most common implements for blockading is the lockbox.

Locking Down with Lockboxes

When it comes to blockading, lockboxes are very useful, assuming you are willing to be arrested. The design described here has been used in several cities, including some in which the police are experts at "handling" protests, and all the same it can take police hours to move blockaders who use them from a busy street. It is one of the simplest designs; there are many other possibilities. You can make lockboxes with go-degree angles in them that accommodate both arms of one individual, so one person can comfortably lock down to a gate, a truck axle, or even a railroad track. For serious engagements, you can make big concrete barrels with lockboxes fitted inside them, or dig a hole in the ground and build a vertical one-way lockbox into it with concrete and rebar, or drive a junker car into place, disable it, and lock down to it.

Lockdowns can be used to stop movement into and out of an area, providing a spectacle perfect for attracting media or other attention. They can stall traffic to allow support 162 teams to hold an awareness-raising rally, and distribute leaflets to or otherwise engage drivers stuck in traffic. After blockaders are removed from the area, police generally block the area for another hour or more themselves, lengthening the impact of the action. Lockdowns can appeal to the public by showing that people are dedicated enough to put their bodies on the line; they are descended from a long heritage of non- violent civil disobedience that many civilians find less threatening than other brands of direct action.

Ingredients

- Metal or plastic tubing or piping — such as PVC pipe
- Bolts and nuts — at least one
- Chain or rope
- Carabineers
- Glue — optional, but encouraged

- Hacksaw
- Drill bolt and one nut for each box
- Bolt cutters — optional
- At least one person ready to put their body on the line

Instructions

A lockbox is a piece of pipe by which a person can be locked securely to another person or object. The average lockbox accommodates two people; with several lockboxes and people, you can form a human chain.

Lockboxes utilize the width of your torso and arm-span to take up space. To lock down, you attach yourself to a mechanism inside a piece of pipe; in order for a police officer to unlock you, he would have to get his arm into the pipe as well, but as the pipe fits snugly around your arm, this is impossible. Should police attempt to pull you apart, the strain will be on the metal chain and bolt, not your shoulder joints, assuming your box is built correctly. B/ using a carabineer to connect to a bolt within the pipe, you are able to detach from the box immediately whenever you choose. With lockboxes, a group of people can swiftly move into a space, block it, and defy the efforts of police officers who would remove them.

Scouting the Target, Planning the Action

The fist step is to scout the area you want to blockade. There are a wide variety of environments in which you might choose to apply lockboxes, but for the purposes of this introduction we'll assume that you will be operating in an urban environment. You could blockade the entrance to an event or business, or an entrance to a tunnel, highway, or access ramp. The first step is to figure out where the traffic, whether it be car, foot, or other, can best be bottlenecked. Often, if you block one street successfully, you can snarl traffic in a large area. Look for streets that lead to main roadways, and watch the traffic patterns. If you are planning to block a road, listen to traffic reports; determine which roads gridlock easily and which roads feed major transportation routes. Note all the details of your target, including the length of traffic lights, which lanes are open at certain times, and which directions the majority of cars turn.

Once you have found the location that best serves your purposes, you'll need to determine how many people it will take to block it. If you have a well-chosen target, but you do not have enough people, traffic will still be able to pass, and you will simply be a nuisance, not a blockade; if you cannot create a "complete circuit" with your human chain, connecting it at either end to immovable points, it may be easy to move you out of the way even if the lockboxes between people are secure. To measure distances quickly and subtly, you can count your steps heel-to-toe across an area, or run string or yam across it. You'll also need to take into account the sizes of the lockboxes you are making and the people locking down. If a street is 20' wide and your lockboxes are 3' long, you'll probably need five or six people.

Plan your formation carefully. If you are locking down in a line, the two people on the ends can be locked to stationary objects — with bicycle U-locks around their necks, for example, or by a less secure means such as chain locks. If you use bicycle locks or any other locks that require

keys, have an accomplice to spirit the key away quickly, or be prepared to hide it where the sun doesn't shine. For a less durable blockade, you could leave the ends of your formation open and sit or lie down. Alternatively, you could dose the formation at both ends, locking down in a circle, or form two lines crossing each other in an X.

When planning, take into account the strain of being locked in place for a long period. If the lockboxes are not supported by something, those locked together will quickly be worn out by holding them up. There are also the matters of food and blood circulation to consider.

Gathering Materials

Once you have worked out your plan, the next step is to gather materials. These can be expensive, so look around for places to acquire them for free. PVC pipe can be found at construction sites; chain can be cut from a locked dumpster; tools can be borrowed or stolen. If you do not want to draw attention, you may want to buy the supplies at multiple locations. While purchases of bolts, carabineers, and glue will not attract attention, a septum-pierced revolutionary may raise eyebrows if she brings thirty feet of PVC pipe to the counter. Rumor has it that before and during mass mobilizations, store employees are told to look out for such purchases. Use the same care you would for buying spray paint, crowbars, bolt cutters, or glass etching solution. Do not use a credit card if you do not wish to create a paper trail.

Design, Construction, Adaptation, and Fortification

Summary:

1. Cut the pipe to the appropriate length.
2. Drill a hole all the way through both walls of the pipe at its midpoint (or thereabouts, depending on the differing arm spans of the two who will be using it).
3. Pass a bolt through both holes.
4. Secure the bolt.
5. Cut a length of chain to fit around your wrist and reach up to the bolt.
6. Fasten a carabineer to the chain by which to secure it to the bolt.
7. Repeat steps 5 and G for the person who will share the lockbox with you.
8. Fortify the lockbox.

The construction of lockboxes can be a fun group activity. Make sure the people who are going to use the boxes try them on and modify them according to arm length SS g and other variables. How much of your arm goes inside a lockbox is a matter of preference and tactical strategy, but on average your pipe should be about 4' in length. The more of your arm is covered by the PVC pipe, the more of your body is safe from police action. For example, if your bicep is exposed, the police could attempt to use pain compliance there to force you to unlock yourself; if your entire arm is in the pipe, this is impossible.

Everyone's arms are unique. If you are locking down, you need to be able to put your arm far enough into the pipe to grab the bolt, so you can easily connect and disconnect your carabineer. If the people who are to use the box can be present during the construction, measure their arms and custom-fit the pipe. If this is not possible, build the box to a length that almost anyone can use — say, between 3' and 4'. If you are using PVC pipe, it can easily be cut with a standard hacksaw. For more long-lasting lockdowns, use more durable piping.

It's important that your pipe be the right diameter; you should be comfortable sliding your arm in at least to your bicep. Unless your arm is extremely small or large, the pipe should be between 4" and 6" in diameter.

After the pipe is cut so that both people who are to use it can put their arms in as far as they want and touch fingers, secure a bolt at the point where their fingers touch. The length of the bolt should be longer than the diameter of the pipe; if you use 5" pipe, make sure your bolt is at least 5.5". Stay away from bolts with sharp threads or a sharp point on one end, unless you are prepared to modify them for safety and comfort. Your bolt should be thick and difficult to cut; it will probably be the weakest link in the chain, so you'll want to be careful to make sure it's as secure as possible.

Drill a hole all the way through one wall of the pipe and out the other. If you have to drill the top hole first and then flip the pipe to drill the bottom hole, make sure the holes line up! Put the bolt through both holes. It should be slightly off-center in the pipe, so the people locking to it can fit their fingers around it and have space for their knuckles. Now use nuts to secure it in place; these can go inside the pipe, or outside it, or both. You can use powerful glue to strengthen the bolt; better yet, if you have the means, weld it into place. You could include multiple bolts in your design, to make it harder for the police to know where to start. If you have more than one bolt, you can also experiment with attaching yourself to all of them.

Now you have to build the chain bracelet that secures you to the bolt inside the pipe. Cut a length of chain that can loop around your wrist at one end, and attach at the other end around the bolt in the pipe; it will be in the shape of a P. Experiment with chain length until you have a comfortable fit. Make the clasp that holds the chain around your wrist permanent and durable; use a carabineer to clasp the chain around the bolt, so you are able to unclasp from the lock box in an emergency.

Attaching the chain to the central bolt with a carabineer is a very secure and safe option, but there are others. For a simpler, though weaker, variation, skip the central bolt entirely and run a length of chain through the tube to attach your wrist to the wrist of your partner. This option might be useful if you have limited time and funding to prepare for the action. A benefit of the central bolt is that when you are pulled, the bolt absorbs some of the force, and gripping it can provide some control; if you are connected to another person by a chain directly, and one of you is pulled or dragged, both of you will bear the brunt of it.

Once the device is assembled, the holes drilled, the bolt secured, and the chain attached, make sure it all fits comfortably. Put some padding around the chain at your wrist, and pad the entrance to the tube if need be. If nothing else, wrap the chain in an old sock or two, and sand down the edges of the pipe to prevent it from cutting your arm.

The final step is to fortify your creation. Many police departments now understand how lockboxes are constructed and know how to disassemble them. This does not mean locking down is ineffective, since it still takes the police time to react, retrieve the necessary tools, and cut apart each lockbox; but it is worth brainstorming about how to stay ahead of their technology. The

police are likely to try to cut the pipe to expose your hand and the carabineer, or attack the box at the bolt. Consider ways to slow this process. You could wrap the lockbox in materials that dull saw blades, for example, or wind layers of duct tape and wire around it, or cover it in viscous tar and sand, or weld rebar armor to it- -or do all of these! The more layers of material that require different forms of cutting technology, the better. For heavy lockboxes that can anchor you in place, you could put a layer of concrete around your pipe, and a layer of plastic or aluminum drain tubing around that.

Practice and Transport

After all of the boxes are constructed, practice locking in and out of them. Do this alone until you have it down, then try it with a partner, locking at once into both sides of a box. Before an action, practice for speed and organization with everyone who will be involved, so things will go smoothly on the big day. To prevent confusion, you can label each end of each lockbox, and plan out which direction each person will face and the order in which people will lock together. It can help to have individuals involved who do not actually lock down on the line; not only can they help get things together quickly at the beginning, they can also provide food and water to the people who cannot move their arms, and help deal with police and others.

It can be a challenge to get all the lockboxes to the site of the lockdown. You could hide them nearby in advance, or bear them there in a march, disguised as puppets or banners. If you have access to a car, you can use it to drop off all the lockboxes at the very moment your group suddenly converges at the chosen site. If you are doing a long line, you have access to several cars, and speed is of the essence, pairs could get locked together in vehicles before driving to the area, then all be dropped off at the site and link up in a matter of seconds. A large group of people walking any distance with bulky lockboxes will probably attract the wrong kind of attention, especially if the authorities are on the lookout for civil disobedience, although you could come up with clever ways to camouflage them in a pinch.

As in all blockading, if you are blocking a road or highway that is in use, it is very important to stop traffic first. This can most easily be accomplished by another group working in concert with those who lock down; it is a lot to ask of a small group that they stop traffic, then lock themselves properly together while holding it at bay. Angry drivers can be even more dangerous than police under these circumstances; be careful not to give them the opportunity to do anything stupid.

Once You're Locked Together

The people who have come with you to play supporting roles can complement your blockade with a rally, street party, or outreach event. If you are blocking a street, there will be drivers to witness street theater or receive pamphlets; if you're blocking the entrance to an official event, there may be reporters to record you issuing your statement. Either way, there will be curious passersby who deserve to be told more about what's going on and why, and perhaps to be entertained in the bargain. If your lockdown is going to create a traffic jam, and you are concerned that the action might be misinterpreted as an attack on civilian drivers, consider distributing peace offerings such as homemade brownies.

Those locking down can be dressed in symbolic or expressive garb — or, for that matter, in nothing at a 1 1 — o r draped in a banner explaining the reason for the action. If your human

chain is not connected to anything at the ends, you could conceivably move from one point to another while locked together, but this will not be easy or particularly safe. If you are planning on moving at all, you should practice in advance, and perhaps designate coordinators to talk everyone through certain movements or count off marching steps. Whether you expect this to be an issue or not, it is wise to prepare a basic communication and decision-making structure in advance, if there are more than a couple of you planning to lock down together.

Police Reactions, Legal Consequences

Ultimately, there is no way to predict for sure how the police will react, so avoid spending hours debating it in your group. It is important to have a police liaison present to negotiate with the authorities or at least make sure they understand the situation, and reporters or other witnesses to temper or at least document their behavior. If they start to do something that seems dangerous, calmly inform them that your arm is inside the tube and that you are unable to remove it, and that a team of crack lawyers eagerly awaits the chance to sue them into oblivion. Police will always try to intimidate you; call their bluff, while maintaining your composure. In a worst-case scenario, they may use pepper spray or a similar weapon on you — but remember, this will cost them a lot in the public eye, especially if you bear this persecution courageously.

If your tine is anchored at each end, they may begin by trying to disengage the people in the anchoring roles. If they can move the entire line out of the way and work on you once you are no longer blocking traffic, they probably will, but this will be difficult if you are seated or supine. If they can't move you all, they will work lockbox by lockbox, cutting the line into smaller, more moveable sections. The method the police use to cut you out will depend on how experienced they are. No police department wants a lawsuit, so they will probably be careful not to injure you. If you hide the location of the central bolt, they will have no way of knowing where your hands are inside the tube; this will prevent them from simply cutting the tube in half. Often, the police will call in the fire department to use special tools designed for removing people from wreckage. Last time I locked down, the police brought special wooden frames to support our PVC pipe lockboxes, then slowly dismantled the boxes with wire cutters, saws, and various other tools.

It is also difficult to predict what your charges will be when you are arrested at the end of your lockdown. In this author's experience, among others, the charge has been "incommoding," the same charge you get for blocking a street or similar conduit with your body. The use of lockboxes is not a separate crime, though the police may make threats or try to tack on additional charges such as "possession of implements of crime" (PIC). In both the lockdowns in which I participated, the police told us that because we used the lockboxes we would be charged with an additional PIC offense, but of course, as police are wont to do, they were lying. PVC pipe, chain, and carabineers are not implements of crime, no matter how you slice it. Regardless, you should have a group ready to provide immediate legal support (see Legal Support, pg. 329).

Committing to a lockdown is a serious matter; you must be prepared for the ordeal of interacting with infuriated police officers over a protracted period of time, while being unable to move freely; this will be followed by the further ordeal of being arrested and spending time in jail. Embark on a lockdown in a state of inner peace and resolve, properly fed and hydrated, prepared to weather storms of danger and drama — and if you think you might be there for a long time, wear an adult diaper!

Other Blockading Methods

There are many other ways to create blockades. The most traditional is to build a barricade (see Blocs, Block and Otherwise, pg. 127). An individual who desires to lock herself to something or someone can do so by putting a bicycle U-lock around her neck, though this requires the same support infrastructure that a traditional lockdown does. Extremely experienced and prepared groups can build tripods and suspend individuals from them, taking the civil disobedience of lockdowns to another level. Dirt roads can be blockaded by digging ditches across them; fencing, metal or wood poles, cables supporting such poles, or other materials can be planted in them, too. If police become anxious or confused enough, they may block off an area for you.

When blockading a busy thoroughfare, it is important to slow traffic to a safe speed first. A bicycle parade (see Bicycle Parades, pg. 100) can slow to a stop, becoming a blockade in itself and offering the opportunity for more permanent blockading to take place. Old bicycles, perhaps outfitted with extra metal, could be locked together and abandoned as a blockade by such a parade. It is possible to set off the automatic arms of railroad crossings by using jumper cables to complete the circuit between little trigger wires on the tracks. Individuals dressed as construction workers can put out traffic cones and barrels and wave down cars; for that matter, giving drivers a spectacle of any kind to stare at will slow them down. A banner drop over a busy highway can slow traffic significantly, potentially creating a traffic jam which might itself constitute a blockade of sorts — nothing obstructs cars like more cars! Speaking of, you can drive old junker cars into place and disable them (see account following Reclaim the Streets, pg. 421); be sure to buy them with cash from people who won't remember anything useful about you if the authorities come asking. They can be loaded with barricading material, which can be deployed from them; people can even lock down to them. Once traffic is slowed or stopped, you can stretch cables or fencing across highways and affix it to telephone poles, light posts, or guardrails.

Don't forget that quick-drying concrete can effectively seal many gates and other means of access. Mix nuts and bolts or other material into it for greater durability. For a humorous effect in a low-risk environment, you can brick up the door of an office or business. Pick a quiet night, so the mortar will have enough time to dry.

When blocking off both ends of a street or bridge, make sure you leave an exit. You don't want to let traffic in, but you also don't want to trap civilians — or yourself. Always make sure that you are not blocking access to a hospital or similar establishment.

Account

In the winter of 2003, before the second Gulf War began, direct action was happening all across the globe in an attempt to stop the war before it started and to connect the impending invasion of Iraq to the larger war that capitalism wages everywhere. Direct actions in New York City and San Francisco hid shut down the Holland Tunnel and Financial District, respectively, and other protests were also making headlines.

Anarchists and direct action enthusiasts in DC were organizing regular actions, while trying to put into place a plan that could be carried out once it was announced that the bombs had started falling on Iraq. Our theme was "When the War Starts, America Stops." We put out fliers calling for an "Emergency Response Direct Action — the Morning After War on Iraq Starts." People who wanted to participate on bikes could show up for a "Race Against War" in Dupont circle; at the

same time, people who wanted to participate on foot would head to the other side of town for a "March of Resistance" at the Eastern Market Metro stop. We also put out a call for groups to carry out actions on their own to further disrupt business as usual throughout the city.

We've had a lot of direct actions in DC over the last few years. The state is usually aware when there's going to be a lot of protest activity, and the police presence is really intense. Given this atmosphere, just meeting up for a protest without being shut down from the start can be really difficult. To counter this, we came up with a complicated plan like nothing we'd done before. We would use the city's public transportation system and the fact that the city is wedged between two different states to our advantage. The march started in southeast DC, near the US Capitol. But instead of the march taking to the streets of what is a pretty typical area of DC for protests, the crowd was led down into the subway station. We handed out different colored slips of paper which corresponded to the colors of the flags participants were to follow onto different cars of the same subway train. The people leading the groups into the different cars were responsible for making sure no one got separated from the protest and that everyone made it to the correct stop. On the train people sang, chanted, had conversations with commuters, and passed out fliers about why we were there. A lot of folks in DC ride the train to work at that hour, so it was a good opportunity to take our message directly to many people.

After the train crossed the river into Virginia, the various color-coded groups were instructed to exit at the Roslyn stop, a short walk from the Key Bridge. The Key Bridge is a main artery between DC and Virginia, and serves as the entrance to Georgetown, one of Washington's richest and most upscale shopping districts and also full of targets which could be related to the war. In addition, the Metro stop was only a couple of short blocks away from the offices of the Boeing Corporation, another possible target with obvious connections to the war.

Meanwhile, as the march headed toward the Key Bridge on the Virginia side, the Critical Mass ride was weaving its way through the DC streets to meet the march on the DC side of the bridge. This, we hoped, would allow us to block the bridge effectively from both sides and thus bring business as usual to a halt, focusing attention on the war begun only hours before. To add to the display of visible resistance and accompany our actions with precise and pointed messaging, other affinity groups, separate from the march and bike ride, brought banners to the bridge and hung them up around the main intersections while others handed out fliers detailing our reasons for shutting down the bridge and explaining our opposition to the war.

Two drivers sat in junker cars near the bridge on the Virginia and DC sides, waiting for the word that the march and bike ride were nearing so they could get into place. When they learned the march was coming, both cars drove out, and stopped and parked at the DC side of the bridge. Originally there was to be a car on each side, but the police presence on the Virginia side of the bridge, combined with the landscape of the area, made a successful getaway for the driver who would have to abandon the car there seem very unlikely.

The drivers parked their cars at an angle to take up as many lanes as possible, hopped out, moved to remove the license plates that had enabled them to drive around safely, and ran like hell to get away. Unfortunately, there were hundreds of cops on the DC side of the bridge, some of whom started chasing one of the drivers immediately. They eventually caught up to him, punched him a couple of times, and threw him in the back of a paddy wagon. They also picked up one of the scouts who was doing communications on the bridge and mistook her for the guy that was driving the other car. In custody, she heard over the radio that the cops realized their mistake.

The cops then suddenly opened the doors to the police van and said, "Get out, we don't want to deal with you right now," and let both people go!

Three people were arrested on the Virginia side of the bridge; we had a bail fund and legal support team ready to go to get them out. They were out in a couple of hours, and thanks to the coordination of the national lawyers guild and DC's local direct action legal collective, a local lawyer took the cases for free.

Let's back up and talk about how we put this together. This action posed several organizing challenges because of the uncertainty of when the war would start. Because of this, we took steps to ensure we had all the needed action roles sorted out weeks in advance. We even had understudies for some of the roles, in case certain people happened to be unavailable the day we needed to carry out the action.

In the planning for the action, we secured two junker cars that would be used to help stop traffic from reaching the bridge. The two cars, one of which was a minivan, were also loaded up with big scraps of wood and metal (including a bed frame), chains, and locks that would be used to form barricades that would fill in the areas around the cars. In the vicinity of the site of the action, there were also road signs and other construction-related barricades that could have pulled into the street. The plan was for an affinity group in the march to open up the cars and pull out all the materials to set up the barricades — but it happened that the folks who were going to do this were tied up on the other side of the bridge by a heavy police presence. By the time they got near the cars, the police had blocked them off and made them inaccessible.

In addition to getting drivers for the vehicles and people to assist in building the blockades, we secured volunteers for several other key roles. We had a loop of communications people within the bike ride, the march, and on the bridge as scouts, as well as folks on site in advance to check for any early police presence. Cell phones were used to insure the simultaneous arrival of both the march and the Critical Mass ride. We also had a couple of people set to lead the various risk levels of the march: those who couldn't risk arrest followed one color flag to a support rally across the street, while those who could engage in blocking the street followed another. While our ultimate goal was for no one to be arrested, we wanted to make sure that those for whom arrest was not an option were able to participate as well and feel comfortable participating. Action medics and legal observers accompanied the march, and the variety of roles allowed for those who could not engage directly in the blockades to take on equally active and important roles.

This plan was largely organized in public, so the police presence awaiting us was unavoidable. Only a handful knew the full details of where we would end up, but unfortunately that must have been leaked. Had we done a better job of keeping the target point a secret, we might have had more time to get things in place; on the other hand, the bridge we picked is one of the main entrances to the city, and it may have had a large police presence regardless.

However, the bridge was completely shut down for about 30 minutes, and partially shut down and made into a spectacle for hours after that. It was a nasty day, cold and pouring rain. The action didn't entirely go as planned — the idea was to shut down both ends of the bridge and have a street party against the war in the middle. Instead, the police cleared all of us from the bridge pretty quickly. But it was shut down, our message against the war and business as usual was all over the news, and the action clearly affected the morning commute to work. In addition, we gained useful experience for our future endeavors.

Classroom Takeover

Ingredients

- A university, community college — *or other institution of "higher" education*
- A few interesting, intelligent companions

Optional Ingredients

- An interesting video
- Educational packets
- Pamphlets, 'zines, posters, other propaganda

Instructions

Procure a Classroom

We stumbled onto this recipe quite accidentally. Essentially, it involves assuming the role of professor in a university class. Traditional methods of propaganda distribution often fail to reach those outside the various radical ghettoes, but students — as our studies have shown! — are unusually likely to pay heed to subversive propaganda, if it is issued by a professor or person supposedly acting in one's stead.

This is the most difficult step in this recipe, but here are some tips that will get you in front of a class in no time! First, try this recipe on the first day of classes at a university; no one in the class will know what the professor looks like, so you can pull this off without even making up an excuse as to why you are there. Second, at many universities, if a professor gets sick or is otherwise absent unexpectedly, an official notice will be placed on the door of that classroom. It is possible to walk around a university, locate one of these notices, and remove it. The notification should include at least the class section number, and probably the time the class is scheduled to take place — if the time is not included, check the university's class listing, which can usually be found in the campus library or bookstore, or online. Come back at the assigned time, tell everyone that you are filling in for the professor, and do your worst. Another way to weasel your way into a professorship — this is the method we used — is to become friends with some professors at the local university. Professor friends are likely to call on you to conduct class in their absence. Usually, they'll just ask you to perform some menial task such as showing a bore-you-to-tears movie or passing out a syllabus, but hey, they're not going to be there! This latter technique is a bit more time-consuming, but in a college town, professors are powerful allies to have. The third and least-recommended option (read "only for reformist suckers")is to go through somewhat more than two decades of schooling and actually get hired as a professor.

Oh Shit, I'm Standing in Front of 150 Voracious College Kids, Now What?!

First, imagine they're all naked. Second, calm down; students, like bears, lions, and other wild mammals, are more afraid of you than you are of them — honest!

Seriously, though, this is where the fun begins. From here, your imagination is the only limit. You could give a lecture on armed guerrilla struggles in Francoist Spain after the civil war, or offer a skillshare on graffiti techniques. You could facilitate a workshop on gender subversion, or pass out instruments and hold a jam session. Whatever you do, we highly recommend you have some radical literature on hand — they will pick it up and read it. Also, in discussions, don't shoot down everything students bring up that you don't agree with — even if you disagree with it very strongly. What we found is that this will polarize the class against you — people will stop listening and discussion will cease. Instead, initially pretend to agree to some of these things, then later come back to these things and show why they are wrong without mentioning the original comment. Remember, a student's ego is a fragile thing; if you can avoid bruising it and still make your point, everyone wins.

Account

At the beginning of the semester, a socialist professor of political science (the sole representative of "radicalism" at the university here) whom we had befriended over the last few years gave us a call. He told us that he was in France and wouldn't be back for the first two weeks of class. He asked if we would handle his classes for the time that he was gone, and hand out syllabi. We agreed — and it was on. Instantly we had three classes, six class periods, and something like 400 students to lead astray.

None of us knew exactly what we were going to do, though we agreed simply passing out the syllabus wouldn't suffice. We had nebulous notions of distributing propaganda through the classes, so we pulled out all our pamphlets, 'zines, and posters, and went about producing a "reader." Teachers often pass these out: they usually consist of photocopied excerpts from boring-as-hell intellectuals. Our reader was a wonderful thirty- six-page packet including selections from Fighting for Our Lives, Days of War, Nights of Love. Orwell's Homage to Catalonia, the Situationist pamphlet On the Poverty of Student Life, and similar works. We hurriedly compiled this packet in the hours leading up to our first class. Over a hundred were produced and distributed during our little experiment, and they seemed to go over very well.

The first few classes we taught were somewhat sketchy. Our propaganda distribution went very well, but our lesson plan was — well, almost nonexistent. It all came together in our fourth class, though. This was a three-hour-long evening Introduction to Civics class hosting 150 students, many of whom were freshmen, so we knew we could prepare a lot of material. The original plan called for one of our number — we'll call him Ted- to give a lecture on the connections between the CIA, drug importing, and the Bush family, then show the video Breaking the Spell, and end with a discussion session. As the class started, it occurred to u s that the VCRs and projectors were all either locked or required a code. This problem was easily solved when we realized that there was a big sticker on the phone reading, "Call X8105 for assistance with the multimedia devices." So, we called.

<quote> Us: "Uh, We're filling in for our professor tonight, and he asked us to show a video, but we don't have the keys. Can you come unlock it?"

Tech Guy: “Okay, do you have the code for the control box?”

Us: “Uh, no.”

Him: “Argh, damn professor didn’t prepare you at all … Til be right over.” </quote>

Within ten minutes, the multimedia problems were solved.

As it turned out, Ted was late, so we showed the video first. Now, when I say that, what I mean is we walked into the room without saying a word to the class, put in the video, and played it. For those who have not seen Breaking the Spell, it should be said that it is a militant anarchist account of the Seattle WTO protests. Within about five minutes, cops were cracking skulls and anarchists were breaking windows, and in the classroom there were about 100 unsuspecting students with their jaws on the floor. The gasps heard through the next hour as protesters were viciously beaten on screen made it clear to me that we were getting our point across.

The movie ended and the class seemed in shock. Ted had arrived by this point and promptly assumed his very natural role of discussion moderator and social lubricant. He told the class that anyone who wanted to leave should (a very smart thing to do) and some did, but many stayed. Then we asked the class what they thought of the movie. Then someone asked, “What was the point of showing the movie?” I was about to respond with some sort of polarizing and cliched rant about the inherent violence of capitalist systems and the need to disassemble them, when Ted saved me from myself. “Why do you think we showed it?” he responded. This sparked an hour and a half of some of the best classroom discussion I had ever been a party to.

It should be mentioned here that the success of this discussion had a great deal to do with the dynamics of the group we had “teaching” class that night. There were four of us there that evening. One of our number sat in the audience and acted in a capacity that we hoped would convince some students that they too are perfectly capable of being radical. Two of us are kind of scary-looking fuck-shit-up no-compromise kind of anarchists. Ted, on the other hand, looks almost like a college student himself, and while he harbors many of the same ideas as us, he presents them in a much subtler, more pacifistic manner. He also works in a cafe, where he talks and talks and talks to all kinds of people with all kinds of political ideologies, so he is quite a bit better than the rest of us at getting his point across in a sugarcoated way. Discussion often turned out like this: One of the more militant of us would present a polarizing radical opinion in some scary militant fashion. The students would gasp and be like, “No! Never! I’ll never believe you, you dirty, violent criminals ! “ Then Ted would jump in and be like, “Well, I wouldn’t really advocate that exactly, but they are correct that… and then he’d explain it more thoroughly in a manner more familiar to the students. This allowed us to present views that were a world away from the views that the students held, but in a way that bridged the gap so that they could see where we were coming from — and where we are going!

The class ended with Ted showing a video about the US government’s complicity in the September 11th terrorist attacks. Some left gritting their teeth, but all were contemplative, and even our most ardent ideological foes stopped after class to congratulate us on “the most interesting class they’d ever had.” Oh yeah, and they took all our pamphlets.

Coalition Building

Instructions

Assembling coalitions is a way to foster solidarity and build social power. Good coalitions enable people from a broad range of perspectives and demographics to work together and benefit from their differences. Affinity groups and collectives can be powerful on their own, and even more powerful when they work together — but when such groups find common cause with people from other organizing traditions and walks of life, a new range of possibilities opens.

Coalition building can enable activists to move beyond the limitations of outreach. When you have much in common with others, it makes sense to invite them to consider your viewpoints and join in your activities. But the less similar your context and needs are to theirs, the more important it is for you to avoid recruiting and focus on building alliances; this means finding ways to make your separate projects complement one another, and to pursue goals together even when your motivations diverge. Assuming that your group has figured out the one right way to do things and that everyone else should drop everything and join you is bound to be ineffective, not to mention exasperating. Such an attitude is often a holdover from hierarchical conditioning: people from the social classes that are accustomed to organizing and directing everyone else sometimes unthinkingly attempt to retain this role even in the struggle against hierarchy, casting themselves as the branch managers of the revolution.

There's a lot of radical sentiment out there that doesn't go by any name familiar to those who consider themselves radicals. Likewise, two self-proclaimed anarchists, however similar their rhetoric may be, are as likely to be at odds in fundamental ways as each is to have desires in common with others who put less stock in self-categorization. Unruly youth whose hatred of restraints is derived from their daily lives, irate housecleaners who've never heard of anarcho-syndicalism, local religious communities that share your ethics if not your cosmological views, these are potential allies with much to offer to a liberation struggle, even if they don't frame that struggle the way you do. Besides, if you really are fighting for universal liberation, you'll do well to get experience working with people of all walks of life, learning in the process what liberation means to each of them.

Getting Started

So you're convinced that there are worthwhile goals that cannot be achieved by affinity groups alone, and you're ready to link up with other groups and communities. But with whom will you form your coalition? How do you find the allies you need?

One way to do so is to become an ally to others. Find out what projects and campaigns others in your area are working on, pick the ones you want to support, and inquire as to how you and your friends or your group can help (see Solidarity, pg. 489). Especially in the case of people from demographics more marginalized, impoverished, or oppressed than your own, you may

have access to resources that can be of great use in their struggle. There's a lot to be said for following the leads of those who suffer the inequalities and iniquities of the capitalist system more immediately than you, whenever they take action to resist it. And who knows — if you offer meaningful, consistent support, they may eventually take an interest in supporting your projects in return, especially if what you're doing is actually relevant to their lives.

To learn what other activists are doing in your area, you'll probably have to look beyond the forums and media with which you are most familiar. Just as the predominantly white anarchist scene has word-of-mouth and email networks that are fairly self-contained, other communities have their own channels of communication. If you're organizing on the campus of a private school, for example, and you're not aware of any radical homeless activists in your town, that doesn't mean there are none — you just aren't looking where they are.

Approach groups and individuals that are already active with whom you can establish common goals. These could range from short-term goals, such as getting a racist sheriff fired, to broader goals like abolishing warfare, exchange economics, and fluorescent lighting once and for all. Find starting places, points of unity on which to base your cooperation, and open a dialogue about what you can do together. Remember how much you can learn from established local organizers : they probably have valuable organizing skills and knowledge about the lay of the land. Older activists in particular may have been doing what they do in their community for a lot longer than you have.

At the same time, don't limit yourself to seeking out alliances with other self-professed activists! You probably know many different circles of people who have never thought of themselves as being politically committed or active, with whom you can accomplish great things if the right opportunity comes up. The regulars at the local bar might be glad to join you in driving fascists out of their neighborhood (see Antifascist Action, pg. 35); a local pottery-making group might jump at the chance to share their wares or offer instruction at a Really Really Free Market (see Festivals, pg. 241); a local graffiti crew might be willing to help you spread an announcement (see Graffiti, pg. 258).

Stay abreast of what people are doing in different social circles, and brainstorm about how their activities could be connected to overtly or subtly radical projects. Cross-pollinating is the essence of coalition building; the more you can mix divergent social milieus and perspectives, the better. Don't lament the limitations of your local radical network while ignoring the other communities to which you are connected: everyone is linked to others in a variety of ways — spatial, cultural, occupational, familial — and so has a variety of starting places for finding unexpected allies. If you once played on a rugby team with a bunch of fraternity members , don't try to bury that episode in the past out of embarrassment — you might one day stumble across the perfect venture to invite them to join.

Above all, be sincere, reliable, and supportive with those around you, and patient and respectful with everyone you meet. Coalitions are built on strong relationships between individuals, and building these takes time and trust . If you are known as a good friend and a good neighbor, people will take you seriously when you approach them with a proposal.

Attitude and Approach

When you set out to build coalitions, it's important to accept the cultural, tactical, and strategic ways in which others' groups differ from the groups with which you identify; what matters

is what you have in common, and what you can do together without compromising yourselves or each other. Similarly, it's important to accept things people do in their own lives that diverge from the standards of your subculture. You may be a strict vegan who never buys from corporations, rides in motor vehicles, or sleeps indoors, but people who do all these things may be involved in projects that are at least as subversive as anything you've ever done. If you can put cultural differences aside, it will be easier to build the relationships that make coalitions possible.

When meeting new potential allies — that is to say, anyone — don't tolerate disrespect, but resist the temptation to pass judgment immediately. As time passes and you see people in action, you'll come to know them for the multi-faceted individuals they are. Then, if you still feel that something needs to be said about their conduct or attitudes, you'll be acquainted with their good and bad qualities and the context of their actions, and will be able to comment in a way they can take to heart — or, at the worst, at least you'll know you're doing the right thing by making a scene.

Keep in mind that every group is made up of a wide range of individuals with a wide range of ideas — not everyone in a union thinks the same way as the president of the union local, for example. Don't assume that any one individual can represent the perspectives of those you presume to be his or her peers, don't project his or her views onto others.

Everyone is in a developmental process of his or her own, making decisions for reasons that may not be apparent from a distance. Trust that people know what's best for themselves, even when you don't understand their choices. Though you may not always agree with the ways people go about standing up for themselves, it's still worth supporting this wherever it happens — it is thus that people win victories, forge relationships, and come to learn from one another.

Take care to respect others' time limitations and schedules. People on the receiving end of capitalist oppression and repression must struggle for their own survival and the survival of their communities, and consequently tend to be extremely busy. Often the best approach is to go to events others organize, both to support them and to learn what their goals are and how they are pursuing them.

At the same time, keep your activities as open as possible, so if others want to take part, they can. Hold meetings at convenient times and accessible places, be friendly and welcoming, and make sure newcomers understand what's going on and how they can participate. Maintain healthy internal dynamics, so potential participants will not feel excluded, belittled, or oppressed.

Building Bridges

How can you be a good ally to other communities? One way to get started is to get your own community together and active. In the long run, an entire community can provide more and better support to another community than any isolated individual ever could. Often, activists who are frustrated that their communities are not providing meaningful support to other communities throw out the baby with the bathwater, giving up on the possibility that their own communities might ever offer such support and instead settling for offering it alone on an individual basis. This is shortsighted. Your allies don't just need your money, volunteer hours, or spray painting skills — most of all, they need the link you offer to an entire social circle of people similar to yourself, people who might also be able to find common cause with them.

Therefore, though it may seem insular or even isolationist, in the long run it can be beneficial for other communities as well as your own if you focus energy on building up infrastructure,

relationships, and consciousness in your immediate social circles. Working in your own community is what you are equipped to do best, anyway, and can be the most efficient application of your time and energy. If, for example, radical individuals in an apolitical punk rock scene refuse to desert it to pursue traditional service-oriented activism, but instead stay connected to that social base and do the work necessary to politicize it, that scene can eventually become a place in which young people develop an awareness of the perspectives and circumstances of those of other walks of life, and in which well-attended benefit shows that support the organizing efforts of people from other communities are held regularly.

When it comes to attracting diverse groups to a coalition, sometimes the most effective approach is to expand incrementally, approaching immediately adjacent communities with whom you have much in common, rather than attempting to start at the opposite end of the spectrum. Once there is some diversity in a coalition, it can be easier to gain more; at the same time, be careful not to let a monoculture develop in your coalition that would put off groups that have little in common with the others involved. It's a good rule of thumb to involve groups in projects from the very beginning, rather than approaching them once things are already in motion when it will be difficult for them to feel a sense of ownership. Regardless of how you go about reaching out to others, whatever you do will work best if it's based on existing relationships and natural affinities.

Within diverse coalitions, it's generally a good policy to defer decision-making to those most affected. People of color, for example, have more at stake when it comes to police brutality issues than the average white person does. It makes sense for them to be the main decision-makers in local struggles against police brutality, because in the long run they will likely be the most affected by the decisions.

To be a good ally, you must be consistent and reliable: do what you say you'll do, don't suddenly disappear, keep coming back. Over time, this will build trust, and a stronger working relationship from which future projects can grow.

Choose issues that are dose to your heart, and stick with them. Many organizers of color have spoken about how white activists often have the liberty to pick and choose which issues to address and when. They have said that when these white activists get burned out, or want to move on to a more trendy issue or just hit the road, they just disappear. If you absolutely have to leave, make sure you let your fellow organizers know in advance. Figure out ways to have your responsibilities and roles covered while you're gone, stay in touch, and get back into action when you return.

Don't just go to groups when you need something from them. Go to support what they're doing, and stay involved in their projects for the long haul. Insofar as you share goals, what's good for them is good for you.

Hang in there even when you don't like some of the things going on. If you hear sexist, homophobic, or otherwise bigoted speech — which can happen or not happen in any social context, regardless of common stereotypes or expectations — remember is okay to feel uncomfortable for a minute. Again, everyone is learning and growing, and what one person says does not represent the whole group. If you stay as an ally and build a strong relationship, what you have to say about it later on will be more meaningful.

Stick Around

Get to know your allies as people, not just as organizers who give you access to a certain community or who play a part in your political strategy. Enjoy the people you meet in the course of your organizing, share parts of yourself with them as it becomes natural, build personal relationships as well as organizing alliances. At the same time, if someone doesn't want that with you, don't push it.

As your relationships with people outside of your usual circles become stronger, you may get to the point where it makes sense to talk about your political differences in order for the relationships to grow. Don't go into these discussions expecting to change anyone. Look on such conversations as opportunities to learn as well as teach. Ultimately, coalition building is a way not only to connect with others for political expediency, but also to expand ourselves.

Collectives

Instructions

While an affinity group is a transitory structure based on existing collaboration and friendship (see Affinity Groups, pg. 28), a collective is a more permanent institution in which collaboration can take place and friendships can develop. Individuals may pass in and out of different collectives, like blood circulating through organs, but the collectives remain, offering continuity and infrastructure.

A collective might be a closed circle, such as a clandestine wheatpasting team (see Wheatpasting, pg. 598). or a more fluid, open arrangement in which anyone can participate, such as a Food Not Bombs group (see Food Not Bombs, pg. 248). Often, as in the case of an anarchist folk band that takes different roadies with them every time they go on tour, the format is somewhere between these extremes. Collectives can serve the needs of the individuals who comprise them, as a reading group does, or the needs of their community, as a women's health care collective does (see Health Care, pg. 275). or those of other communities, as a prisoner support group does in mailing out books to the incarcerated. At best, everyone who comes into contact with a collective ends up both participating and benefiting in some way; that's the whole idea of thinking and acting collectively.

Cooperation and Consensus

Affinity groups and collectives can be distinguished from other organizational structures in that they are explicitly non-hierarchical. Ideally, all participants have an equal say in the activities of the group. There are no leadership positions; every effort is made to keep power and influence from being centralized in the hands of any individual or faction. Decisions are made by consensus rather than by vote, so they meet with the approval of all involved.

In this way, affinity groups and collectives provide a foundation for individual autonomy in collective action. For this to be possible, though, they must themselves be built on a foundation of supportive and liberating relationships. Egalitarian structures and procedures cannot substitute for sensitivity and goodwill; at best, they can only smooth the way for these. As so many of the important aspects of any collaboration are determined informally, participants in collectives must seek to nourish in themselves the attitudes and habits necessary for coexistence and cooperation to come naturally.

Expandable Autonomous Zines

Rather than increasing the resources or power of individuals, collectives build shared power. In a competitive system, life is a zero-sum game, in which one can only pros- per at the expense of others; in the cooperative system collectives seek to employ, on the other hand, the more

everyone invests, the more everyone benefits. Likewise, in establishing and nurturing a collective, individuals do not amass power for themselves alone, but instead build a structure from which all might benefit. The wealth a collective generates is not the kind of currency one can use to purchase an insurance policy; it is, rather, the long-standing emotional bonds and networks of mutual aid that can provide for people's needs even when insurance policies fail.

At their best, collective projects are contagious, spreading collaborative spirit and structures to all who encounter them. They may do so by welcoming new participants into their ranks, or by demonstrating the advantages of methods others can make use of themselves.

Harmony, Not Unity

Many activists approach collective projects with the idea that in order to work together, be or appear sincere, or accomplish great things, all members of a collective must share a specific political platform, a certain lifestyle, and a strict code of conduct. And you thought the pressure to conform was bad in high school! So-called radical ideologies such as Communism that neglected to do away with hierarchy have historically demanded such standardization from their ranks, and have ended up with consequently sterile movements, artwork, and societies; anarchist thinking, on the other hand, suggests that diversity is necessary to any healthy ecosystem or organization. Greater diversity offers a wider range of inspiration and ideas to draw on, and makes your group more adaptable; and since human beings are always different, even when they try to homogenize themselves, any value system that encourages conformity can only spawn dishonest and superficial relationships and projects.

A collective of would-be clones can do one thing well, at best; a circle of unique individuals can do many differing things that complement each other. The best collectives are the ones that engage the sum total of all the different members have to offer, not the ones that limit themselves to applying only what their members have in common. Just as a band needs musicians who play different instruments, healthy associations don't restrict the participants with compromises that force them to limit themselves to the things they have in common, but instead integrate their dissimilarities into a whole greater than the sum of its parts.

Working and living in such arrangements, in which every person is conscious that she is responsible for making the projects and relationships work, helps one learn to see oneself as a part of the web of human relations, rather than as an isolated individual against the world. Under these circumstances, others' desires must "be taken as seriously as one's own. This can actually allow an individual to be a more complete person, as her companions can represent parts of herself for her that she would not otherwise express. Ultimately, everyone is a product of the same world, anyway -we are all interconnected, each of us manifesting different aspects of the same interplay of forces. Without this insight, our cooperation and community can only be incidental and haphazard.

Eventually, for the individual experienced in living communally and acting collectively, it becomes possible to regard the entire cosmos as one vast, albeit dysfunctional, collective; the problem is simply how to make its workings more to one's liking. This is not to say that fascists or sexists can go about their merry business and be "part of our collective" — they'd be the first ones to deny that, and follow it up with proof! But the chief argument of fascism and reactionary thinking has always been that cooperation and autonomy are mutually exclusive, that people

have to be ordered and controlled or else they will do nothing but be lazy and kill each other. The more we can demonstrate that this is untrue, the less appeal their claims will have.

Diversity

Starting from diversity is as important as fostering it. Everyone is unique, of course, and it can happen that there is more divergence of personality, skills, and experience between two people of the same background than between individuals from differing demographics — but that said, it can be a great thing for a collective to include members of different genders, ages, social classes, and cultures. When people from such differing backgrounds learn to understand and respect each other's perspectives, complement each other's strengths and weaknesses, and form symbiotic relationships on the basis of their differences, that's revolution i n action, even if it's just a handful of people at first. This is not to say that you should recruit people for your collective on the basis of race or gender alone — that can come across as patronizing, to say the least — but rather that traveling in diverse circles, and drawing on the friendships that develop naturally within those circles to undertake collective projects, are in your best interest.

Of course, collectives composed of members with widely differing degrees of privilege will have to work extra hard on learning to interact as equals (see Undermining Oppression, pg. 560). Oppressive patterns — middle class people tending to take over the organizing, working class people to do the physical labor, men to make decisions in ways that exclude women, and so on — come with us into our collectives from the hierarchical world that raised us; let's make these groups social laboratories in which we learn how to break these patterns, in preparation for breaking that world.

The proportions of different demographics within a collective often have a great influence over its internal dynamics. For example, it's best that there be at least two people who identify as women in every collective, if possible: an all-male group will inevitably lack certain important perspectives, and a lone woman in a group of men is going to have to deal with a lot of frustration on her own. All- woman groups, on the other hand can be inspiring for others, and can function as "safer spaces" that are more comfortable for the participants than working in mixed company (again, see Undermining Oppression, pg. 560).

Commitment

Commitment is to collectives what bottomlining is to affinity groups; it is the bedrock on which communities can build their power and organize themselves. When you give up all the false riches and reassurances of the capitalist protection racket, you'll need this from each other more than anything else.

The world we live in, or rather, what world we live in, depends entirely upon our investments: we go on living in this world of sales, wages, rent, and cages because every day, people wake up and — seeing no other viable option — invest their energy and ingenuity in surviving within its structures, thus perpetuating them. If you can somehow invest yourself in creating and perpetuating another world, that world will exist at least to the extent that you exist — that's the logic of living a radical lifestyle. Now, one person alone living and believing against the grain can barely survive, let alone make a real impact; but a small tribe of people who reinforce and sustain one another can thrive, and help others open doors to new worlds of their own.

Anarchist communities, at their best, are networks of such tribes, all trading support and inspiration with each other and helping plant seeds that could grow into new realities. The most decisive element in determining what a given community can and cannot do is the commitment of its participants. A group of people who are ready to go through anything together, who how they will be faithful to each other and their dreams through the hardest of times, need not be perfect; as time passes, they will learn what they need to learn and improve where they need to improve.

When you're considering who to work with, characteristics like experience, technical proficiency, and access to equipment should be secondary — a person who has none of these but is possessed by a burning desire to accomplish great things can acquire them eventually Likewise, if you want to get anywhere working in cooperative groups of any kind, the most important characteristics you can develop in yourself are commitment, dedication, reliability, and responsibility. Don't let people down, no matter what challenges you encounter. Let others how through your actions that they can count on you in everything you undertake together.

Three people can share and minimize rent and food costs, cover a town in posters and graffiti, and organize a part-time childcare collective; ten can cultivate a community garden, operate an infoshop or newspaper, and form a radical marching band; one hundred can transform a neighborhood into an autonomous zone, organize city-stopping demonstrations, and fan out across the country to share those skills with ten thousand more — but it all comes down to commitment!

Division of Labor, Specialization, and Power

In seeking to prevent both internal strife and the centralization of power, collectives will do well to be leery of long-term division of labor. An established division of labor means that every member becomes specialized in his or her particular tasks — and, often, in the accompanying role associated with those tasks. Once the members of a collective have settled into different roles, they tend to develop conflicting needs and perspectives, and an imbalance of power often follows.

For an offbeat example of the pitfalls of too much specialization, let's look at a common but oft-neglected example of the collective: the political punk or rock band. Many political bands experience an internal disorder in which a rift develops between the singer and the other members . Already likely to be outgoing and expressive by temperament, the singer finds himself in the role of spokesperson for the whole band: he is expected to compose lyrics and accompanying song explanations, field the majority of interview questions, and introduce the songs while other band members fine-tune their instruments. All this serves to reinforce the singer's inherent authoritative tendencies — let's not kid ourselves, we all have some — until he starts to take the power of his position for granted.

The best analogy to use here is the Communist State: the singer becomes the Party, whose White Man's Burden it is to educate the Masses, starting of course with the Proletariat of his own band: the other members, the ones who actually manufacture the useful product — the music. He, of course, is only giving voice to the politics they already hold unconsciously: he is the Vanguard, and this gives him the important responsibilities of managing their labor, representing their interests, issuing statements on behalf of the group, and so on.

Being able to express one's feelings in words, to speak one's mind publicly, to articulate complex ideas on the spot, all these are valuable skills to have-the problem is not that the singer in this example exercises these, but that the specialization within the traditional band format tends to develop these skills in this one person and not in the others. The singer may well be saying and organizing things that need saying and organizing, and he or she may for that matter be the one who takes the most responsibility for important matters such as the relationship between the band and other people — but this specialization is not usually sustainable, and never healthy, Tensions develop between the different class strata of the band, now that they have different interests according to their different roles.

This is only one of countless examples of the ways specialization can concentrate control and create dissension within a collective. Even in collectives in which the division of labor is much less formal, people tend to slip into roles, and the same consequences proceed.

Responsibility and responsibleness alike tend to flow in one direction once a pattern is established. The more one person does, the more she or he knows how to do, and feels invested in these things getting done — and the less everyone else does. Worse, that person can thus become ironically to trust others with responsibilities, just as others cease to be aware of how much work there is to be done and what it takes to do it. The Responsible One blames others for not taking on responsibilities they don't even know exist; the others blame him or her for hostility and resentment they lack the context to understand.

How can a collective resist this insidious tendency? There's the reformist approach: stay aware of the privilege and power you hold as a result of the tasks you take on, try to keep those who assume key roles in check with continuous feedback. And then there's the radical approach: rotate responsibilities frequently between participants in the collective, keep things so nebulous that no set roles can crystallize within your collective. Neither strategy can work without the other, really: no radical restructuring of our working groups could by itself undo the effects of the decades of hierarchical conditioning all of us have already undergone, and at the same time it's foolish to think people in structures that are conducive to specialization and centralization can behave differently just by deciding to.

Translating

Communication is central to collective activity, and it' s a voodoo art if there ever was one.

No two people speak the same language the same way — different words, gestures, actions always mean different things to different people. Don't get angry and self-righteous about communication breakdowns. There's no "right" way to communicate, no One and Only way to handle things; anyone who tells you different is trying, consciously or not, to impose their personal system upon the cosmos. On the other hand, some ways do work better than others — ultimately, the only thing that matters is that your group find a common speech or method that enables you to figure things out with each other.

Whenever the composition of your group shifts, or even when it remains the same but the people inside it go through changes, as all of us always do, you'll have to figure everything out all over again. When you have a new member or two, don't assume that you can simply march forward according to the plans and procedures you'd worked out before. Get together and make sure everyone has a say in and a feeling of ownership of what you're doing together.

Dynamics: A Round Table, Not a House of Representatives

Imagine the relationships in your collective as a system that can be diagrammed: support and information pass between some members more than others; pair bonds are formed, tighten, loosen. All this is inevitable, and fine enough; but the general shape of the system has critical effects on the way it works for those inside it. Some collectives have circular systems, in which communication takes place between all participants, or, if two members are not interacting as much, they are at least linked to each other by everyone else; other collectives develop linear systems, in which at some point in the chain of relationships there is one person who alone connects one group or individual to the rest. The circular system is healthy and durable; the linear system is perilous and fragile.

Linear dynamics are not always accompanied by hierarchical power structure — but at the very least, they tend to encourage power polarization. The skills and needs of the people occupying the two (or more) ends of the line often evolve independently of each other, and the resulting specialization of interests can lead to conflict.

Communication, which ordinarily would resolve such conflicts, is especially difficult in a collective that has linear dynamics, because the one person who links the different "wings" of the collective has to represent them to each other. Representation is already recognized by anarchists as unhealthy and disempowering: the politicians who claim to represent our interests in so-called democracies inevitably fail us, for one can only learn one's own interests by representing oneself. Even if the linking member earnestly makes every effort to represent the needs of the different parties to each other, he or she ultimately does a disservice to both by enabling them to avoid figuring out how to communicate directly. Additionally, the stress this representing imposes on the linking member, especially if one or both sides are being aggressive, can be extremely difficult to bear. This stress, like all stress in a collective, is inevitably passed back on to everyone else again — so don't toy to be a hero, solving everyone's problems and carrying the whole group forward on the strength of your diplomacy.

The linear dynamic is a classic problem for collectives in which two members are involved in a love relationship, since in our society people in such relationships are encouraged to isolate themselves from others and form one unit, the joint interests of which are then related to the group by one of the two. Blame monogamy monoculture for this. This doesn't mean people who are romantically involved can't be in a collective together, but they do need to be especially aware about keeping communication mutual and representation to a minimum. Non-monogamy, not in terms of sex so much as relationship expectations and dynamics, has a lot to teach us on this subject (see Non- Monogamous Relationships, pg. 397) *

It may well happen in a crisis situation that one member will retreat into isolation from the rest of the collective, fearing or resenting all of them except perhaps the one who knows best how to communicate with him or her. This situation will not be resolved until the others can recognize his or her needs, and the individual can feel support coming from all of them. As the success of any collective project depends on everyone involved, this should always be possible, somehow — it had better be, since in the long run no shortcut or substitute will suffice.

Avoiding linear collective dynamics is as easy, and as hard, as solving every other internal collective problem: watch out for bad patterns, keep lines of communication open, don't be insensitive. Remember not to carry someone else's load when it comes to communication, any more

than any other responsibility; remember also not to be so difficult to approach that others avoid you.

Don't Be a Jerk

If only this didn't need saying! You may not think it does, yourself, until pursuing your visions of total revolution to the ends of the earth lands you and your friends in your first, or fiftieth, really trying catastrophe, and tempers start to flare.

If you raise your voice at your companions, apologize explicitly as soon as you can, and try to work out the reasons you lost your head so you can avoid it next time. If one of them raises his or her voice at you and then apologizes, make it dear you accept the apology and harbor no grudge, and ask if there is anything you could do to help avoid this happening again. If no apology is offered, approach him or her in a non-threatening way and make it dear how important it is you discuss what happened. Check in with each other consistently-and not just in formal meetings, in which some members may feel intimidated — about how you're communicating and making each other feel. Solicit constructive criticism, and take your companions' needs very seriously — your collective depends on this.

Shouting at your companions is abusive, coercive behavior. Such behavior comes in subtler forms: sulking, sarcasm, insensitive teasing, refusing to participate in discussion, dismissing others' perspectives or needs. Forcing others to be the responsible ones — always being the one drinking, never considering others' needs until they remind you, never volunteering for tasks- or to absorb the stress of your outbursts because you're too volatile for dialogue is also coercive. If you find yourself thinking it necessary to "get tough" with your comrades by raising your voice or acting in other ways that make them uncomfortable — or for that matter thinking that they somehow deserve this treatment for something they have done! — then make no mistake about it: you are becoming an authoritarian.

Make yourself accessible and approachable for dialogue at all times. You may not be able to tell what your companions are going through or need support in — or even that they're going through anything at all — just by watching from a distance; you have to be someone they know they can come to for support, someone they will want to come to no matter what's going on. This is important between all people, but especially so for a small group undertaking long-lasting, high-stress projects in dose quarters. Don't get too comfortable in the role of supporter, either — you need to be just as comfortable seeking support as offering it. When you are offering support, be sure you're receiving it from somewhere as well.

Lastly, above all — make sure you're doing something you really want to be doing. This will make you more accommodating and good-spirited, and you won't feel like you need to be compensated for your activity like you do waiting tables or filing papers. If you really love the projects you're undertaking and the people you're with, you won't mind the challenges that come with them.

Protect Your Idealism

Part of acting collectively is not setting yourself up to be disappointed. Your faith in other human beings, your ability to believe that they can be responsible for themselves and each other, these are more integral to what you're doing than anything else — so be careful not to give people

unnecessary chances to let you down. Learning how to assess exactly how much you can trust a person is an essential skill for those who would work cooperatively.

Likewise, provide for your own needs to whatever extent you are able. This might mean carrying toilet paper with you so when there's none in the bathroom at the squat you won't hold the whole squatting movement accountable for it, or showing up at a demonstration with a strategy of your own rather than waiting for instructions. Know what you need and how to ask explicitly for it, but be self-sufficient and durable too. Enjoy developing these qualities in yourself, so you can consider it an exciting challenge when everything you counted on others to prepare for the big festival falls through the night before and you have to take care of it all on your own. This will be a lot healthier and more productive than feeling yourself a martyr crucified by the laziness and stupidity of an unfeeling world.

Ultimately, you should be able to thrive in any kind of environment or cultural context, and to be grateful for whatever people have to offer you, no matter how humble it may be — since in our networks outside the capitalist economy, where we've done away with notions of debt and duty, everything given is given only out of generosity. Approach everything in this way, and you'll be easy for everyone else to work with — not to mention you'll have a better time yourself.

When Times Get Tough

Remember, as long as we live in this cutthroat society, troubled relationships are going to be inevitable. That's why we're working towards a revolution in the first place! The dynamics within our groups and ourselves mirror the patterns of strife in the larger world around us, and we can't expect them to be much healthier than it is. The struggle to heal one is the struggle to heal the other, and neither struggle will be concluded until both are. The good news buried in this conundrum is that whatever you discover that works within your small crew may well also work to change the world at large.

It might help, when things get really bad and you start to feel ashamed of your group, like you're all a bunch of phonies and have nothing to offer the world or even each other, to consider all the other beautiful, important things that anarchists like yourself have accomplished. — those great punk rock records, the resistance in the Spanish Civil War, the millions of meals served by Food Not Bombs. You can be sure all those feats were only barely snatched from the teeth of internal dissension, resentment, and pessimism.

Everything good we achieve, we achieve because we're willing to engage in projects that are imperfect — and to forgive ourselves and our relationships for that imperfection. The only thing that is perfect is nonexistence. Hold out a little to see what you might still be able to accomplish together, however flawed it might be, before you opt for that.

Fallout and Aftermath

Even with the best internal dynamics anticapitalism can buy, your collective may eventually break up, or you may choose to leave it. That's inevitable, just like death (and the eventual abolition of taxes, god damn it). Things may even end in emotional drama and disappointment. Don't beat yourself up over this — learn what you can, and move on. Again, none of us is perfect, and recognizing that, being comfortable with it, is as radical and positive as our efforts to improve ourselves.

The fact that it comes to an end doesn't have to mean you were doing the wrong thing, either. Such an assumption is reminiscent of the objection people sometimes bring up against non-monogamous relationships: "Oh, I know some people who tried that, but they ended up breaking up." Being able to have a healthy relationship includes knowing how and when to conclude it: the conclusion is not necessarily an indication of inherent problems. Not being able to conclude, on the other hand, might be — think of the miserable monogamous marriage that drags on forever, the inmates too proud to admit it's not working.

So don't get demoralized when a collective comes to an end — take every lesson you learned, every skill you gained, every idea that has yet to see expression, and put them into action in your next collective projects. Make the lackeys of capitalism regret they ever let you get out alive, and the communities you care for grateful you managed to survive.

Corporate Downsizing

Corporations don't downsize themselves-they need our help! This is an example of how a selection of different tactics can be brought to bear at once on a given target on a busy shopping day.

Ingredients

- At least a dozen helium balloons of your favorite color
- Ribbon
- Banner-sized sheets of paper
- Spray paint or thick markers
- Kite rods
- Lots of fliers
- Blank t-shirts
- A GAP employee name badge (if you are a real badass)
- Your winning smile

Instructions

This action is a triple-pronged assault on the local sweatshop-using, environment-destroying clothing company of your choice. The three separate components of the action work well together or individually, depending on how many people are in your action group. Five to ten is an optimal number to execute all three components simultaneously.

The Balloon Banner

This action only works indoors, optimally inside a mall in which the target store is on the highest floor. Prepare ahead of time a large paper banner reinforced with kite rods — for example, "gap uses child labor." Large rolls of paper are usually hidden in high school offices to cover bulletin boards in different colors. If you do not have access to paper, look for a thin bed sheet in a thrift store or dumpster.

Next, designate well in advance a good spot on the ceiling of the mall where your banner can hang down with optimum visibility in or in front of the store you are targeting but out of

reach of security guards. At the time of the action, move quickly to the designated location, tie the balloons firmly to the upper kite rod, and release the banner. Be sure to test it out beforehand to make sure you have an adequate number of balloons for the weight of your banner.

Shortly before the test run that is described at the conclusion of this recipe, another affinity group launched a balloon banner in a corporate bookshop on their opening day. Two operatives entered the store separately, one in civilian dress with a dowel and a rolled-up banner with loops in the top secreted separately on her person, the other dressed as a down bearing balloons. As it was a festive occasion for the bookshop, the presence of the clown didn't attract unusual attention. The dowel was slipped into the banner, the banner was slipped to the clown, and the clown affixed the balloons to it and released it, making swiftly for the exit with the secret of his identity kept safe, thanks to his absurd getup.

Fliers

To complement the balloon banner, or as a separate action, print off massive quantities of fliers describing the corporation's exploitation of workers and the environment. Whenever possible, try to include the testimonies of actual sweatshop workers instead of speaking for them; these can be found easily enough on the internet.

To distribute the fliers most effectively, we recommend placing them in folded clothing and posting them in dressing rooms (see Wheatpasting, pg. 598, and Stickering, pg. 520), where hopefully customers will read them before they buy anything. Armed with a stack of fliers the right size, you can fold a pile of shirts or pants with remarkable ease and swiftness.

This is where the name badge and smile come in handy: prepare for your new job as a greeter! Stand just inside the door, and as customers walk in, smile and say something like, "Welcome to the GAP, where we bring you low prices by destroying the planet. Can I help you find something? "If you prefer a more subtle approach, try writing a slogan on your T-shirt and striking a pose with the mannequins-everyone loves a cute anarchist showing off the latest fashions covered in handwritten slogans like "GAP: made for kids, by kids," or simply the cleverly-modified logo "CRAP."

Account

Beginning at high noon on a Buy Nothing Day some years ago, we executed all of the above ideas with about ten people.

The first part of the plan, which was intentionally omitted from the recommended ideas above, involved banners attached to a four-foot remote-controlled helium blimp. The gleaming silver vessel was powered by twin plastic propellers and said "US Navy" across the sides. For all its beauty, however, it was a problematic contraption from the beginning. When we taped the banners onto the sides, even though we had made them from very thin wrapping paper, they threw off the balance of the blimp so badly that we had to add an oversized party balloon to the top just to get it airborne. All of this added weight and air resistance, and rendered the once-effective remote-controlled propellers totally useless.

Regardless, we pressed on with the plan and at precisely twelve o'clock a close friend and I burst through the doors of the food court and launched the banner blimp upward. We quickly blended into the huge crowd of day-after-Thanksgiving shoppers and made discreet exits while

the remote control was passed around our team of amateur pilots, who were already positioned at tables. The blimp made a few successful laps roughly three feet above the heads of the hungry shoppers. Amazingly, it failed to draw much attention to itself, but its banners — "STOP consuming, start living" and "sweatshops=slavery, buy nothing!" — were dearly legible. Then, suddenly caught in a gust from the heating vents, the blimp was pushed into a giant neon fast food sign, where it stuck as its propellers spun powerlessly. A confused employee began beating it with a broomstick, and by the time it was dislodged it had sustained critical damage. Alas, despite a courageous attempt at re-launching, it was never to fly again, and a security officer dragged it through the crowd and into the mall office.

The blimp only lasted about ten minutes, but the sheer hilarious spectacle of it had raised our spirits. We quickly rallied at a meeting point in the parking lot where we divided Goo fliers between ourselves and retrieved the balloons and paper banners. We split up and re-entered the mall through different entrances; some of us headed to GAP, Abercrombie & Fitch, Sears, JC-Penney, and American Eagle to distribute the fliers, while three of us walked quickly toward the designated banner launch point.

I was holding a bundle of six black and red balloons as I hustled through the jewelry department of a JC-Penney. I kept nervously glancing down at my watch, and was relieved when I arrived under the GAP at precisely the same moment as my accomplices, who were carrying the banner and another six balloons. We quickly tied it all together and let it fly straight up to the vaulted glass ceiling. The long ribbons dangled the banner at a readable level that was totally unreachable by the grappling hooks that were soon thrust at it. Shoppers lined the sides of the walkways and stared up at the banner with open jaws. Many were holding our fliers in their hands !

At this point, the security guards were frantically talking into their two-way radios and looking up at the balloon banner in disbelief. Later, we found out that in hitting the glass the balloons had triggered a silent alarm. The banner was up for four hours until a large platform could be raised under it and security was finally able to pull it down. After the last of the fliers had been tucked away in corporate clothing and the extras thrown off the second-floor balconies, and I had been kicked out of five separate clothing stores (thus ending my career as a greeter), we met back outside and celebrated an afternoon well spent. The consequences were minimal: some of us were banned from the mall for a year, one of us who had been working at a pretzel stand in the mall lost his job, and charges of trespassing and disorderly conduct were threatened but never filed.

Lessons Learned

Mall security cameras can be used effectively to identify participants after the event. Masks are an option to bear in mind, but that approach has drawbacks as well. Perhaps the clown makeup described earlier is the best solution.

Engaging with customers directly can be surprisingly effective. The average shopper doesn't put too much thought into where her clothes are made, and will most likely be as outraged as you are once you share the testimonies of sweatshop workers with her.

Balloon banners fucking rock. Forget blimps: banners are more cost-effective, easier to aim, and more difficult for security to take down.

Distribution, Tabling, Infoshops

Instructions

<quote> A recipe for Dandelions:
A lungful of air will spread the seeds.
Manicured lawn becomes bed of weeds </quote>

Plant in Fertile Ground

First things first: ask yourself whom you want to contact. Everybody? High school students? Potential political/social allies? A music scene? People like your grandmother? Go to the places where those people are. Do these people walk? Put posters on light posts. Do these people drive? Put stickers on the walls of a gas station bathroom. Soliciting for a Critical Mass (see Bicycle Parades, pg. 100)? Why not leave notes of appreciation announcing it on all the parked bikes in town?

If you only put fliers up at the local college and the record store, chances are you will only reach a particular demographic. If that's your goal, great. But if you want to involve people from outside your usual community, you have to make an effort, not just cross your fingers. Leave literature at the unemployment office. The Greyhound station. Planned Parenthood. The dressing rooms of department stores. Inside tabloids. Phone booths. Burger King. Yes, it might get thrown away. But someone will have to interact with your offering before that happens. For best results, tailor the language and format of your material to the target readership and context.

Don't forget doctors' and dentists' offices, as well as beauty salons, bank lobbies, and car repair shops. People like to read things while they're waiting, and it might as well be 210 your 'zine instead of Glamor. Of course, if you have a reason to be in one of these places and slide it into the stack nonchalantly, it's liable to remain longer than if you just bust in, toss it down, and leave. After all, it could have anthrax on it.

We threw a Sin festival in Olympia and one of the three days consisted solely of free activities. Free movies, free workshops, free food, free will. One of us went to the soup kitchen and shelter and made sure that everyone there knew they were invited. I earned fliers everywhere I went. "Yes, you can have my spare change — and come to these free movies, by the way."

You can broadcast from alleys and bus stops and under bridges. When Benjamin decided to create a punk rock Midsummer Night's Dream, he posted the casting call on all the dumpsters. They performed it on Mayday and the result was phenomenal.

For more information, see: Graffiti, pg. 258; Stenciling, pg. 516; Wheatpasting, pg. 598; Stickering, pg. 520; Asphalt Mosaics, pg. 66; and so on.

Add a Tablespoon of Fertilizer

You're in the bookstore. Are you going to pick up the novel your friend told you was really good, or the one you saw in an advertisement? Human interaction is simply more memorable than a remote printed message. If you need to choose where to invest your energy, make a hundred photocopies instead of a million and talk to everyone you can. One common approach is to attend events that have something in common with your idea, where the people are likely to be interested in your music/art/cause/revolution, and set up a table.

Tabling is simple: take some literature and/or other material to a public place and set it up on a table, blanket, etc. Do this at punk shows, Food Not Bombs servings, hip hop concerts, showings of radical documentaries or action movies intended to cash in on dissent, speaking engagements by left-wing politicians and authors and artists, gun shows, political rallies, underground dance parties, street fairs, science fiction and comic book and technology conventions, activist conferences, college cafeterias, the park on a sunny day. If you know they wouldn't otherwise give you permission (or free entry) to table, act like you're doing something official and enter with no questions asked or answered (except, perhaps, "oh, me? I'm here to run the table"); if they won't let you table inside, table outside.

It's a gesture of good faith, and a demonstration of anarchist economic principles, to offer at least some, if not most, of your stuff for free, so do your best to come up with a source of free photocopies or materials: find a pilfering friend at a copy shop or seek employment at one yourself, misreport the number of copies you made or crack their copy-counting technology, order a big stack of free papers from some wild-eyed radical collective (hint, hint). You can also sell things on a sliding scale according to the means of each individual. Put out a donation jar — you'll be surprised how proactive people will be about donating what they can, once they know you're not out to make a profit. At some events, donations alone can be enough to pay gas money, even if you're traveling a great distance. Anarchist bookmobiles have succeeded in crossing the country, sharing literature everywhere they go, on the strength of mere donations and book sales.

Consider setting up a banner or similar visual by your table to increase your visibility and add atmosphere; you could also develop theater or circus acts to attract attention. Don't be shy about what you're doing, or use euphemisms about it — that just makes people suspicious. Shouting out "Subversive propaganda! Seditious literature! Dangerous stuff here, folks — protect your children from the anarchist menace!" will endear you to fence-sitters, if you do it with the right spirit — they'll appreciate your sense of humor and hyperbole, and will want to prove that they're not so old and uptight as to be afraid of a little brush with the extreme. You'll find yourself astounded at the wide variety of people who will come up to you proclaiming that in fact they are the dangerous anarchists, not you.

Make a display system that offers easy access to a number of browsers at once and also protects fragile materials until they find good homes; you could even set up the back of a truck as an info shop on wheels. For long tours, in the course of which cardboard boxes would get dented or soaked (note that, as the boxes empty of material, they become more and more fragile), yon can pack everything into those plastic crates with the interlocking plate tops that are easy to find behind drug stores. If possible, carry your own tables, folding chairs, hand truck, tarp in case of rain, and paperweights or rubber bands so you won't find yourself running around picking up rocks in front of police at the next demonstration that falls on a windy day.

Besides photocopied posters and pamphlets, there are a million other things you can offer at tables: screen printed patches, free food (as an outreach for your local Food Not Bombs group, a strategy to detract from sales at the corporate bagel store next door, a pressure valve for dumpstering surplus, or just for its own sake), healthy substitutes for tampons, video documentaries, normal-looking clothing home-altered to convert to black bloc gear and back again, miscellaneous stolen goods, items (such as graffiti markers) useful for committing community-friendly crime. One anarchist traveling circus made many hundreds of dollars to fund their other projects by stealing massive quantities of vaguely radical books from corporate bookstores and selling them at cheap prices. A table to encourage graffiti could provide young people with stolen paint pens, spray paint, gloves, and bottles of glass etching solution, and homemade stencils and stickers. An anarchist table at a liberal antiwar demonstration could give out posters using humor to push a more radical stance.

When it comes to the question of whether it's worth the trouble, always err on the side of tabling unless you have something better to do. Even if it turns out the event is attended exclusively by Young Republicans, and no one takes anything you've brought, it's still important for us to be visible as anarchists/queers/creative people. That makes it all that harder for our enemies to deny our existence, which is their most powerful weapon against us; also, whether or not we win "converts" for "the cause," a goal of dubious value at best, it's important for people to have a basic idea of what we want and what we're doing. It may take them a number of times seeing you to work up the courage to interact with you, anyway.

And a Pinch of Curiosity!

Once upon a time, my favorite book was a manual on spy techniques. I yearned to find messages in bottles left in fountains or artificial lakes and rolled up scraps of paper in the cracks of brick walls.

Skip forward ten years. The night before classes began at Evergreen State College, we slipped into the classrooms and taped thought-provoking notes under tables, leaving a comer undone so the paper would graze someone's leg. We stuck some to the backs of vending machines and slipped them inside our favorite library books, reveling in the possibility that three years could pass before they were found.

What would you do if you found a secret missive? An impassioned love letter? Would you drop it immediately, or study it carefully ? Would you wonder who was meant to find it? Would you know it was meant for you? Would you go to the train tracks at midnight on Friday, just to see who was there? Sometimes dreamers can't help themselves.

Paint a beautiful mural or write out an incendiary manifesto in a secluded location, and draw maps to it in phone booths and restrooms . Go through the phone book, calling places of business and engaging the employees who answer the phone in conversations about what really matters in life. Place personal ads in the local newspaper: "Capitalism sucking the life out of you? BiWF, 27, non-monogamous, seeks lovers of life and liberty to form a revolutionary organization. Only those serious about playing need apply."

Now Scatter the Seeds on the Wind

In the lulls between tabling, fliering, and burying treasure for the curious, you can also distribute by mailorder. Once you've amassed a wide assortment of material, compile a 214 catalog including prices or suggested donations to cover postage and production fees; photocopy it and mail it out in packages, post it on the internet, take out advertisements in newspapers and magazines. Learn how to use the domestic "media mail" and over- seas "m-bag" rates to send packages more cheaply, and memorize the wording of the postal regulations so you can quickly give any postal worker the impression that you understand the system and are abiding by it. Above all, befriend everyone at the local post office.

If you are producing your own material, send copies of everything to reviewers and other magazines, and to other distributors who might want to help spread them. Con- tact other publishers for advice on printers and distribution venues.

...And Put Down Roots

For long-term outreach and organizing, it really helps to have a community resource center as a focal point and staging area. Such centers are sometimes called infoshops. An infoshop can offer free literature; books, music recordings, and other material for sale; a public library and archive of books, papers, and videos; a community computer lab; a space for meetings, performances, and film showings; a calendar of public events; a "free store" in which surplus resources are shared... space and volunteers are the only limits.

That is, they should be the only limits. Problems with landlords, funding, and city zoning and permits usually plague an infoshop every step of the way. If the financial resources can be raised somehow, it is preferable to buy a space rather than renting one, so as not to be at the mercy of a landlord; before settling on one, be sure it is in a district zoned by the city for the purposes you intend and that the neighbors are amenable to your plans. Gentrification is often an issue — it's always best that the people opening a space have a lot in common culturally and economically with the people who live around it; if this isn't the case, seek to collaborate with local groups from the beginning, and work hard to provide for local needs without being evangelical about it.

To raise funds, you can hold benefit shows, solicit donations from wealthier folks, even sell community memberships. Speaking of finances and other resources — as in all do- it-yourself endeavors, be careful not to overextend. An infoshop can help foster a community, but the community has to be there in some form already to support the infoshop. Don't undertake the taxing project of getting a permanent space until there are enough people involved and enough momentum to sustain you over the initial hurdles and well into the day-to-day grind of keeping the place going. Make sure at least a few of the organizers are in it for the long haul; at the same time, always seek new blood to keep things fresh, and stay flexible enough to provide new resources and serve new roles according to the changing context and needs of the community.

The bottom line is to get people to spend time in the space — and then to help them feel entitled to take the lead in making use of it. Serve free drinks and snacks, make your place a social center that people will drop by to see friends and hang out; be sure no cultural demographic monopolizes the atmosphere, so people from different social circles will all feel welcome.

Account

We were invited by a rival anarchist collective to travel many hundreds of miles up the coast to Boston for the Wake Up the Earth festival, a family-oriented all-day event at which they had reserved spaces for tables. We brought our flying circle-A with the twenty-three-foot wingspan, and set it up over the grass across from our booth to make our presence known. Our table was beside the Food Not Bombs serving tent, between the other political tables (the Socialists, Democrats, independent candidates, and other bloodsuckers) and the rest of the tables — mostly small-time capitalists hawking food and crafts. It helped quite a bit that this festival already had a sort of eco-friendly, liberal slant to it; at the same time, it was unfortunate that we were from out of town, as it meant that we couldn't connect people to local networks except by proxy.

We taped copies of our posters to hang off the sides of our table, and covered it with stacks of newspapers and boxes of pamphlets and posters filed vertically. One of us offered fortune cookies to passersby; these were vegan chocolate chip cookies wrapped in strips of xeroxed paper. I heard one father reading his son his fortune as they walked away: "Next Christmas, dress up as Santa Claus and give children free toys off the shelves in corporate… department … stores. Hmph."

We'd brought three pinatas made from cardboard and paper mache to add atmosphere to the event: a black box with barred windows, reading "Prison Industrial Complex" on three sides, a sneering fat cat businessman, and a big ugly pig with "police brutality" scrawled on the sides — we'd avoided making human effigies, so as to seem like nice folks to uptight parents like the one I just mentioned. All were stuffed with stolen vegan candy, and the fat cat was also stuffed with fake dollar bills with little anticapitalist slogans printed on them. As soon as the park crowded up with people, we tossed a rope over the branch of the nearest tree and hoisted the Prison-Industrial Complex aloft. To our surprise, a small crowd of kids gathered around us immediately: "What's that?" 'A pinyata." "A what?" "Pinyada." "Oh, a pinata\" one little brown-skinned girl chimed in, pronouncing it properly for us white folks. "Can we break it? Can we beat it?"

Most of the punks and anarchists in the area had gathered across from us under our flying circle- A, and now a small corps of them started up a rhythm on their marching drums to build excitement. I produced a blindfold: "Who wants to go first?" "Me! Me!" Now there was a small army of kids swarming around us, tugging at the baseball bat in my hands. I picked the smallest one, spun her around in circles, and gave her three tries to swing the bat into the box, while my companions struggled to hold back the screaming, surging crowd. It was the closest thing to a punk show environment I've ever experienced in a public park. One of us was pulling and releasing the rope that suspended the pinata, making it swing wildly — so that many kids of all sizes, and a few of their mothers, got to have a turn before it was finally smashed open and its booty spilled across the grass.

We waited an hour before putting up the next pinata, then another hour again before deploying the last one, and each was greeted with the same response. All the fake dollar bills with radical messages on them inside the fat cat disappeared along with the candy, which was encouraging — and the atmosphere in the park was definitely transformed: imagine a mixed crew of

vagabond activists, college students, and parents of all races watching a powerful black mother aggressively swinging a baseball bat at a pig with a police hat on it as her children and about a hundred others scream "Hit it! Kill it! Get the pig!" in the middle of a placid, consumerist street fair. See Effigies (pg. 229) for more information about how to do this yourself.

As for the table, we were amazed by how many people of widely varied walks of life were excited to see it, and more excited to learn everything on it was free. We'd brought hundreds of anarchist newspapers and magazines, pamphlets for student activists, bootlegged comic books with radical commentary added, seditious posters and stickers, and punk rock patches, and the table was totally bare by the end of the afternoon — and we had enough donations in the can to pay for our gas all the way up and back down the coast. A few nights later I set my hair on fire while trying to demonstrate the pinata program in my hometown, but that's another story.

Dumpster Diving

<quote> Kid in dumpster with mountain of food. Head of broccoli demands, “What are you doing in here?” Kid counters, “What are YOU doing in here?” </quote>

Burdens lift and scarcity is averted when the mountains of trash produced by this insane society become supplies and sustenance. Everything that sucks about capitalism is inverted when the dumpster diver scores. Poverty becomes abundance. Loss becomes gain. Despair becomes hope.

<quote> “To a dumpster diver, every day is Christmas — except Christmas, which is boring because it’s the same trash from the 24th .” -St. Nick </quote>

Instructions

If you haven’t heard it on the evening news, dumpsters aren’t just for trash anymore. Why in the world would anyone throw a case of fresh strawberries in a dumpster? That’s a great question, but we’ve no time for a nuanced discussion of how waste figures into capitalist collapse. There are more pressing matters at hand … like that case of berries, and the hundreds of other price-less treasures awaiting rescue this very second in a dumpster near you! Soldier, this is an emergency! We’re talking about how to get in there, get those berries, and get back out where you and your fruit belong.

Where

The first step is to find out who in your town is wasteful. That’s the same question as “Who has a dumpster? “If you just want to explore the world of waste reclamation, get aimless: most any dumpster will do. But if you have specific needs, do what any savvy shopper does — look in the yellow pages! Chances are, if they sell it in front, they throw it away out back. So … what do you need? There’s bound to be a dumpster out there to serve you: food, bike equipment, construction materials, Kitchenware, books, electronics, clothes, flowers, shoes, bread, bread, bread. There are even fancy nut dumpsters, and I’m here to tell you: yes, you can get sick of almonds.

Keep your eyes peeled for invisible dumpsters without walls or lids. Weeks after college gets out for the summer, those sad, rusting bicycles still locked up on campus are in such dumpsters, and you’d better grab your bolt cutters and cut them free before some maintenance worker transfers them to the big dumpster in the sky. You can also use scissor jacks or bottle jacks to break locks, and if you do so with the right confidence, everyone will think you’re just reclaiming your own bicycle. the same token, don’t miss leftover materials at construction sites, or piles of perfectly good items set out on curbs throughout the suburbs.

When you’re looking for specific goods, retail locations are great, but don’t count out distribution centers. These are usually listed in the phone book. A juice distributor, for example, will throw out all its juices long before the expiration date, when there isn’t time for them to be sent

to retailers, sit on shelves until they're purchased, then sit on shelves until they're consumed before that deadline finally arrives — not that expiration dates usually indicate much about food safety, in my experience! Anyway, in this case you're consuming food even the most bourgeois would be hard-pressed to write off as garbage.

You can also look on packages of specific products for manufacturing locations, and try dumpstering there.

Dumpstering at self-storage units is worth your time. definition, everything in one of those dumpsters has been specifically chosen, moved, and stored by someone. Finally, they had to come to terms with the fact that in this world of over-abundance, they would never have space for these prized possessions, and toss them out. Here's a glimpse: entire drum sets, VCRs, food, furniture, lumber, dishes, small appliances galore …

How about … thrift shops!? Yes, very wasteful. They cut the cords off trashed appliances, same as we do in the aisles of Wal-Mart, but these can be replaced. University theater departments are another "seasonal" harvest: wood, props, cloth, costumes. Musical instrument repair shops — lord have mercy! Construction dumpsters are luscious, but look out for nails. Carpet installers have dumpsters full of cut-offs. Any apartment complex, especially at the end of the month, can be a one-stop shop for the revolution. Yes, you can dumpster computers. Don't count out public trash receptacles for a handy snack, especially soon after lunchtime in a downtown area.

When

When? Always! You have to be persistent with certain dumpsters, but it's worth it to visit When more than a dozen times if lucky thirteen donates one hundred pounds of granola to your cause. Keep tabs on dumpsters that seem sporadic; you may find that they follow an odd but regular schedule. In the case of foodstuffs, when a new shipment arrives it means out with the old. When does the truck come?

Timing also concerns the hour of the day. I try to dive at off hours: nights and week- ends. Early mornings on weekends are particularly safe if you can hack it. Still, if I'm just looking for a quick snack, I never hesitate to pop back and see what's cookin' — many are the times I've gone around back while my companions went in the front, and I've returned with the more impressive score. Also, if I'm walking across town, I try to take the alleys rather than the streets, so I can play peek-a-boo as I go. If there's something special, I come back later- One more hint: during a hot summer, you won't want to give food a long time to ferment.

There are timing issues related to season as well. In some towns, different neighborhoods have different curbside pickup days, on which households can put out all their oversize trash. You could call the sanitation department, purporting to be from each neighborhood of the town in succession, to learn all the best days and locations for curbside trash-picking.

If you live in a college town, you are all set. College kids throw out more useful garbage than perhaps any other class of people on earth. The big potlatch is at the end of a school year. Come spring, campuses swarm with wastrels and scavengers of all kinds. What kind of consumer binging and purging happens in your town?

Certain emergencies make dumpstering a special event. When a grocery store's power goes out for any length of time, they are required to throw out all refrigerated perishables! My first dumpster diving experience coincided with just such an emergency. I was lying on my bed reading a 'zine about dumpster diving, skeptical but ready to conduct my own investigation, when the

power went out. Unable to continue reading, I puttered about in the dark, until finally I hopped on my bike and rode down to the nearest Food Lion. Picture, if you will, the young skeptic rounding the comer to see a construction- size dumpster — bigger than my house at the time! — filled to overflowing with the entire cold food section … all still frozen! After three hours of ferrying food back and forth until my house could fit no more, there was a little dent in Mt. Food into which I tossed the last of my misgivings.

Technique

Now that place and time are covered, what's left is technique. No big deal. There are a few pointers that can increase your joy and prosperity; the subtleties you will learn as you go. Trust your gut, both in terms of where to go and what to take. In the case of food, believe it or not, you have built-in faculties for determining what is safe and what is not: smell, intuition, deduction. How do you think your hunter/gatherer ancestors survived? These — along with the immune system — get dull in a world that's too sterile, but they sharpen up quickly. After a lengthy career, I still have never known a dumpster diver to get sick from dumpstered food (except that hilarious scene in Evasion where the author deliberately eats moldy bread). Of course there are stories, just like there are stories of razor-bladed apples being given out on Halloween — be leery of the ways sub-urban legends reprimand and warn. People get sick all the time, but if any food should be blamed, it's that sugary, plastic- wrapped trash they buy off the shelves.

Be a sneak. It serves the dumpster diver to go unseen and unnoticed. I make my rounds after store hours and try to leave the dumpster in better condition than I found it. This way my gathering causes no stress for employees who, quite reasonably, get upset if they have to dean up around a dumpster. If no mess results, your patronage is actually a service, since businesses pay for their waste by weight and frequency of pick up. Given all that, if the store becomes openly hostile you have the right to get pissed off and fight back. If they put a padlock on the dumpster, cut it off with bolt cutters and replace it with your own. If you have yet to dumpster a nice pair of bolt cutters, squeeze a tube of superglue into the keyhole. If they replace it with a compacter, push a blanket soaked in gasoline under it and light it on fire. Um, for entertainment purposes only, you know.

Another pointer — never be afraid to get inside that dumpster. The dumpster gods do not smile on window shoppers. Get in there, dig holes, open bags, dump out boxes, be persistent, just because a business slips up and puts a few layers of bona fide trash in the dumpster doesn't mean they are against putting useful stuff in there too. All the same, watch out for "dumpster juice 11 — sometimes you just don't need to go any deeper. Wearing sturdy waterproof, protective shoes won't hurt, either.

What to wear? Dumpsters are mostly dark green, so whatever goes with that will do you well. Some friends in Indianapolis, masters of the craft, dive in furry raccoon suits. That's something to work up to. For starters, get a headlamp- it will free up your hands in the dark — and a nice bag or backpack to fill with loot.

Spirituality

The dumpster spirits deserve respect — keep them appeased. If you find something useful, take it. Worst case, you can set it by the road and watch as it gets scooped up by some grateful

soul. If you begin to feel extraordinarily looked after, it's time to start a Food Not Bombs (pg. 248) or a free store. Also, and most important, recognize that the dumpster may know more about your future than you do. Last week, in the middle of a weeks-long drought, I found an umbrella. Today I've got to go to the bus station, and it's been raining torrentially since I woke up.

Making Peace with Your inner Raccoon

Dumpster diving can be rough for the recovering bourgeois. There is hardly anything so deeply ingrained as the middle-class fear of having to go in a trashcan to eat — the ultimate in social failure. Recognize what you may be up against in that regard, and remember, it's a path of a thousand steps. One day you will be able to proudly walk right up to a public trash can, fish out some Chinese leftovers, and eat them right there in front of all your ex-classmates — with such ease and confidence that they'll come over to ask for a bite.

Once I was climbing out of the dumpster behind a bread shop, drooling and giggling of course, when two bread shop employees came out the back door. They looked at me, I looked at them, we all looked at the bag of bread I was toting like Santa Claus. They were appalled; I felt a little weird. "I … uhh …"-but the two went back inside before I managed to get out my doctoral thesis on free food. It wouldn't have bothered me much, except that I recognized one of them as the little sister of a kid I was in drug treatment with years earlier. Before I could make a break for it (see Evasion, pg. 234). the two emerged once again, this time with a loaf of fresh potato bread. "Um, thanks," I said. I don't think she recognized me.

Converting the infidels

It may help to explain to the dubious and disgusted that you're not actually taking trash, you're intercepting perfectly good materials on their way to the trash. Don't be shy about your means of acquiring supplies, however critical or snobbish your friends may be. Like veganism and abstinence from chemical intoxicants, the issue of dumpstering tends to provoke defensive responses — for if it isn't unpardonably disgusting after all, then those who have been paying for things all along are straight-up suckers. Flaunt your loveliest dumpstered wares, make a delicious feast of pristine trash-picked cuisine and only tell where it came from afterwards; they'll come around. Excessive squeamishness is counter-revolutionary if anything is.

Dumpster Diving as Surveillance

We learned this one from the FBI. We use it to keep tabs on hotels that might host events for offending corporations or, for that matter, the police, on corporate offices where nasty plots are laid, on the houses of fascist organizers or others whose plans are interesting to us. Look for schedules, notes, anything that gives away secrets. Big scores in this department have provided serious intelligence resources for effective actions, believe you me.

Is That All?

You can start a Food Not Bombs (pg. 248) or hold a "Really Really Free Market" (see Festivals, pg. 241). You can establish a free store, a space where free materials and resources are always available. You can make gift packages for the needy, or walk through the streets giving things

away. In most neighborhoods, useful things left on the curb will disappear swiftly. Waste is everyone's problem if it makes its way into the landfills to pollute our earth and crowd out our future — hijack it on the way and make sure it gets back into circulation.

Reverse Dumpstering

It was the Young Lords, I think, who, in the 1960s, when the city government refused to do adequate trash collecting in their neighborhoods, organized their own garbage collection. At the end of a few weeks' labor, they took all the trash they had picked up to the neighborhoods of the wealthy and deposited it there as a massive roadblock. Don't let the wastrels forget how much trash they're producing — make sure it reappears to haunt them just when they thought they were rid of it. Not long ago, Europeans carried out a successful campaign against superfluous corporate packaging by unwrapping products inside the store and leaving the containers there on the shelves; some years earlier, a group crusading against non-recyclable containers distributed mailing labels, so conscious consumers (or dumpster divers!) could mail these back to their manufacturers.

Warnings and Hints

Some of us once had a problem with this , that's why I bring it up: you've got to watch out for scabies. It was common among us for some time to acquire our sleeping arrangements from a mattress store down the street that would throw away the old mattresses their customers brought in when they got new ones. We have also been tempted by the many foam cushions people leave out with their trash on Thursday nights. Sometimes these seemingly dreamy cushy-cushies are infested with little bugs that get in your skin and try to eat you. This is a condition to avoid.

Another thing to watch out for is rat poison. The odd shop owner will sometimes pour bleach or other lethal substances onto the edible goodies outback to deter the presence of our fellow dumpster divers, rats. Sometimes you can smell it, and sometimes there will be discoloration on the packaging. Be sure to inspect your score.

Don't feel pressure to use or eat everything you retrieve from the trash — it's not your job to metabolize away the sins of our whole spendthrift civilization. In the case of those nutrient- free sugar cookies, remember — some things are in fact trash, from the very moment they're produced. Don't put them in your body — do what it takes to shut down the industries maniacally producing such junk.

In the opposite situation, where you really need something but the ones holding it hostage won't oblige you by throwing it away, you can expedite the process by doing so yourself inside their establishment, or damaging it so they will for you. In a related instance, one of us once got caught scamming massive quantities of photocopies from a copying corporation that purported to recycle their waste but in fact did not. All the precious fliers and 'zines she had produced were confiscated, but we dumpstered them back later that night.

Epilogue: If You're Not Careful... Backlash!

In the summer of 2000, following my first few years of dumpstering and the attendant case of pack-ratitis, I found myself caught up in a great purging, an elimination of all the objects choking

up my home. It started one Saturday afternoon around 1:00 p.m. as a simple room-cleaning, but sifting through the layers of dumpstered knickknacks I started to set items aside that had to be returned to the source from whence they'd come. &/ 2:00, things had changed: I was throwing out cassette tapes and dirty clothes. &/ 2:45 I was throwing away stacks of things I meant to mail to people, entrusting them to the other postal system. Soon I realized this was more than a mere physical cleansing of my dwelling space; it had become something primal, something *that had to be done.*

At 3:00 I started in on the home furnishings, and then the pots and pans. By 9:00 a.m. the next morning, my house was completely empty. I threw out all of my belongings as well as those of my brother, who was away for the weekend. I threw out the shelves from the refrigerator, and then dragged it onto to the street as well. The experience was simultaneously terrifying and liberating.

A few minutes later, as I lay naked and shivering on the bare floor trying to fall asleep, I looked out the window and saw my friend Jason digging through our trash, my old sneakers in one hand and the thrill of discovery on his face.

Effigies

Ingredients

- Cardboard
- Tape
- A public setting ripe for transformation
- Cloth
- Industrial stapler
- Paint
- Rope
- A deployment team
- Paper mache
- Whatever!

Instructions

In this country, effigy-making has a rich radical heritage that stretches back to before the first American Revolution. If you can't actually overthrow, pummel, or set fire to your oppressor, it can certainly be heartening to do so to a surrogate; this is good for morale, and also helps provide visibility for your discontent. That visibility can be dangerous — authorities and counter-revolutionaries will do their best to enforce even symbolic respect of their idols — so be sure to deploy your effigy with plenty of supporters around, or a plan for escape; but such visibility can also be useful, not only to incite your fellows, but also to gauge and perhaps influence the sentiments of others.

One well-known effigy format that benefits from its festive character is the pinata. Filled with candy or other goodies, associated with a participatory game that everyone wins, pinatas can be at once radical and accessible in every way For a stirring report of such effigies in action, read the account following the Distribution, Tabling, and Infoshops recipe (pg. 210). On the other hand, other situations may call for something more direct: the day a war starts or the results of a rigged election are announced, it might be appropriate to take to the streets and set fire to an effigy of a political or military figure. Imagine the evening news trying to play that off as liberal disapproval! Even then, there's something to be said for destroying effigies that represent destructive concepts or forces rather than living, breathing individuals: this isn't a war of some people against others,

like the wars of capitalism and hierarchy, but a war of all against war itself Indeed, what does it mean to bum an American flag? This is simply burning in effigy a hypocritical value system and genocidal legacy.

When it comes to making effigies, anything goes, so long as the product is recognizable and will be destroyed by or survive your planned activities as you intend. Costume stores may have masks of your favorite subjects ready-made for you, especially around Halloween. Paper mache is especially good for pinatas. You can make it by heating three parts water and two parts cornstarch until it becomes thick; let it cool a bit, and apply it to newspaper to make it stick together. Stretch the wet newspaper over a wire frame, let it dry, and repeat, until the layers are durable but not impervious to a few powerful direct hits; now you can paint it. If you are indeed making a pinata, fill it with goodies through a hole you leave for last. You can also make pinatas out of painted cardboard boxes, in a pinch.

How We Made Our Puppet President

We stole the rubbery, full-head mask from a corporate store. The body was double-layered cardboard with tons of industrial staples and construction adhesive. This rigid under-structure was wrapped in lots of soft foam rubber like that found in cheap sofas. The head was the same foam rubber, sculpted into the appropriate shape and "upholstered" with a tightly fitting double layer of cloth. The head was made large enough that it had to be squeezed into the mask. This helped the mask stay on, sort of. The extra cloth of the neck was stapled and glued to the torso. The legs were stuffed tubes of cloth with thin pieces of wood built into them like bones so they would bend at the knees. There was no such bone structure in the upper arms. The lower arms were made of long poles: at one

end there were homemade red cloth boxing gloves stuffed with foam, while at the other end of the arms wood stuck through the elbows of the shirt and suit to about three feet of extra length — these enabled a puppeteer behind the effigy to operate the boxing arms . Because our dummy had no hips, the shirt and pants of his dumpstered dress suit were sewn together at the waist — this is highly recommended for the brawling effigy. The whole thing hung from a pole on a thin rope; one person carried the pole, suspending the marionette in the air, while another stood behind it, operating the arms. When the pigs seized the pole from us at one demonstration, we were able to go on operating him for hours, the former pole bearer now holding the dummy aloft by means of the rope alone-and nursing sore hands for some time after!

Account

"Fuck you George — this one's for my brother!" The war cry came from a stocky gentleman in a leprechaun suit whose uplifted elbow was headed straight for the President's eye. Bush and the leprechaun toppled over into a messy heap on the asphalt. We helped the two of them up and the leprechaun stumbled away. I had just barely gotten the commander in chief of the US military dusted off when another blow, this time a crushing uppercut, came out of nowhere and sent the President's rubber face sailing out over the crowd. The megaphone squealed and H — 's voice boomed out "Ooooooooo, that one had to hurt, ladies and gentlemen! Now whooooo's next?" Meanwhile, B- had run off into a little duster of sumo wrestlers to fetch the weary face of the 43rd president of the United States of America. It was the fight of the decade!

Ringside seats to political theater aren't exactly in high demand among the general public. But as luck would have it, downtown Chapel Hill's famous Halloween crowds handled all the logistics for us. Voila, 75,000 people ready for a wild night. And hell, we've all been to enough of these things to know how predictable they really are: way too many cross-dressing frat boys, Supermen by the dozen, fairies, fairies, fairies, and that guy who just runs around screaming, "Wooooo!" The scene was set for something — anything — to go down.

That's where George came in — hanging on the end of a rope. Our effigy had a cloth- covered foam rubber head stuffed into a rubber Bush mask. He wore a dumpstered business suit (public figures sometimes dress down for the masses) and a pair of red boxing gloves. For an entourage, he had drummers, banner-bearers, stilt- walking capitalist puppeteers and their corporate marionettes, and, of course, the ladies and gentlemen of "the press." One of our number played the ringside announcer, dressed in a tux and wielding a megaphone. He was the ham: "Get into the ring and take a swing at the king!" "Introducing — in the left comer, we have the challenger — uh, what's your name, sir?" "Texas, Afghanistan, Iraq… Chapel Hill, YOU'RE NEXT!"

In fact, to our delight, we found that the crowd needed very little encouragement. On our way to the event, a taxi driver with limited English pulled over just to give the commander in chief a tidy thumping. With a little coaching and encouragement, chuckling liberals would give a symbolic tap on the nose — but most folks took it to the Prez with vicious abandon. The tightly fitted mask was knocked clean off the "dummy" too many times to count. Over and over the "puppet" was ripped from our hands by a hail of fists. When he crumpled to the ground, the crowd would commence kicking and jumping on his body in a manner we are more accustomed to seeing cops use on poor people. Each individual's response to the effigy seemed to reflect the particular level of repression he or she suffered at the hands of the regime: members of the demoralized and depressed but safe classes tended to give a little tap; those demographically most likely to face state violence were themselves ultra- violent.

After three hours of continuous assaults, our dummy was almost completely demolished. Hundreds had dealt blows. Thousands had watched in astonishment at the anger his presence inspired. Everyone knew how things would go down if the head of state found himself on the mean streets of Chapel Hill without his bodyguards.

As usual, what carried the event was humor and good cheer. I hardly stopped laughing for three hours straight. This atmosphere left little opportunity for the few pro-Bush folks to try anything, and the spectacle of the vast majority of the crowd doing violence to their figurehead of choice helped deter them from threatening violence themselves. Every now and then a troubled Republican would come up to the Prez, saying something like, "You're a good man, you've got my vote in '04." Bush would respond by socking them in the face! Such realism!

In sum: as keen observers, we feel that it is our patriotic duty to report what could be construed as latent feelings of violence, resentment, and readiness to brawl directed at the President of the United States of America. Now let's get something straight: we do not suggest or condone engaging in fisticuffs with the President. When dealing with the President, we strongly advise against uppercuts, crushing rights, left hooks, jabs, roundhouse kicks, knuckle sandwiches, resounding smacks, boots in the ass or crotch area, blows to the ribs or face, haymakers, boxing of ears, or any combination of bonks, thwacks, swats, or pokes. If you are concerned about the world and want to effect change, such roughhousing is simply unacceptable. We recommend going through the established channels: being ultra-rich, rigging elections, and allowing airplanes to fly into buildings.

Evasion

Instructions: Getting the fuck Outta There 101

The art of escape is one of those things that can't be taught, least of all by books: you have to learn it on your feet. All the same, it's good for us to talk and write about such things, to demystify them and help each other build up the confidence for that learning process.

When your cover is blown and all that stands between your freedom and those who would seize it are your wits and your running legs, you'll be surprised how much wider the margin is between "in trouble" and captured than it appeared from a distance. The average ex-bourgeois lawbreaker lives in terror of being caught in the act, driven by unresolved feelings of guilt to fixate on this possibility out of all proportion to the difficulties it would actually involve; in fact, it can be a big relief to no longer be sneaking around consumed by anxiety, but finally have everything on the table in a simple contest between yourself and your enemies. The first time you find yourself running from the police, you'll discover a new relationship to your body: you will be present in it entirely, and it will serve you well, as bodies have served human beings fleeing from predators since the dawn of time. It may even be profoundly empowering to discover that, in addition to all the capabilities your mind affords you, you have this, too: the strength of your muscles, the speed of your reflexes, and the sharpness of your instincts. Besides, your pursuers are just running for a paycheck; you are running for your life.

But what do you do once you're being pursued? Let's back up a bit. First, there's a time to play it cool, and a time to run. Nothing identifies you as an outlaw like taking off running. If the alarm goes off as you leave a store, for example, you'll generally be better off walking calmly until you're at least out the door; if you're the only one not fleeing when the police charge at a crowd as it breaks up, they just might run past you. Your ability to act as if nothing strange is happening is your best passport to safety. Don't panic — but don't freeze up, either!

Second, know whether you want to run in the first place. If there is little chance of escape, it might make sense to quit while you're behind and face the music. Even surrounded, you might still be able to deadpan your way out of the situation. Never under- estimate the power of sticking to your alibi- you did already work one out, didn't you?

Speaking of bluffing your way out, if you're trying to pass as harmless passersby, nothing looks harmless like a cute male-female couple with their arms around each other and an intimate conversation in progress. I've breezed out of many a sketchy situation at the side of a stranger of the opposite sex who was willing to take my arm and gaze into my eyes as we walked past the police.

Don't wait for the heat to show up to beat your retreat; as soon as you have reason to believe they've been called — say, an illegal act is openly committed in sight of potentially law-abiding, 911-dialing citizens — begin counting down the time you presume it will take them to arrive and get abreast of what is going on, and make sure that you and yours are on your way by then if you're not planning on facing them down somehow.

Hopefully, you've already charted escape routes from the area, or at least noted them in passing. Whether you're planning a route well in advance or improvising on the fly, you're probably either going to want to get entirely out of the area swiftly and without being observed, or get to a place with heavy crowd cover and disappear into it If you're attempting the former, watch for spaces like alleys and dog-free backyards that you can move through without being seen; if you're counting on doing the latter, make sure you can actually melt into the crowd at hand. Escaping into crowd cover is especially useful when a large number of people are all seeking to disappear at once. Keep in mind that there are some places — woods, for example — that police may not follow you, at least not if they are alone; security guards may not even leave the property they are hired to guard. Wherever you go, don't get boxed in, whether in alley or thicket.

When it comes to transportation, cars are rarely safe to use near the scene of the crime: they're tagged for easy identification by your enemies, and those enemies have dominion over almost all the places you can drive them, too. If you use them, try to make sure that your driver is the least likely of you to be arrested before your getaway, and that your drop-off and pick-up points are out of sight from where the action goes down; you can use a stolen license plate or obscure your plate with mud, but check out the potential legal consequences first to make sure it's worth the risk. If you are on foot and hoping to stay out of sight, and your driver is roving the area waiting to pick you up when you're ready, you could leave a marker out at the pi&-up point until you arrive there, remove it, and hide nearby until the car pulls over.

Bicycles are often useful, as they are quiet, easy to conceal, can go places cars cannot, and can be abandoned in an emergency. Even though they don't have registration to give them away, they can still be connected to you by description, so either use a bicycle other than your own, or stash it someplace where you can get on it out of sight of pursuers and ride away unobserved. Leave your bicycle unlocked for quickest accessibility. There's always public transportation, though it can he unreliable and you probably don't want anyone to be able to identify you as having been near the scene of the crime. If those pursuing you are in vehicles, you can slow them down by pulling obstacles into their path.

If you're surrounded and there's no way out of an area, you can always find a good hiding place and sit tight. Remember when choosing hiding places and escape routes that if you are chased by police at night, they will probably use spotlights to follow you.

So many have escaped the claws of so-called justice by leaping into dumpsters that it's practically a coming-of-age ritual in some circles. In Miami, fleeing from a charging force of three thousand police fanning out across the district in cars, tanks, and bicycle brigades, my affinity group found ourselves encircled on all sides, with police on every street ahead of, around, and behind us; we fled into a small alley, and hid there among weeds and trash for several hours until night fell and the police lines moved forward, leaving us to sneak away in tremulous pairs.

Don't rule out the possibility that locals will help you out of a tight spot, either, though some are more likely to do so than others. We wouldn't have known which way to go out of the aforementioned alley if neighborhood locals hadn't been waiting to guide us to safely; of course, that was an impoverished black ghetto, and things might have played out differently in a bourgeois suburb. You may also be able to pass yourself off as a customer in a bar or club, if you're not breathing too heavily.

If you're in foreign territory, try to make sure you have somewhere to go if you can't get back together with your partners. I'll never forget the night I got chased by a police car after putting up graffiti for the next day's demonstration; it was a rainy January night, and of course I shed my

outer layers of clothing in the course of flight, so it was a cold, wet eight hours walking around back streets killing time until the demonstration started.

If you're carrying potentially incriminating evidence that doesn't bear your finger- prints, and there's any chance you will be caught, dispose of it in the safest place you can in the course of your flight. Better you don't have it on you if they do get you; you can come back to the scene later, if possible, and remove it. Wear layers of clothing — better yet, a persuasive wig — that you can strip off as soon as you're out of eyesight; just make sure when you come out looking like a different person, you do so in character, not running desperately in the same direction you were a second earlier!

Post lookouts, either immediately around the field of engagement, or at a distance with communications equipment; make sure they can't easily be associated with the one doing the action, not least so they can pull the 'she went that-a-way " trick if the chance arises. If you're the one going for it, don't let your guard down just because you have lookouts — you never know what will happen. If you're a lookout, don't panic and run just because the one you were watching on behalf of is running.

If there are many of you, escape can be more complicated. First of all, before doing anything risky in a group, make sure your planned method of escape, should that be necessary, is something everyone in the group is comfortable with, capable of, and dear on. In case you split up during the chase, set a location to reconvene, or have someone somewhere at a telephone who can receive calls from people and coordinate them or come pick them up. Splitting up can make pursuit more difficult, but it can also mean giving up the chance to help each other or outnumber the opposition. If you're being followed, be careful not to lead your enemies to your getaway vehicle or convergence point.

After any larger action that breaks up in flight from the police, get back together at a safe location as soon as possible. If you are unsure of whether everyone escaped, make a list of everyone who is unaccounted for, and set about locating them. Try to verify rumors about who has been arrested and what happened to them. Start collecting a bail fund, if necessary, and consider composing an announcement to circulate over the internet to your community about who has been arrested and what people can do to help. If you don't know all the people involved, get contact information for everyone, in case a court case necessitates that you be in touch with them to agree on a story, request their assistance as witnesses, or make use of any documentation they may have of the events.

Finally, and perhaps obviously, if your escape plans — or any you might need to make on the fly — necessitate athletic prowess, make sure you exercise in advance!

Account

'Twas the night before classes started, and there was a perfect site for graffiti on the campus: an alley between two buildings, invisible from the street, through which all pedestrian traffic in the area was being routed on account of construction work. We'd done some impressive artwork on the campus over the preceding year, so it was good that this location offered high visibility without much risk, as the authorities were actively seeking the ones guilty of free expression. I invited two friends to come along as lookouts so I could relax and decorate the area with the thoroughness it deserved; I made a point of dressing differently than them, in a borrowed patent

leather jacket and ridiculous faux- fur hat with my long hair packed up into it. I left my bicycle unlocked for quick access at a rack by the street on one side of the alley, posted one friend there and the other near the other entrance, briefly surveyed the scene, and set to work.

I hadn't even finished the third word when, sensing motion out of the comer of my eye, I turned my head to see a maintenance worker a few yards away, walking right toward me! Talk about bad luck — it turned out there was one door inside the perimeter secured by the two lookouts, and he had just walked out of it. What he was doing there well after midnight, I still don't know. I reacted before he did, capping my spray paint can and sliding it down the sleeve of my jacket as I broke into a steady run. Seeing me do so, he gave chase.

An instant later I passed my friend; our eyes met just long enough for her to sense what was going on. She began walking toward the alley, so as to appear to he a passerby who had not yet seen what was happening. I later learned that the maintenance employee, hot on my heels, asked her which way the person he was chasing had run, and she pointed him in the wrong direction; he looked in that direction, toward a broad expanse of empty campus, saw no one, and stopped to radio the police. She passed through the alley, met my other friend, and left the area. Some time later, when it was dear I wouldn't be getting it, one of them returned for my bicycle.

Fortunately, we had cased this area for a more serious action, so I had a route already worked out. I ran along a pedestrian walkway between two construction sites, then across a major street — relieved not to encounter any cars to speak of- and along the side of a dormitory. I climbed a short slope, tossed my spray paint can into a bush from which I retrieved it the next day, then ran a couple more blocks through parking lots and driveways. A police car passed on the street across the lot to my left, but the driver didn't see me, as I disappeared quickly between two buildings. I made it to a "bicycle path that bore me through a wooded area into a residential neighborhood; here, I took off my jacket and ridiculous hat, and began walking at a moderate pace, trying to get my breathing under control after sprinting half a mile.

There was one more long stretch 1 had to cross before I was out of the area, a major thoroughfare that would have gone swiftly on a bicycle but took some time to walk. Had this been a more serious situation, I would have laid low in the wooded area for a while, but I figured I was pretty much in the dear. I stayed on the shadowy side of the street for most of it; a police car passed by once, slowly. As I approached the end of the street, where I would have to cross it, the police car returned and slowed to a crawl. There was no way around it, I had to cross the street, and if I panicked and ran again I would reveal myself to be their quarry, this time out of disguise. I walked as slowly and nonchalantly as I could, right in front of the police car that had now stopped. The officer scrutinized me through the windshield, but I didn't match the description on the radio. I got to the other side of the street, and switched to another car-free bicycle path that led out of downtown. Rack those motherfuckers, I was outta there.

The moral of the story? Always spray paint the circle-A first, so even if you're interrupted mid-sentence, people will know where you're corning from!

Festivals

Ingredients

- Promotion (optional)
- Entertainment and activities
- People
- A staging location

Instructions

So you want to throw a festival ! Maybe you want to have a good time, in a way that shows what a better time we could all be having. Maybe you want to get people together, and you've noticed how many more people will come out for a party than for a protest. Or maybe you're trying to provide for the needs of your community directly, in the long- standing tradition of direct action, and you figure togetherness, excitement, and amusement are human needs as much as food and shelter. If we can't dance, who's going to be part of our revolution, right? And there's something to be said for making friends during peacetime, so there will be people looking out for you when war is on.

What will the theme of your festival be? It could be "anarchism," but then it might only attract people who consider themselves anarchists. Better, hold a street fair organized according to anarchist principles, or a music festival exploring anarchic aesthetics, or a dance party with anarchist implications. If you must be topical, try demonstrating your thesis in practice, rather than just talking about it. For example, if you want to address alternative economics, you could hold a "Really Really Free Market," to which people bring gifts and resources to share without money changing hands or count being kept, and thus present a working example of a gift economy.

What will the structure of your festival be? Will you script events to be staged for spectators, or establish a framework that enables groups to contribute autonomously? A core group can envision possibilities and coordinate complex plans a less organized mass cannot, and in a civilization based on spectatorship it can be dangerous to rely too much on the spontaneous contributions of others. On the other hand, there's no reason to limit your event to what you and your fellow organizers can imagine. Leave room for others to bring and deploy their own ideas, and brainstorm about how different groups could be involved; the more points of departure within your event, the more these can bring people together and complement one another. Just like revolutions, the very best festivals are open-ended, encouraging groups to organize within them as they see fit in ways that add up to a whole much greater than the sum of its parts.

Who will be invited to your festival? Once again, there are goals that a homogenous group can accomplish together that would be impossible in more mixed company, but there's also a lot to be

said for bridging divides and nurturing symbiotic relationships between communities. Consider ways to draw upon different circles, soliciting the participation of individuals and groups that will engage them.

Where, when, and how will you hold your festival? It is often difficult to get people to come to places they've never been, or to participate in unfamiliar activities; think about how to take advantage of routines or interests that are already established, or integrate your event into existing social forms. As for timing and location, it can be beneficial to pick a space that receives a lot of traffic, so passersby can witness or join in your events. To maximize this potential, pick an area that is frequented by demographics that are likely to be interested; for example, a Reclaim the Streets (pg. 421) action might draw more spontaneous participation in an arts-oriented neighborhood than it would in an industrial area. Depending on the scale of your event and the local context, it may be necessary to seek a permit from the local administration; when doing so, don't misrepresent your project completely, but don't tell them anything they won't understand or don't need to know. Serious police attention and repression can interfere with your project, or be turned to your advantage, depending on your strategy; if you're hoping to avoid it, it might be wise not to announce it in forums, such as direct action websites, that they already associate with trouble.

How will you promote your festival? Posters, stickers, press releases, word of mouth, the internet, announcements on college radio stations: all are fair game, unless your festival must be a secret to succeed. Certain kinds of press attention may be inconvenient for any kind of event; for these, contact the media yourself, being as boring and unremarkable as possible, so as to deter them in advance (see Mainstream Media, pg. 358). As for whether to associate festivals with political perspectives, be judicious: sometimes this can increase interest, sometimes it can distract or alienate. Don't be afraid to be out of the closet about where you're coming from, just make sure that doesn't limit who else feels comfortable participating.

Account

We decided to take advantage of our relationship with the local independent movie theater to hold a radical film festival. Instead of screening little-known independent movies of a radical bent, we would try the opposite tack: we would screen mainstream movies with subversive implications, in the most radicalizing atmosphere we could create. We hoped this would bring out people who would never attend an obscure subcultural event yet shared our interest in thinking and living differently, and give them the opportunity to get connected to others with the same desires. To make this work, we solicited help from everyone we knew, inviting people to offer workshops to share their skills or set up literature tables on behalf of their infoshops and organizations.

We covered the streets of our town with hundreds of fliers and a few dozen six-foot posters over the weeks leading up to the event, promoting it as a "heArt and Film Festival" four days of movies, skillshares, and other activities. To put our money, where our rhetoric was, we declared that on the main day of the festival, everything would be free. This was a gamble — our efforts to talk the theater into giving us cheap rates had only been partially successful, and we had failed to persuade anyone to sponsor the event, so it was optimistic to think we could afford to rent the place and all the film reels with the proceeds of just a few movie showings. ALL the same, we

posted a schedule on the internet and sent out a press release, which got us coverage from the local paper.

The event started quietly, on a Thursday. For this day, in order to save money, we didn't rent the theater, and instead put on the free skillshares — radical graphic design, pirate radio, and graffiti — in a room at the public library and a local independent show space. About thirty people showed up to each. The graffiti skillshare spilled out into the streets at the end, to decorate the walls in preparation for the weekend. Some people showed up from out of town, and we arranged for locals to house them. We also printed up programs for all the weekend's activities, and distributed them thickly.

The next day was the first day in the theater, so we showed up early to cover the walls with radical posters and set out tables of free literature, homemade radical fortune cookies, and dumpstered organic fruit juice. Many people from our community of dropouts and dissidents brought free food, dumpstered goods, and reading material of their own to share, and put these out on the tables as well. During the day, the theater hosted six free skillshares: bicycle repair, folk dancing, drumming (in which stolen drumsticks were distributed free to everyone who showed up), an herb walk showing all the edible and medicinal plants that grew locally, a discussion entitled "how to cripple privilege" about the ways able-bodied people can be allies to the handicapped, and print-making, the results of which were soon pasted up all over the walls. That night we charged for two showings of Fight Club and one of Brazil. Before each, there was a speaker: one was introduced by radical cheerleading, another by a spirited anarchist manifesto, another by the widow of a man the police had recently murdered; she was being silenced by the local media and deserved a chance to speak to the public. In one intermission, we opened the theater up again, so a local cop-watch group could offer a free presentation on dealing with the police. Quite a few people showed up, but the theater wasn't sold out by any means; there probably weren't more than a hundred people in it at any given time.

The next day was the free day. In addition to the previous day's decorations and amenities, we added a massage table, at which a local massage therapist gave free massages, and a screenprinting table, at which people could learn screenprinting and print free shirts; the local Food Not Bombs group also provided fill meals of delicious free food, and free groceries for anyone who needed them as well. We showed four movies, including Spike Lee's Malcolm X, and Three Kings, a Hollywood action movie uncharacteristically critical of the first Gulf War, to which a local antiwar professor gave an eloquent introduction. The theater was packed throughout the day with a diverse but predominantly white audience, reaching its fullest during the showing of the former movie; that was perhaps one of our most important achievements of the weekend, that we got so many white people out to learn black history.

We had a trick up our sleeves, too, so that our demonstration of alternative economics would not be limited to the movie theater. During the day, we passed around hints that there would be an exciting adventure after the last showing. At the end of the day's final movie, a woman leaped onto the stage and tremblingly declared that a group was going out to take over an empty house nearby to show what positive things could be done with vacant buildings, and that everyone was invited to participate. Proclaiming this publicly was a risk of sorts, but as it turned out, word didn't reach the police; not only that, but a majority of the people in the theater decided to come along!

In order to avoid attracting the wrong kind of attention, the crowd split into smaller groups, each following a guide along a different route to converge at the abandoned building. In minutes,

the place was bustling with life: people who had never squatted a building before were sweeping up dust, covering the windows, and exploring the basement. After a few minutes, everyone who wanted to stay in the building for the night packed tightly into one cramped room to hold a discussion about pressing issues: how to handle the police if they showed up, what the goals and priorities of the action should be, and what to announce to the community at large about the event. A pamphlet on squatting that some people had prepared in advance was distributed. For me, the most exciting moment of the whole weekend came during this meeting, when I looked around and saw that two teenagers who had come from out of town for the festival were there in the group, their eyes wide with the magic of what we were doing.

The next day, before each of the four movies, we read aloud a statement the squatting group had prepared about their action, taking advantage of the assembled audiences to publicize it. Food Not Bombs served again, and two radical infoshops from the region set up tables in the foyer to distribute books and literature. One of the movies was not a Hollywood affair, but a whimsical French documentary about dumpster diving; we preceded it with series of brief documentaries one of our colleagues had compiled on the subjects of thinktanks and folk science, accompanied by a live voiceover. In the intermission that followed, we opened the theater up again for a free slideshow and discussion on squatting around the world. The numbers in attendance for this day were lower, again, as they had been on Friday; many of the people who had been involved before spent the day at the squat, cleaning it up and watching for police, who fortunately did not appear.

On the day following the film festival, those of us who had worked hard to organize it were totally exhausted. ALL the same, one more skillshare took place — the advanced course on graphic design, following up Thursday's introductory workshop — and that night, the group that had remained in the squatted house opened it up to the public for a community potluck and dinner. The house was crowded with people eating delicious food, getting to know one another better, and discussing the pros and cons of the weekend's event.

Was our festival a success? Not unequivocally. We lost quite a bit of money, and the people of our town haven't yet risen up to replace capitalism with ex-workers' councils and gift economics. The dates we had picked for the festival were in the middle of winter, right at the end of the semester for local college students, and many people were busy or had already left on vacation. Also, I feel we should have varied more from the format of showing movies; after three days of constant movie- watching, the contradictions between our goals of motivating people and the spectatorship-based medium we had chosen for a starting place were painfully obvious. Our town didn't quite have enough people to support a radical film festival of the kind we staged, and we were counting on the proceeds from the films to cover our expenses; people came out to see a movie or two, but your average cinema-goer won't go out to see more than a couple of movies in a three-day period, and for understandable reasons the greatest number of people chose the free day to show up. If we had held the same event in a larger city, it would probably have worked out, assuming our costs hadn't been higher. As it was, we might have been better off breaking up the movies with other kinds of performances and events, and renting fewer movie reels.

On the other hand, we pulled off a very idealistic experiment, and survived to learn from it. If nothing else, our festival was part of a string of cultural events that serve to build and maintain the radical social base in our community, and it did involve a wider range of people than the average activist rally. Until every radical is connected to a community and every community is radicalized, events like this should be happening constantly, so people can meet each other and be exposed to new possibilities.

Food Not Bombs

Like Crimethlnc., "Food Not Bombs" is something between a strategy and an organization: the basic idea is that people get together in public on a regular basis to cook and share free food. The concept behind Food Not Bombs is so simple you could start one on your own even if you'd never seen one anywhere else; if there isn't a Food Not Bombs in your town, it's time to start one. Food Not Bombs doesn't simply feed people and re- distribute resources — it is one of the most common and effective ways for people to get their first taste of anarchist politics and action. You can't look long at all those mounds of discarded food and all those people who could use a good free meal without beginning to question the basic principles of a society that values wasteful consumption over common sense. Food Not Bombs is a gateway drug to activism.

Ingredients: There are very few things you need to start a Food Not Bombs.

- An understanding of and agreement with the three principles of Food Not Bombs
- a place and time to cook
- a place and time to serve
- a core of volunteers
- Transportation
- Basic large-size cooking pots and pans
- Serving containers
- Utensils
- A few staple ingredients
- Food

There are also things you don't need to start a Food Not Bombs

- Highly developed cooking skills
- Money (at least not much of it)
- Permission

Instructions

Let's start with an understanding of and agreement with the three principles of Food Not Bombs. Although there is no central office or board of directors of Food Not Bombs, all the groups adhere to three basic principles — Consensus, Non- Violence, and Vegetarianism. Consensus is another way of saying non-hierarchical organizing, which is in itself a way of saying anarchism. Food Not Bombs is not a charity with "us" giving food to "them"; as an anarchist organization, part of its purpose is to provide people the means to effect change in their own lives, and to break through the barriers of class, race, gender, age, ethnicity, and all other artificial boundaries that keep people separated from one another. It is an opportunity for people to decide for themselves how much they want to be involved; the power in Food Not Bombs lies with the people who choose to use it, within the framework of group consensus.

Food Not Bombs is a practical hands-on protest against the violence of poverty and hunger. An empty stomach is as painful as a punch in the stomach; chronic hunger is as damaging, both physically and psychologically, as any other form of torture. Poverty and hunger shorten lives, drive people into addiction, eat away at pride and self-reliance. In some parts of the world — notably San Francisco, where thousands of people have been arrested over the last decade for the simple act of serving food in Golden Gate Park — Food Not Bombs is met with violence and repression. The typical Food Not Bombs reaction is simply to keep sewing, with backup food if necessary. Food Not Bombs is based on direct action, not coercion; when it is met with coercion, it takes action.

Food Not Bombs meals are always vegetarian and often vegan. There are several reasons for this. The production of meat is an inherently violent process and therefore runs counter to the Food Not Bombs philosophy of non-violence; vegetarian meals like the ones cooked at Food Not Bombs are healthier than meat-based meals, and serve as a vivid demonstration that meat is not an essential ingredient; vegetarian meals are less expensive than meat-centered meals, so resources can be stretched further; and meals prepared without animal products are safer and less prone to spoiling.

If you can agree to these principles you are ready to start your own Food Not Bombs. What else do you need?

A place and time to cook. Food Not Bombs meals are cooked in all sorts of kitchens, from punk houses to churches to community centers to mobile propane ranges. A public kitchen in a church or community center is ideal if you have one available, not only because it is probably already outfitted with the institutional-sized pots and pans you will need for cooking in quantity, but because a wider variety of people may feel more comfortable cooking in a neutral setting than they would in a private home. Whatever kind of place you cook, make sure you choose a place that has some permanence (and, if it's in a house, that all the house members agree to let Food Not Bombs use the kitchen); try to find a place that is accessible to people with disabilities. Allow a minimum of an hour and a half for cooking.

A place and time to serve. This may take a little experimenting before you get it right. Start by finding out when and where other groups serve meals in your community so you are not duplicating efforts — one way to do that is to go eat at a local soup kitchen and simply ask the people eating there where else they eat and if they have any recommendations about when and where you should serve. In most communities, Food Not Bombs serves outside and often in highly visible locations — both to make the meals easy for people to find, and to make unavoidable the

points that hunger exists in America and that people can be fed. In addition to regular, consistent servings, Food Not Bombs groups often make themselves available to serve food at conferences, protests, and other special events.

A core of volunteers. It takes surprisingly few people to put together an active, self-sustaining Food Not Bombs, but it may take a little while to get the right mix of volunteers. Put up fliers, talk to people, table at shows and events, rope in your friends to start, but keep working to make your volunteer group as diverse and committed as possible. This is important first of all because it is natural for any volunteer group to devolve into a small group of the same people who show up every week; if those people burn out or have trouble getting along with each other the whole organization can fall apart quickly. In communities where there are several Food Not Bombs servings, volunteers often sort themselves out into affinity group-like teams of people with similar tastes and back- grounds. This is fine so long as a 1 1 interested groups are represented somehow; some people may not have the means or the experience to form a group of their own. One of the nicest things that can happen is that the people serving and the people eating begin to overlap. I was telling a woman recently that we had several homeless men among our volunteers. "That's good," she said. "It means more to them if they have to work for it." That statement simply doesn't make sense in the Food Not Bombs context: there is no "they" — and cooking is too much fun to call work. It is nice, though, to make Food Not Bombs a welcoming place to people who are often made to feel that they don't have anything to contribute — never forget to reach out, and always remember that an open door is not enough. Some people — not just homeless people, but older people, younger people, middle-class people, your mom — may need extra encouragement to feel that they truly are welcome in the kitchen.

Transportation. Transportation is an obvious ingredient — you'll need at least one car or bicycle to pick up food and perhaps carry it to the location where you serve. Keep this in mind as you recruit volunteers, and make sure you've got backup drivers.

Basic large-size cooking pots and pans, a few staple ingredients, and sewing containers and utensils. If the kitchen you are using doesn't have big pots and pans, you'll need to get some. Basic cooking equipment includes a large soup pot, a large frying pan, some baking trays (disposable foil pans can be reused for quite a while), big spoons for stirring and serving, and sharp knives. You can look in thrift shops, yard sales, and dumpsters for cooking equipment, but don't overlook restaurant supply places, which sometimes have back rooms where they sell damaged and second-hand equipment cheap.

Staple ingredients include salt, pepper, spices, vinegar, and oil (olive oil if you can afford it-olive oil makes just about anything taste better and you can stretch it by mixing it with cheaper canola oil). Serving containers can be anything from plates and bowls to recycled plastic tofu boxes; ask around for donations and you'll be surprised how many people have dishes and pans to give away.

Food. Believe me, the food is out there. Start by asking your local food co-op, if you have one, to save its wilted and spotty vegetables and other expired goods for you. Go to bakeries at dosing time and ask for the bread they are going to throw away (for some reason, bakeries tend to bake much more than they can sell; in my town they often put the bags of leftover bread out by the back door rather than in the dumpster, in hopes that someone can use it). A local steakhouse gives us their leftover baked potatoes at the end of the night, plus their prepped lettuce and tomatoes — talk to restaurants and caterers about what they might be willing to donate. If you still need more food, go dumpster diving: we have a standing Wednesday night date to go through three

grocery store dumpsters to see what we can find, which yields us enough not only to serve 3 or 40 people the next day, but to put extra groceries out for people to take home. If you dumpster food, however, make sure that you are not stripping dumpsters other people depend on — we do our dumpstering in a suburban neighborhood where we are not competing with anyone.

What you don't need

Highly developed cooking skills. It helps to have at least one volunteer with some cooking experience, but cooking really isn't all that hard.

Money. Most of your food will come to you for nothing — that's part of the point. You may, however, need some start-up money for pots and other equipment, and you'll need to spend money occasionally on oil, rice, etc. Don't turn down donations — you can put out a jar if you like (we prefer not to do it at regular servings because we don't want anyone to feel bad about not making a donation, but we do put one out at special events). Other ways to raise money include benefit shows, yard sales of dumpstered items, and selling patches or other things . Don't let lack of money keep you from starting a group — it will work out much more easily than you might think.

Permission. The only permission you need is the consensus of the group — you don't need approval from a central office or anyone else to get started. Some people worry about the legal liability of giving away free food; you can explain to them that your activities are covered by the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Act, a federal law protecting people who give away food from lawsuits. If you feel that you need a permit from your city to set up a serving in a park or other location by all means look into it, but most groups don't bother — in fact, one of the underlying points of Food Not Bombs is that no one should have to ask permission to serve food to people who want it.

Just about anything can be soup. Sauté onions and garlic in oil, add water (enough to fill up your pot about three quarters full), drop in chopped vegetables, bring to a boil and lower the heat to a simmer. Add spices, herbs, and salt to taste. For a thicker soup put in a handful of rice, some pasta, some lentils, or some diced potatoes. Takes about forty-five minutes.

Stir-fry is basically like soup without the water. Follow the directions above, using a big frying pan instead of a pot. Serve with rice or other grains. Takes about forty-five minutes.

Cut up any kind of greens besides lettuce, using everything but the stems, and put them in a frying pan or pot with a little oil to prevent sticking. Add a tiny bit of water — the greens will give out their own moisture as they cook. Add a little vinegar to taste and season with salt, pepper, and nutmeg if you've got it. Fill the pot as full as you can and keep turning the greens as they cook — they will shrink dramatically. Keep adding greens, stirring and turning occasionally. Turn off the heat before the greens are completely limp and colorless and cover the pot until you are ready to serve. Takes about thirty minutes.

Cut potatoes (you can use sweet potatoes as well as regular potatoes) into rough squares; no need to peel them unless the skins are really dirty, but wash them first if you are leaving the skins on. Drop the potatoes in salted water and boil until they are soft when you poke them with a knife. Drain the pot and mash the potatoes. Add margarine if you have it or oil if you don't; moisten with soy milk or some of the cooking liquid from a stir-fry (liquid from greens is too bitter for mashed potatoes). Add salt and pepper to taste; parsley and garlic are good too. Takes about thirty minutes, or more if you've got a lot of potatoes.

Account

A traveler kid had been hanging around town for a couple of weeks, coming to Food Not Bombs every Thursday to cook and to eat. He wrote poetry; he'd been active in a poetry slam in his hometown and had even won a couple of prizes. He was surprised there weren't any poetry slams in our town. We a 1 1 talked about it in the kitchen while we were cooking, and someone said, "Why not have a Food Not Bombs poetry slam here!" We scheduled it for two weeks later and told the plan to everyone who came; the traveler made fliers and over the next two weeks we posted them and handed them out. Food Not Bombs When the day came, it looked as though the slam wasn't going to happen — it was a 254 sunny afternoon, and people seemed happy to just lounge around on the grassy bank outside the church where we serve. The two tables set up by the church steps were filled with dishes of stir-fry and potatoes and salad and bread and pastries; people refilled their glasses with ice water from the big orange cooler. Finally, one of the volunteers who had come to cook said "Well … and went out onto the sidewalk and turned to face the group. Suddenly the lawn was not just a lawn: it was a little amphitheater and the sidewalk was the stage. She opened her pocket-sized notebook and read some of her poems. Everyone cheered. Then another volunteer stood up and recited a poem from memory. Everyone cheered again. Then a man who had come to eat stood up and cleared his throat and read a poem he had written for a woman with whom he had once been in love. After he had been applauded, another man — someone who had never been to Food Not Bombs before, who hadn't come expecting poetry — stood up and recited a limerick. Passersby stopped and listened. People who had seen each other every Thursday for months began talking to each other for the first time. The poems went on; the eating went on. The late afternoon shadows grew longer. Finally, both the food and the poetry had run out; people folded up their raggedy bits of paper, dosed their notebooks, and carried the dirty dishes back into the church.

As poetry slams go ours was probably not much. As a moment when people took the opportunity to surprise themselves and each other, however, it was wonderful. Food Not Bombs is not a soup kitchen; it's not a family; it's not even a revolution. But when it works, when it is at its best, Food Not Bombs is a place where people can be their best selves to themselves and to others, where there is always room for surprise.

Appendix: The Anarchist Ice Cream Truck

The Anarchist Ice Cream Truck is perfect for hot summer days when people are hanging out on front porches, riding bikes in the street, and playing in the local swimming pool or water park. Go around giving away free ice cream out of your homemade ice cream truck.

Ingredients

- A decorated shopping cart or bike cart
- A large cooler or two
- Ice (dry ice works well and is fun to play with)
- Ice cream

- Ice cream cones
- Cherries
- Chocolate sauce
- A lot of people — *biking, skateboarding, walking, juggling, stilt-walking, wearing colorful clothes, telling jokes, interviewing people, taking pictures, video-recording for a documentary, helping to serve ice cream.*

Preparation

Ice cream: Having enough ice cream to pass out is possible with the help of free coupons for corporate ice cream brands. One might write to these companies telling a sob story about a bad ice-cream-eating experience, or whatever else it takes to get coupons for complementary pints of ice cream, preferably the vegan stuff made out of soybeans or rice. Then with the help of photocopiers … well, you know the rest — and if you make them right, the bar codes still even scan! Take all the coupons for ice cream you can produce and get as much ice cream as you can over the days before you roll out the Anarchist Ice Cream Truck.

Ice cream truck: The Anarchist Ice Cream Truck can be a walking truck made from a shopping cart; alternatively, you could use a bike cart, especially if you plan to cover broad distances. You'll want to attract attention, so attach things to the side of the cart, use bright colors, and bring along a boombox with music everyone can sing along to.

Execution

Sing, walk in the middle of the streets, meet your neighbors and be a part of your neighborhood, have a dance party in the middle of each intersection, get the media to cover your story, get video coverage and vocal recordings and cover your own story, start an ice cream fight, fly kites, bang on pots and pans, stop in local establishments and give employees a treat, eat lots and lots of ice cream!

Graffiti

Ingredients

- Different layers of clothing — *in case you need to change your appearance quickly*
- Shoes comfortable for running
- Bicycle, skateboard, or other getaway vehicle
- Latex gloves — *to keep your hands paint-free*
- Spray paint, house paint, paint markers, paint rollers and trays, stencils, other decorating supplies

Instructions Graffiti stands out among the countless methods of free expression (see Stenciling, Wheatpasting, Billboard Improvement, Asphalt Mosaics, Stickering, and Banner Drops and Banner Hoists) for its simplicity, directness, and time-honored traditionalism. You can be sure Jews put up anti-Roman graffiti in Gaza two millennia ago, just as Palestinians spray paint slogans there today.

There are many different occasions for which this tactic is appropriate. You can simply take a paint marker everywhere you go, adding little messages to mute surfaces. Sometimes, in a supportive crowd already engaging in illegal tactics (see Blocs, Black and Otherwise, pg. 127, and Marches and Parades, pg. 336), individuals can seize the opportunity to redecorate their surroundings on a grander scale; more frequently, graffiti is put up by small groups acting under cover of darkness, applying hit-and-run tactics.

If you are going to use the hit-and-run approach, your first task is to arrange a good disguise and cover story. Your presence should not elicit any attention, let alone suspicion, 2 , g no matter how busy or deserted the area you will be working in at the time you strike. In a neighborhood, you could go out walking a dog, or running in a sweat suit like a jogger; in a bar or university district, you could pose as an amorous, giddy heterosexual couple.

When choosing targets, weigh the visibility and aptness of each location against the risk of apprehension and the swiftness with which the artwork will be erased. The best targets are in areas that are very busy during the day but practically deserted and unguarded at night. Failing that, watch for a place that is concealed from the immediate view of patrolling authorities, while still being visible to others. One-way streets can be safer than two-way streets, as traffic can only be expected from one direction. It's often better to decorate a low-traffic area where your work will not be erased for months than it is to hit a busy area where it won't last a day. The best time to hit the latter sort of target is right before a big event: decorate Main Street the night before a street carnival or protest, hit the mall the night before their grand opening. Consider the ways art haters will attempt to remove your work, and take this into account in choosing your location:

for example, they will often use a sandblaster to grind paint off brick, concrete, or stone, but they might hesitate before aiming it at the fancy plaque on a monument.

Make use of existing features in the environment, whether stop signs (see Stickering, pg. 520) or billboards (see Billboard Improvement, pg. 114) or absurd corporate logos. If you want your additions to stop signs to last longer, paint them on in the same red as the background; your message will appear in car headlights at night, as your paint is not reflective, but will not otherwise attract attention. Some targets suggest themselves: corporate franchises, memorials to genocidal conquerors, nondescript buildings that secretly host animal testing, condominiums being built to gentrify neighborhoods. Be ambitious: you could decorate the field of the football stadium before a televised game, or wow everybody by putting up animal liberation slogans inside cages at the zoo. At the same time, keep in mind that little graffiti messages throughout an area could create a more impressive and lasting effect than one huge masterpiece.

As for hitting really impressive, death-defying sites like the tops of bridges or the sides of overpasses, don't assume that because a place is harder to reach your work will be sure to stay up longer. On the other hand, it might, and taking it down it will cost more trouble and money — and besides, freely offering installations that attest to true stories of courage and defiance is a public service, if anything is. Climbing gear — and a great deal of practice with it- will help a lot for such endeavors; bring an equally experienced partner.

Scout the area of your target or targets in advance. Learn the layout of streets, alleys, fields, fences, and cover such as bushes and woods. Plan approach and escape routes (see Evasion, pg. 234). Note the visibility of and from your chosen sites, the presence of cameras or other surveillance measures, the frequency of foot traffic, automobiles, police, and other possible witnesses, and the proximity of police stations or other locations from which a response will be launched if you are sighted. Keep an eye out for emergency hiding places: dumpsters, ditches, construction sites, friends' houses, crowded bars or subway stations.

You can work alone, but it's often easier and safer to work with a few trusted companions (see Affinity Croups, pg. 28). Pick roles according to your tastes and skills: one or two people can stand lookout, perhaps another could be a getaway driver, and, if you're hoping to put up a particularly large piece, you could divide action roles between two or more individuals. It's also a good idea for there to be someone at a phone number that people can call if they get arrested or lost (see Legal Support, pg. 329).

Work out your slogans or illustrations ahead of time, so you don't risk drawing a blank at the last minute. Familiarize yourself with spray paint at home, so using it will come naturally in a high-stress situation. There are different tips available as nozzles for spray paint cans, providing different degrees of paint flow; as you become more experienced, you can explore these and choose your favorite effects. Some recommend dip-on triggers, to make the spray paint easier to apply. Consider wearing a mask to protect yourself from the hazardous fumes of the aerosol can, as well as from identification by your enemies. Test your paint cans before going out with them, and don't risk running out of paint in the middle of an important thought.*

You'll want to keep quiet in the field; this is one advantage of paint markers . If you are using spray paint, make sure to shake the cans in advance, and try to keep them warm if it's particularly cold out. If you need to shake your paint can in the middle of the action, roll the agitator ball gently in a circle at the bottom of the can. Work out a way to communicate quietly and subtly with your partners; if you can't use words, consider coded gestures or animal calls.

Don't take anything unnecessary with you that identifies you as a radical or vandal; if you are detained and searched, you should appear to be a law-abiding citizen. Make sure you keep paint off your hands, and your fingerprints off anything you might have to drop. If you feel you are in danger, get rid of everything incriminating; at the very least, toss away the tip from your spray paint can — if you do not have a way to apply the paint when you are arrested, that is one less piece of evidence to be used against you.

Act swiftly. If you are painting more than one target, don't attract attention to yourself by rushing around, but don't linger in the area any longer than necessary, either. Take care of your targets in ascending order of conspicuousness — a dozen little stenciled images on the sidewalk might not tip off the authorities that vandals are on the loose, but once "police everywhere justice nowhere" is scrawled thirty feet long across the wall of the courthouse, you'd better be on your way home.

For particularly challenging missions in areas into which it is difficult to smuggle large quantities of paint and equipment, you can stash your gear nearby ahead of time. In many situations, you should consider finding a hidden place to suit up just off-site, so you won't have to leave your house looking the way you do when you are painting.

If you are working with lookouts, it may be wise to have separate escape routes, and designated points for regrouping. After the action, keep clear of the area for a little while, keep your authorship to yourself (see Security Culture, pg. 461), and try not to make it obvious if you do eventually return to admire your work.

For painting from a short distance — for example, putting a slogan on a tall billboard from the ground — attach a spray paint can to the end of a long stick and operate it by means of a lever (figure 10.2). Put a "spacer" extending from the business end of the apparatus, so you can keep the paint can a steady distance from your canvas; the spacer should slide smoothly across the surface. You can also use paint rollers on long poles.

To decorate from a greater distance, fill a "super soaker" squirt gun (figure 10.3) with paint; precision is difficult with this method, to say the least, but sometimes all you have to do to get your point across is make a mess. Better yet, find an old-fashioned pressurized fire extinguisher — the chrome kind with the flexible hose, used for spraying water (figure 10.4). Make sure it's empty, then use a funnel to refill it with a mixture of one part water to one part acrylic house paint. Make sure your mixture is not so thick that it dogs the spraying mechanism; if you're using salvaged or otherwise lumpy or dirty paint, filter it through pantyhose first. Pressurize the canister surreptitiously at a gas station, or with a bicycle pump. The fire extinguisher will either have a pressure gauge on it to indicate when it is sufficiently pressurized, or a plaque listing the maximum pressure in pounds per square inch. Using this, you can spray paint up to fifty feet; you could improve a billboard, or paint the visors of a line of riot police, or detail an entire lot of suburban utility vehicles. Be sure to wash the extinguisher out thoroughly afterwards so you can use it again. Practice before using it in the field, so you'll know how much paint you've got to use.

If you need to do your painting with projectiles, you can fill Christmas tree ornaments with paint, or open up the bottoms of used light bulbs and do the same (figure 10.5). Both can be sealed with duct tape or candle wax, and carried in empty six- pack containers. Be sure not to get fingerprints on them — you should wear gloves while preparing any projectile. For maximum splatter, mix the paint in equal parts with paint thinner (for oil paints) or water (for acrylic paints). Think in advance about which color paint will best complement the color scheme of your target.

To be sure a projectile will not bounce off the target and break on you, throw at an angle; this will also ensure that the paint splatters away from you. To make a paint projectile out of wax, take a balloon filled with air and dip it in melted wax; let it cool, then repeat the process about twenty times before extracting the balloon from the shell, filling it with paint, and sealing the hole with more wax. Much less than twenty dippings, and it may break too early; much more, and it might not break at all.

You can also make paint bombs from balloons themselves. Use water balloons, which were designed to hold fluid: any other balloons may be too small or weak, and can burst when you least expect it. Carefully protect the area in which you will produce them, as it's easy to make a big mess; work with a partner. You need each balloon to have enough air in it that it will break against the target, and enough paint that it will leave a mark without being too heavy to throw. First, blow up the balloon to contain more air than you ultimately need, as some of the air will escape during the filling process. Next, using a two cycle fuel mixer or some other tool that can function as an enormous syringe, fill the balloon with the right amount of paint, supporting the bottom of the balloon as you do and being careful not to let too much air out {figure 10.6). When the balloon contains the right proportions of air and paint, pinch its mouth, pull out the filling tool, and tie off the end. Make sure there's no paint left on you from the production process when you go to apply balloon paint bombs. Transport them in sealed plastic bags, and throw them like you would throw a football, so they roll off your fingers to spiral through the air.

Finally, if the target you have in mind is small or doesn't need much paint, you can fire paint gun pellets from a slingshot.

Decorating Glass

You can find glass etching solution or cream at some arts and crafts stores, though it may be locked up behind the counter. It can be used to frost glass — but be careful, you do not want this stuff to touch your skin! You can put the liquid form in a shoe polish applicator or similar device, and apply it through the sponge on the end to write a message or just make a smear across corporate windows you want replaced. It sure attracts less attention than a baseball bat! If you can't get that dose, put it in a spray bottle. To apply it from an even greater distance, you'll need an eggshell or a light bulb — don't use a Christmas tree ornament, as they are so thin that the fluid eats through them. If you're using an eggshell, stick a hole in one end of the shell and drain it; fill it with the cream or fluid, and close the hole with electrical tape without wrapping the egg in it. If you're using a light bulb, unscrew the bottom of the bulb or pry a hole in it, fill it with the etching solution, and use electrical tape to seal the bottom before throwing. Make sure not to leave any fingerprints. Consider using this method to frost the windshields of certain vehicles and the glass screens of certain machines, as well as the plate glass of corporate storefronts.

You can also wrap emery cloth around your finger to write quickly on glass or stain- less steel.

Refining Your Medium

Once you've been involved in graffiti long enough to get your bearings, consider graduating from spray paint cans and prefabricated paint markers to making your own equipment and mix-

ing your own colorants. The two most common media you can use for this are bucket paints and irks or dyes. The two types do not mix with each other.

Bucket paint comes in a wide variety of colors; Rustoleum is one common brand. It is not as permanent as many inks, but it usually will not weather away quickly. Make sure you get oil- or "solvent"-based paint. You can't put paint in most markers, so try putting it in a shoe polish applicator or similar tool. If you want more drips, thin out the paint with mineral spirits. Do not use a thinner, such as xylene, that destroys plastic, if you plan to use a plastic applicator.

Ink is known for staining harder than paint. In the United States, Marsh and Pilot are two well-known brands. Just about every ink is alcohol-based, as is leather dye. Ink generally looks good on a wall, flows well through a marker, and is difficult to remove. By itself, leather dye doesn't look very impressive, and doesn't flow as well as irk, but you can mix ink and leather dye together to get stunning colors that are extremely difficult to remove. Be careful when handling this mixture — it is as challenging to clean off a surface in your home as it is in the street. To take things even farther, you can add brake fluid. Brake fluid is corrosive and eats through paint, just as etching solution does to glass, making for an even more permanent mark. Make sure you get DOT3 brake fluid. Keep it off your hands, and don't add too much to your mixture.

Try mixing different proportions of different inks and leather dyes with varying amounts of brake fluid, comparing the results for staining power, flow, and consistency. You can try boiling them together and then using a thinner, as they may thicken when heated. You can also try adding brake fluid to bucket paint, and aluminum dust to make it shine. If someone else is using a paint recipe that interests you, which they refuse to divulge in full, get a sample and let it settle over time until it separates into its constituent parts.

Disguising Your Tools

If you are practicing freedom of expression in an area especially singled out for repression, it can be really inconvenient to have anything resembling a graffiti tool on your person. Here are two examples of ways one can camouflage painting equipment as harmless household items.

Appendix

Chapstick Container Marker

Ingredients

- Chapstick container
- Ink
- Candle and matches
- Felt chalkboard eraser
- An eyedropper — these come with many ink containers

Instructions

1. Clean the chapstick out of the container.
2. Melt some wax into it from the candle, so the bottom is sealed and won't leak any ink.
3. Use the eyedropper to fill the container with your ink of choice.
4. Rip a strip from the felt eraser. Cut off about 1 14-inch of the strip. Push it into the container, leaving enough space that you can fit the cap back on.
5. Get the eyedropper back out and drip some ink onto the eraser nib until it becomes saturated. Use it to write graffiti. When the nib gets dry, rejuice it with the eyedropper and ink.

VHS Cassette Paint Marker

Ingredients

- VHS tape with plastic sleeve
- Screwdriver
- X-ACTO knife or wire cutters
- Craft glue gun and glue sticks or epoxy
- Duct tape
- Ink
- Old sock or other filler
- Two chalkboard erasers

Instructions

First, pull off the piece that protects the exposed tape. This is where the chalkboard erasers will go. Next, unscrew the cassette casing and take everything out. Seal off the interior with duct tape and epoxy so it won't leak: use the duct tape to span gaps, and fill them in with the epoxy. Don't count on the duct tape to seal anything by itself. Using the utility knife or wire cutters, cut all the plastic entrails out of the container. Once there's enough space for the filler and eraser nib to fit inside, line the seams of the casing with epoxy, then dose it back up, sealing it shut. Now you have a completely sealed container for your ink.

Cut up your filler and stuff it into the case. Its role is to soak up the ink: the less you put in, the drippier your marker will be. Three-quarters of a container worth of filler should work nicely. Now cut up the felt of the chalkboard eraser so it can fit into the space where the tape was, to be a writing nib. It will take one whole eraser and part of another to fill the space there tightly. Epoxy all the eraser pieces together, for greater nib durability, and then epoxy them into position. Make sure the epoxy makes a tight seal around the nib, so all your irk doesn't leak out when you try to write.

It will take a lot of ink to fill this marker. Keep it in the original plastic case.

Other Applications

You can make a paint roller into a portable printing press. Use a razor blade to remove the fuzz in a reverse image of what you want to print. Dunk it in paint and roll it along a surface: your word or design will appear over and over figure 10.8). It might be possible to adapt this method to bicycle tires or a cover that could be affixed to them, to print while riding.

You can use salt, lime, or other herbicides to write a big message in a green lawn. For an even more delayed effect, plant flower seeds in a pattern.

To emphasize the socially responsible aspects of graffiti writing, write on dirty, mildewed sidewalks by cleaning them. Carry a small squeeze bottle of bleach and a scrub brush; draw or write with the bleach, and agitate the lines with the scrub brush. As you are "cleaning," you can try this in broad daylight.

You can paint a backlit mural on the illuminated surface of a beverage machine, if you lightly sand it first to remove the graffiti-proof coating.

For do-it-yourself, environmentally friendly spray paint, thin out acrylic paint with pure grain alcohol and apply it with a spray bottle.

In certain cases in which all you need to do to accomplish your objective is make a big mess — if a city is hosting a fascist rally or capitalist summit and you want to make this expensive for them, for example — it may be sufficient just to carry a few full cans of house paint to dump out everywhere or throw off a high place. Be careful not to spread it in such a way that it's hard for you or others you care about not to step in it- you wouldn't want to mark yourselves as the culprits!

To make an oversize stamper, you can cut foam into the desired shape, mount it on a board, dip it in a paint tray, and press it to the surface of your choosing. This method could be used for stamping sidewalks through the false bottom of a box.

To airbrush on the fly, cany a compressed air tank in a hip pack with the coiled air- brush hose running inside your sleeve to the airbrush in your hand; at the first sign of danger, release the airbrush so the tension of the coiled hose pulls it inside your sleeve.

Guerrilla Performances

Ingredients

- A band, speaker, open mic circle, dance party, masked ball, etc.
- A location designated for uses that do not include the one you have in mind

Instructions

Perhaps you've heard of guerrilla theatre, in which vigilante thespians hit the streets to drive their message home. Guerrilla theatre is dangerous because it takes drama off the stage and deploys it in everyday life, where it has the power to unnerve and unmask in ways that cannot be shrugged off as mere art. A guerrilla performance is similar: a concert or party, which would normally take place in a carefully controlled, socially-designated area, occurs instead in an environment that is totally unprepared for it.

A guerrilla performance is essentially a Reclaim the Streets event (pg. 421), with two distinguishing characteristics: first, there is a main act, and second, it may not be the streets that you are reclaiming. Set your objectives: is your event for passersby, or for a handpicked circle who will follow coded instructions to rendezvous at a secret location? Is it worth risking arrest? How will you deal with the police or owners, should they attempt to interfere? How will you protect equipment from them — can it be used from a vehicle that could be started up and driven away at the first sign of trouble, for example? Where are the escape routes, if there are any? Select your location carefully for the perfect ratio of danger to potential. Subway stations, laundromats late at night, rooftops and basements, public parks and parking lots, empty warehouses, all of these have qualities to recommend them, and risks or shortcomings to bear in mind.

Some well-known recent applications of this tactic include underground raves, dance parties held in warehouses squatted for the night; the Boston "T" parties, in which people occupy tram cars and throw parties in them; and the Rage Against the Machine concert in front of the Democratic National Convention in summer of 2000, a permitted event that all the same ended in streetfighting with police. Set up a punk show on a boat to disrupt a riverside public event (like the Sex Pistols did), put on subversive puppet shows for the children of the bourgeoisie gathered at some wine and cheese event in the park, hold weekly games of Capture the Flag downtown — just do what it takes to get entertainment out of the cage and into spaces where it can be vital again!

Account

The fliers read, simply, in huge letters, "USA IS A MONSTER 2:00 AM." For months, J- had been supposed to book a show for this noise band, and never got around to thinking about it

until a week before the date he'd promised them, when he realized he was in trouble and started trying to come up with a solution. He hit upon Z-, the devil- may-care graveyard shi(f)t worker at the Handy Pantry, the all-night convenience store in our neighborhood.

Z- is one of those beautiful lumpen-proletariat guys who knows who his enemies are and gets jobs just to fuck with his employers. I heard that when he was tired of his last job (night shift at UPS), he took a package being shipped by a chewing gum company, set it down in front of a surveillance camera, opened it up, took out a piece of gum, and, looking straight into the camera, began chewing it. The next morning when the manager found the opened package still sitting there, he checked the tape and saw Z— staring him in the eye, smacking his gum.

J- went to Z- and told him that he'd forgotten to book a show for a band that would be arriving on Saturday. Z- drawled, "Well, I'm working every night this week," and it was arranged: USA Is a Monster would play at the Handy Pantry at 2 a.m. on Saturday night.

Now, the Handy Pantry is not some out-of-the-way convenience store. It's in the middle of the main drag by the college campus, a center of Greensboro night life (to the extent that there is such a thing), next to all the coffee shops and restaurants, and it shares a parking lot with Kinko's… and with the university police station. The police station is about two hundred feet away: you can see it clearly through the windows of the convenience store. So we weren't even taking about a risky proposition, we were looking certain catastrophe in the eyes and offering it a formal invitation. I think that's what appealed to us most about this idea: more than any of the Reclaim the Streets or Critical Mass actions of the previous year, more than the noise parades or any of the nocturnal breaking, entering, and exploring we'd done, this was something crazy enough that the outcome couldn't be foreseen or even imagined. We had to do it just to thrust ourselves out into that dangerous space where everything comes as a surprise.

Word of the show spread long before J- put up the fliers, and by the last night every mouth was whispering about it. J- and I went to a going-away party for M- , who was departing to spend the next month teaching art in another city, and then went to a show in nearby Winston-Salem, at the collective warehouse there, at which we were to meet USAIAM themselves. They showed up around midnight, just when we were starting to worry, and we went out to the parking lot for a briefing.

They seemed like good kids, and they were trying as hard as we were to act like this was a normal thing for them — but, to our surprise, there were eight of them, including two drummers with full sets, and a keyboard player with crazy electronic equipment. It wasn't going to be easy to run their stuff out the back door when the pigs came — not that there was a back way out of the lot behind the 'Pantry, anyway. They followed us back to Greensboro in their van, and I spent the ride talking J— out of his apprehensions: "This is our chance to put punk rock where it was never supposed to be, where it's still dangerous . This is payback for all the nights we've had to walk around watching this town do nothing, man — this is revenge for that flag they put on the moon!" When we arrived, he turned to me, reassured, and declared, "We're going to make Greensboro history, man."

I agreed. For the sake of everyone in that dead-end town, there was no choice but to make Greensboro, as we'd all known and loathed it, history.

There were about sixty people from widely varied backgrounds (punks, art students, homeless people, a middle-aged professor "interviewing" people with a microphone that wasn't plugged into anything) lined up on the curb as we loaded two drum sets, four amplifiers and speakers, a vocal amp and borrowed microphone, and assorted other instruments and equipment into the

store. The drummers had forgotten their sticks, or lost them at earlier shows or something, so they ended up just beating on the drums with various junk foods (beef jerkies, soda cans and bottles, popsicles), grabbing a new one whenever one substitute stick broke or shattered or splattered. The first notes of the sound check were so loud that I couldn't believe they were even going to get to play a minute.

Everyone pushed in, packed into the aisles, and the noise began. The members of the band were leaping around, smashing things and falling over each other like they might have at a normal house show, but here it was totally new and dangerous, visceral, and music that could have been standard somewhere else was suddenly the fiercest, most vehement thing any of us had ever heard. At a normal show the band are the ones taking the risk, but here everyone was at risk, just by standing there in the store — and not just because of the threat of the police, either. There's no way I can describe what it felt like to step out of reality as it had been and into that space, to fuse two separate parts of my life (the passion of punk rock the lifelessness of convenience stores) that were never supposed to meet … everything was electrified, tense and intense, ten thousand years of culture turned on its head in an instant.

Amazingly, the band finished one song, the members all switched instruments while the scream of feedback tore the air, and then they shot into another one, knocking against the shelving, smashing into the drink coolers, pulling the cardboard display posters over their heads and charging into people-all of us looking nervously back and forth between them and the police station out the window. A couple of civilians who had come up to buy cigarettes joined the crowd in total wonder. Some people were throwing junk food, candy, breaking things, wrecking the place; this was the most controversial topic afterwards, since the kids doing this were largely bourgeois children of the suburbs who had nothing at stake and weren't worried about Z- 's welfare or anything else. Others, and this was much more beautiful to me, realizing that we owned the place for a moment and they could do whatever they wanted, were picking up candies and other commodities, looking at them, and then just dropping them, realizing just how valueless they were at any price, especially compared with the lightning of what was actually happening. Z—-, for his part, stood placidly in place behind the counter — for the only surveillance camera in the store was pointed there! The band switched instruments again in the middle of the song, banging out random notes and screaming nonsensically — someone from the audience jumped behind one drum set, and started playing along as natural as could be — others joined in — and then looks of terror spread through the room, as we all saw the flashing lights of an arriving police car.

And you know what? We got away with it. The pigs pulled up, looked in, and, seeing their favorite doughnut stop bursting with mayhem beyond anything in their job description, drove away in presumable despair or denial — basically giving us the go-ahead to take the city over: for if we could do this so easily, then what next? "Should we get out of here?" shouted a band member, clutching a cymbal stand. "Naw, man, they've just gone to get the Black Mariah," drawled Z- , "keep playing." The band played for another twenty minutes, until everyone was satisfied that we'd done what we came to do; the arrest wagons never did show up. Still spinning in a delirium of adrenaline, we hastily packed all the equipment out the back door and into the van, while the locals drifted slowly off into the night, exchanging grins of disbelief and delight. For the next weeks, whenever two of us who had been there passed on the street or in a library or coffee shop, we exchanged a knowing glance: we had seen that all the placid neighborhoods and strip malls,

even the convenience stores, were a mere front, behind which a wild world lurked — just waiting for a chance to bust out.

Health Care

Instructions

Countless texts have been written on various forms of radical health care, including free clinics, herbalism, needle exchanges, midwifery, feminist gynecology, and organizing street medic collectives for demonstrations. Here, we can only go over the broadest smattering of topics not often covered in those treatises, to give a humble indication of all there is to learn about health care outside the institutions.

Hijacking Conventional Health Care

If you need immediate medical treatment from a hospital but you can't afford their exorbitant, extortionist fees, don't despair. Emergency rooms are required by law to treat anyone in need regardless of their ability to pay. If you don't want to deal with the hassle of bills and debt, give them a false name, a false address, and a false social security number.

Give a name that is familiar enough to you that you can respond to it instinctively and give it exactly the same way every time. Give an address that exists, so it will not be obvious that it is made up, but cannot be tied to you. Give a social security number that has the same first five digits as your own or that of a friend of a similar age, but different numbers for the last four — the first five digits designate the place and time you were born, so you don't want to give a number that doesn't represent a region or that indicates you should be a much different age than you are. It might also help to present yourself as homeless, jobless, and destitute, assuming your outward appearance gives the impression that this might in fact be the case; there may be drawbacks to this, too, however.

Unfortunately, this technique will not work for obtaining long-term therapy or treatment, but it will serve to get a broken bone set or a cut stitched; one of the crash test dummies who test-ran it in the field even had a ruptured appendix removed free of charge. Another option, which may help you obtain medication and other longer-term treatment, i s to travel to a foreign country where health care i s available at more reasonable rates. A different crash test dummy got a whole mouthful of dental work done in Mexico, and paid for his travel and living expenses, too, with less money than it would have cost to get the work done domestically.

Developing Your Own Health Care: Taoist Lymph Pump

Did you ever notice how much chemistry is involved in healing? More often than not, getting well means swallowing something. The chemical goes "down there" to do (or not do) its thing, while you do something else. In and of itself, herbal healing is not much different. While it may be your friend rather than some robot zombie doctor giving the prescription, herbs alone are just another thing to swallow. Whatever your experience with chemistry, it's worth diversifying your

toolbox. There are many sophisticated and ancient schools of thought on healing and maintaining health through postures, movement, breathing, and massage. Any of these is worth a lifetime of study, but in the meantime, here's a simple technique for arousing the immune system that 1 have employed with great success.

When you think "circulatory system," the heart and lungs come immediately to mind, but the body is composed of many circulatory systems. Your immune system, for example, is a circulatory system, though it doesn't have a dedicated pump like the heart or diaphragm — instead, the lymph nodes serve as pumps. Your lymph nodes are located around your joints — armpits, crotch, neck — and are pumped sympathetically when you move. Often sickness accompanies or follows a period of limited movement. Whatever the reason you feel sick, one of the first things you do is stop moving as much: you stay at home all day, skip the show, spend a lot of time in bed. No doubt you should get rest. But to your regimen of chemistry and rest, add the following simple exercise. It will help activate and circulate your immune system without adding too much stress on a body that has its hands full.

Stand upright, with lightness in your head and your shoulders relaxed. Don't forget to breathe — from your belly, not your chest. Maintain long, slow, deep inhalations and exhalations. Your legs should be active, not locked or hyper-extended.

Now, with elbows straight, swing your arms forward and up, so that your hands clap together at around head level. Let your arms swing back down past your hips, and straight up in the back. There's no need to clap in the back. This is a very relaxed action; allow your arms to be pendulums and find their natural tempo. Do this for around one minute four or five times a day when you are sick, when you have been exposed, when you are traveling with a lot of people such as in a tour van or in an airplane that you did not build yourself. Let this be a starting point for researching and developing your own personal philosophy and practice of health care!

How to Perform Your Own Cervical Exam

Have you ever seen your own cervix? Has anyone else ever seen your cervix? For most people with a cervix the answer to the first question is "no" and the answer to the second is "yes." Regularly doing your own cervical exam is one way to begin to take control of your body and your health. You can learn what is normal for you throughout your cycle and not have to trust that what a doctor sees once a year is indicative of your ongoing health. In this way, you can challenge the physician's role as sole healthcare provider and healer, and acquire knowledge about yourself that has been the doctor's alone. Self- exams allow you to catch any irritations or problems before they become severe, and, if you do need to go to a physician, the familiarity self-exams give you with your body — inside and out — makes you an informed patient, able to ask the right questions and demand full information about your condition and treatment.

Ingredients

- SPECULUM-any gynecologist should be able to give you a plastic speculum at no cost, or you can order them in bulk over the internet Speculums come in three sizes; try out a medium, and if it feels too large, get a small If you can't see all the way back to your cervix, get a large. The size of the speculum you need does not correspond to the size d the rest of your body.

- Mirror
- Desk lamp with flexible neck, or flashlight
- Lubricant or water (optional)

Instructions

Since you do them on your own, at your own pace, and in a comfortable, safe space, self-exams can be an important tool for survivors of incest or sexual abuse, people who do not have access to healthcare, and people who feel uncomfortable going to the doctor because of their sexuality, body type, herstory, or gender identity. With a self-exam, you can decide to stop if you do not feel comfortable. You can become familiar with the process of a self-exam so that you will know what to expect and be more comfortable if a doctor does the exam. Self-exams also allow you to perform routine care on your own and not rely on doctors to treat simple problems like yeast infections or trichomonas. Cervical exams can be awkward to perform on yourself, though, so another good option, if you are comfortable with it, is for trusted friends to learn how to do them on each other.

Before you do your own cervical exam, you may want to look at a book so that you know what to expect. There are books available that include full-color pictures of various vaginas and cervices in different stages of the menstrual cycle, and books that offer pictures of common infections and STDs so that you can identify them and treat yourself when appropriate.

When you are ready to do your self-exam, find a comfortable, safe space where you will not be interrupted — most people prefer to do self-exams on their beds. Get into a comfortable position: try leaning back on some pillows at about a 45-degree angle, with your knees up and open. Remember to have your mirror and desk lamp or flashlight within arm's reach. Try opening and locking your speculum in position a couple of times before actually inserting it, until you are comfortable with how it works. Insert the speculum by spreading the inner lips of your vagina with two fingers of one hand, holding the hills of the speculum tightly together with the thumb and index finger of the other hand, and guiding it into vaginal canal. You can use water-soluble lubricant or water to make insertion easier. You may want to insert the speculum sideways initially, then turn it with the handles still pinched together until the handles are facing up. Once the handles are facing up, open the bills and lock the speculum in position. Do this by sliding the short handle down and the long handle up — when you hear a click, the speculum is locked into place. This will stretch the vagina open and reveal the vaginal canal and cervix. With the speculum locked, you can adjust the placement of the mirror and your light source. It is best not to leave the speculum unattended: the muscles in your vagina can push the speculum out even while it is locked open, which can be very painful. Keep one hand on it if you can! If you are using a flexible-necked lamp, aim the light at your vaginal opening and use the mirror to see what it illuminates. If you only have a flashlight, hold it in your mouth and aim it at the mirror, which will reflect light into the speculum. With proper positioning of the mirror and light, you should be able to give yourself a thorough exam.

What you can see: vaginal walls, vaginal secretions (if any), cervix (the neck of the uterus), os (the opening of the cervix), and any irritations (e.g., yeast, trichomonas, bacterial infections). Throughout your monthly cycle, you can see changes in the color, texture, and secretions of your cervix: these are all indications of whether or not you are fertile, and where you are in your

cycle. Take a look at the outside of the vagina and the vaginal walls. Become familiar with what this part of your body looks like, and look for any irritations, bumps, or blemishes. Next, take a look at your cervix. The cervix may not be immediately in view: if you can't see it, remove the speculum and try moving around, jumping up and down (really, this works!), or moving to a firmer surface. Your cervix may be directly in line with the speculum, or it may be off to one side if you have what is called a "tipped uterus." This is perfectly normal, as everyone's uterus is tipped in some way. Your cervix might be pink and smooth, have reddish blemishes, or even be rough and splotchy. Depending on where you are in your menstrual cycle, there may be fluid coming out of it (especially if you are ovulating) or it may be very dry.

If you see blemishes or bumps that worry you, go to a gynecologist and ask her to look at them, and get a pap smear. Most likely, they are perfectly normal, and you will know for the future that these spots are just part of your body. Because of the changes that your body undergoes throughout your monthly cycle, you may want to do a self-exam at the same time each month so you can spot irregularities. You may also want to do them at different times of the month, so you can watch the changes and become familiar with your body throughout its cycle.

Self-exams can enable you to identify infections and STDs before you even feel them. Consult friends or a book to help you identify any problems. There are several books and 'zines that are good resources for identifying infections and treating yourself in safe and effective ways. Some of the infections you may be able to spot include: an infection (swelling) of the vulvovaginal glands ; yeast infections, which will result in heavy, clumpy discharge; trichomonas, indicated by yellow or greenish secretion, foul odor, and heavy discharge on cervix; non-specific vaginitis, which causes heavy or runny yellow or greenish discharge from an overgrowth of bacteria, usually with a strong odor; active herpes sores; an infection of the cervical canal (bacteria from gonorrhea or another bacterial infection can enter the cervical canal and cause the cervix to become red and tender and produce a very heavy discharge); and cysts on the cervix, which can grow and shrink throughout the cycle, but generally do not hurt or cause problems.

Doing a self-exam with a group of friends can be a great way to learn more about your bodies, share information, and be supported. You can observe and compare your own and your friends' vaginas, clitorises, and cervices. You can learn first hand about the incredible variations between people's bodies and the variations during the monthly cycle and different stages of sexual arousal. In comparing your bodies to illustrations in anatomy textbooks, you may notice that you and your friends have parts that are not in the books. This does not mean that anything is wrong with you: it just attests to the fact that the medical industry often tries to simplify our bodies, which are in fact very diverse and complex.

A self-exam is a simple but empowering act-don't keep this information to yourself! Do a workshop on giving self-exams; create a space for doing a group self-exam or for people who have done self-exams on their own to discuss what they saw; show your cervix to your sexual partners (whether or not they have cervices themselves) or friends; take pictures of it; talk about your body; write a 'zine about it … For too long, our bodies have been represented and misrepresented by the medical industry. We have been made to feel disconnected from our bodies and to be passive about our health. For our liberation and our survival, we must take back this knowledge and relearn ourselves.

Health Care and Resistance

Some communities include street medics, who provide health care and first aid to protesters; at demonstrations, such medics can often be identified by red crosses or other such insignias. If there are no such medics in your region and an action is coming up, it's important that some people take classes and be prepared to handle any emergencies that might arise. An affinity group undertaking a dangerous project should consider having a medic of its own, as well.

The most fundamental rule for anybody considering medicine and health is do no ham. This, of course, is a pretty fundamental rule in all aspects of life. In terms of medical care, doing no harm means never trying anything you're not certain of, never being ashamed to admit that you can't help a person, and never hesitating to ask for help. Get as much training in as many aspects of medical care and general health as you can and always stay on top of your knowledge. It's pretty easy to forget a specific treatment, so review and practice. Always have your own health and the health of those around you foremost in your mind.

Put together a first aid kit, equipped according to the materials you know how to use and the injuries that are likely in a given area or situation, and keep it with you, or in your vehicle, home, or communal space. Make sure to restock items you use and replace items when they become too old.

Preparing for Chemical Weapons Attacks

If you expect to be attacked with chemical weapons, wear a waterproof outer layer with tight cuffs and collar, and synthetic fibers under it. Cotton, wool, fleece, and just about anything else fuzzy soak up chemicals. Cover as much skin as possible. Before the action, wash yourself and all your clothes in fragrance-free, non-oil-based soaps. This gets rid of dead skin and the oils on you and your clothing, and will help prevent chemical weapons from sticking and causing more pain. Don't use any oils on your skin: that includes perfumes, lotions, deodorants, and most sunscreens. These don't provide barriers; in fact, they'll make tear gas stick to you like glue.

Don't shave for about a day in advance. Shaving opens your pores and makes chemical weapons more effective; on the other hand, hair absorbs chemical weapons too — it's a fine line to walk. Take out any piercings you can, and put band-aids over the others so they don't get hit or pulled out. Don't wear tampons — they absorb chemical weapons, and if you go to jail and they're left in, you could get toxic shock. Do not wear contact lenses. Chemical weapons get trapped under them and could even melt them onto your eyes.

If you wear a gas mask, choose one that won't obscure your vision too much, with shatterproof lenses and replaceable non-asbestos filters. Alternatively, you can breathe through a bandanna soaked in apple cider vinegar or lime juice — transport the bandanna to the action in a sealed bag, and carry a lime or two with you to keep it fresh — and wear swimming goggles to protect your eyes. These can be obtained in prescription form for those who wear eyeglasses; when not wearing them over your eyes, keep them inside out on your forehead so they won't fog up. You can add a particle mask underneath the bandanna for extra protection. All fancy gear will make you a police target, so try to keep it concealed.

Popular Chemical Weapons and their Effects

During chemical weapons attacks, you can blow your nose, rinse out your mouth, cough and spit, but don't swallow or rub your eyes. If you are wearing contacts, "by to remove the lenses, or get someone to remove them for you whose fingers are clean and uncontaminated.

Pepper spray and mace are most often deployed in a foam or liquid spray from small hand-held containers, or from larger devices that resemble fire extinguishers. Police have been known to swab them directly into the eyes of protesters who were locked down and unable to resist, presumably for the sole purpose of demonstrating themselves to be truly despicable. You feel the pain immediately in your eyes or on your skin, wherever the substance contacts you. The pain peaks in fifteen minutes and then starts to fade.

Tear gas is deployed in exploding canisters. It is an invisible substance, but police often mix it with a powder so it appears in an intimidating cloud. If the tear gas appears in such a cloud, you can watch which way it blows in the wind, and try to stay upwind. If you can't see it, you sure will be able to tell when it reaches you. Tear gas canisters are hot enough to burn you; do not touch them unless you are wearing protective material, and not before they begin emitting gas, as they could explode and injure you. You won't necessarily experience the effects of tear gas immediately; it could hit you up to five seconds after contact. Once you get out of the cloud, you'll begin to feel better immediately, though it takes some time for your eyes to dear and the burning sensation to fade away completely. The most common symptoms are tears and a running nose, to such an ex- tent that it can be impossible to see and difficult to breathe.

As with many repressive tactics, the use of tear gas is made most effective by the fear it inspires. The first time tear gas hits you, when you are still unfamiliar with its effects, it may seem more overwhelming than it really is; once you have been breathing it for a couple of days, and you know exactly what to expect from it, you'll find that it is less debilitating than it seemed. In crowds fleeing from chemical weapons attacks, call out, "Walk, don't run!," and assist those in need, so panic does not result in trampling injuries.

Treatment and Decontamination

If someone has been sprayed in the eyes and mouth, you can flush out her eyes with water. A bottle with a squirt cap is ideal, but a spray bottle will work. Always irrigate from the inside comer of the eye toward the outside, with her head tilted back and slightly toward the side being rinsed. The flush needs to get into her eye to help, so if the sprayed person is comfortable with it, you should try to open her eye for her. She most likely won't be able to open it herself, and opening her eye will cause her a temporary increase in pain, but it does help. This will work to rinse her mouth, too. During cold weather, do your best to keep yourself and the victim dry.

Affected skin can also be cleaned with water. Some trained medics use mineral oil followed immediately by alcohol, but others insist this is too dangerous a treatment. To do this, thoroughly wet a pad or similar material with mineral oil or, in a pinch, vegetable oil. Carefully avoiding the eyes, rub the exposed skin with mineral oil. Quickly wet another pad with rubbing alcohol, and vigorously rub off the mineral oil. This procedure must be completed in its entirety with each victim so treated — leftover mineral oil can trap any remaining chemicals on the skin.

If you have had any contact with chemical weapons, however superficial, assume that you are contaminated and carry traces of the chemicals with you wherever you go. Do not go into a

safe zone or public place where you could contaminate anyone else. Shower in the coldest water possible to dose your pores, and wash your clothes in the harshest nastiest detergent soap you can find. Sleep and drink water as much as possible. Good foods to eat after a contamination include miso, whole grains, brown rice, and citrus fruits, all organic of course. If you can find somebody with herbal knowledge, take dandock, burdock, and nettles to purge your liver and system.

In Case of Arrest

Plastic handcuffs can cause long-term nerve damage. If you feel any pain, numbness, or tingling, demand immediately, and keep demanding, that they be loosened. Don't move around too much; that can cause plastic cuffs to tighten. When being cuffed, flex your muscles as much as possible to take up extra space inside the cuffs until they're on.

If you have medical problems or are in jail with anyone who has an injury or needs medication, tell the police immediately, and keep reminding them. Use group pressure, and really keep at them. Days in jail with an untreated injury or without medication can be fatal.

If you are dependent on medication and are risking arrest, it is important that you have a note from a doctor explaining how important it is that you receive it. The note should state your name, your diagnosis, what would happen if the medication were interrupted, whether any substitutions at all can be accepted, and that you have to keep the medication on your person. Give copies of the note to the medical team, if you're at an event at which there is one, and to your legal representation, and keep one on you with your identification. Bring a few days' worth of medication and keep it in the original container. If you absolutely do not want to give away your identity to the police, but still need medication if you are arrested, you could request a note from your doctor with your photo on it instead of your name, and cut your name off the label of the container in which your medication was issued.

It may be possible to smuggle medication into jail. Place them in bags in your underwear or in obscure pockets, or in bodily orifices if need be.

When you get out of jail, talk about your experience before going to sleep. This significantly lessens the chance of post-traumatic stress. Eat easy-to-digest organic foods, such as whole grains and rice and cooked vegetables.

Hijacking Events

Ingredients

- A public event
- A Secret Plan

Instructions

The whole entertainment industry, including the underground punk and hip hop scenes, is basically a distraction, or at best a pressure valve: whether we're staving off cravings for pleasure and togetherness until Thursday night at the bar, or channeling rage and ingenuity into folk songs instead of frontal attacks on the police state, these little opportunities for amusement and outlets for creativity keep us satisfied enough that we don't do anything crazy — like demand such excitement and self-determination in every moment of our lives.

At least that's one version of the story. The other runs like this: coming together to create and celebrate, we develop a sense of what we're capable of, which we can draw upon in broader struggles to take back more of our lives. Either way, it's dearly not enough for subversive ideas and dance moves to remain in the clubs and basements forever. Could there be a way to liberate them from those confines, to hijack the brief moments of authentic living we're permitted and turn them upon the status quo that circumscribes them?

Quite a lot of energy and expectation is invested in these moments; people who find their daily lives boring and meaningless look forward to concerts and parties for weeks in advance, approaching them with all the reverence and sense of limitless possibility that pagan religious festivals once occasioned. To the hardened revolutionary, this can seem pathetic; but the excitement itself is authentic enough, and all that remains is for it to be re-directed back to a subversive, liberating engagement with the total social environment.

This could mean inciting a crowd exiting a concert to a Reclaim the Streets action (pg. 421), setting up an open mic circle around a campfire outside a predictably alienating music festival, even turning a post-playoff victory celebration into a street riot in which rival sports fans unite to fight the police. Rather than struggle to create a radical situation from scratch, one can take advantage of existing opportunities, adding whatever elements are missing to set off the bombs everyday events conceal. Rebellious tendencies diverted from revolutionary possibilities into institutionalized rituals can be redirected back to them; the "real meaning" that punk rock, dance parties, picket lines, and action movies have had all along suddenly becomes clear to those who have enjoyed them, and the desires they inhibited through programs of carefully controlled indulgence are realized as these forms are superceded.

Lets talk specifically about one of the more challenging examples of this, turning the end of a show into an unpermitted march. It's not easy to organize unpermitted marches — if you

announce them publicly, the police will be there from the beginning, making everything difficult, and only those who think of themselves as proponents of direct action are likely to show up. Taking advantage of an existing crowd to offer the opportunity for an unpermitted march, on the other hand, offers not only the benefit of surprise, but also can mean that many who would not otherwise have joined in get the opportunity to have an empowering, exciting experience. The police can't watch every single show and public event for signs of "spontaneous" crowd activity; even if they could, it would only provoke more resistance.

Rumors can be spread before the event that "something" will happen afterwards, to pique interest; make sure that no one cites specific individuals as the origins of the rumors. It helps a lot to have the band (or performers, speakers, etc.) in on it; they can announce that something will happen, or let others do so, or, best-case scenario, at the end of their performance, when they have everyone's attention and an atmosphere has been created, lead everyone out into the street.

The moment when people leave the sanctioned performance area is the critical juncture: the group must develop momentum, morale, and cohesion before malaise or law enforcement can intervene. If a core group can be playing and distributing drums and other musical instruments, as well as masks and banners and so on, as people come out into the street, this will help get things going; as the materials are distributed, it will quickly become difficult to tell who the originators of the action were, protecting them and helping everyone present share a feeling of ownership of the situation. The march should leave as soon as most people have made their way out to join the crowd, and to make this quick it helps if people inside exit the venue en masse or at least in rapid succession. Have a route planned in advance, if possible, perhaps with a surprise somewhere along the way: a crowded district of thrilled onlookers who might join in, or a place where fireworks can be set off or fires set, or a target worthy of a little property destruction. Lay plans according the comfort level you anticipate in the participants — this should be a positive experience for them, especially the ones who would never have thought they'd do this.

As soon as illegal activities commence, begin a mental countdown to the time the police can be expected to arrive. Chances are, if they are unprepared for the event, they'll have to hang back, at least for a while, but count on this at your own risk. Make sure you don't fail to think about where to disperse; if a march breaks up in a place where there are few escape routes, the police may take advantage of the opportunity to pick off stragglers, and if it comes back to its point of origin-or even if the police can determine what that was- they will harass people around their vehicles, or at least take license plates and perhaps follow cars. Make sure no one whose name the authorities can get their hands on could convincingly be held responsible for inciting a riot.

There are many pitfalls to be avoided in this kind of action; a "re-routing" gone astray can end catastrophically .Those who initiate it must not trick the crowd, or seek to control it; their role is only to open a door to another situation, to highlight options that were already present. The re-routing must ultimately transpire as an informed, collective choice on the part of those involved; anything less is simply demagoguery, manipulation. It is critical that the action not endanger anyone who is unprepared — there can be risks involved, but they must be easy to recognize for what they are, and it must be up to each individual to choose whether to take them or not. At worst, those conscious of what they are doing can form a buffer zone between the police and the inexperienced or vulnerable, so if anyone gets into trouble it will be people who are prepared for it. It is also crucial that the hijackers not make enemies, nor disrespect or derail projects into which others have poured well-intentioned efforts. If people do notice the role a person plays in a re-routing, they should feel only gratitude, not fear or resentment- or, for that

matter, inordinate admiration. The most accomplished re-routers act without attracting attention to themselves or assuming command over the situation.

Account

The preceding day, the pigs had killed a man they were arresting on shoplifting charges, and that night a radical environmentalist band from a few years back was playing a re- union show. That meant there would be a lot of young people with anarchist leanings in one place, and, as the show was scheduled to end early, there would be a lot of undischarged energy. We decided to take advantage of the opportunity to put the heat on the

police, to remind them that there was a whole city of people who were not going to sit idly by while they marauded and murdered with impunity.

Some people worked on a statement to the public, and mass-produced it as a flier. Others collected buckets and sticks. Still others went out to an abandoned house, which still had a pile of firewood under it, and collected the firewood; later that day, that firewood would turn up, wrapped in plastic to keep it dry in the rain, concealed in an unused, inconspicuous downtown doorway.

The show was inordinately expensive, and only two bands were playing; the second was a marching band that most of us were familiar with from their performances at various demonstrations. As people began to arrive at the show (a steady stream of them making their way in the back door, as they felt the door price to be insufferable), we passed out our fliers describing the police killing and outlining our stance on the issue. A couple of us spoke with members of the marching band, telling them about the preceding day's events and asking if they would lead the audience out of the theater and into the street during their last song. They had done the very same thing at earlier shows, and readily agreed, making it dear however that they wanted to be leaving shortly thereafter.

The headlining band played their reunion set. They were as talented as ever, but somehow it felt like there was something missing, and the particularly macho energy in the male singer's stage presence made some of us uncomfortable. No matter, we figured — it's not the responsibility of others to do things the way we would if we were them, it's our own responsibility to do those things ourselves. So as they played, buckets and drumsticks were stacked up outside, and wheatpaste brewed over camping stoves in the bathrooms. They finished, and the marching band appeared; to those of us who had already had our lives changed by songs about revolution and now were ready to live a little taste of it, it seemed like they would never begin their last number. Finally, they did, and when they passed through the doors of the venue with the audience hesitantly behind them, we were already in the street, banging our improvised plastic drums and heading off down a route that had been hastily charted a couple of hours in advance.

At first the concertgoers dallied around the front of the dub- years of concert going had taught that the excitement ends when the show is over — but when a few of the rowdier ones joined us, the others followed, and a mass of hundreds swept into the street. A few of us walked in the front, doing our amateur best to beat our makeshift drums in time with the marching band behind; around them paraded the greater part of the former audience. The tentative remainder, not sure yet how to feel about what was happening, brought up the rear; they were soon joined by small groups of people who came out of the bars to investigate. We hadn't thought much in

advance about scouts, an oversight we couldn't have gotten away with in a larger city, but all the same a few of us were on bicycles. It definitely helped that many of the fans of this band already had years of experience in street demonstrations and similar environments; for them, this was perhaps a welcome relief after a night in a club: the adrenaline of being out in the city, making things happen, reclaiming space with only bravado for a permit. As we proceeded, a few little elves ran around the periphery wheatpasting posters about the events of the previous day on walls, telephone booths, and electrical boxes, so there would be a dear explanation of this event the next morning.

Soon, we reached a central intersection downtown; suddenly, there was a big heap of firewood in the middle of the street, and then — flames. From out of nowhere, street signs — "road dosed," "under construction" — appeared, barricading the street. Masked figures with chains were spinning fire, people were clapping their hands and dancing, and the bars were emptying as others came out to see what was going on. Everyone who approached got a flier. The police, finally, started to show up — perhaps twelve cars in total, in two of the four streets ; but there was open field on two sides that they lacked the numbers to block, and they had no buses for mass arrests, since this was an unexpected event. Besides, the last thing they needed in the midst of their current public relations debacle was a lot of news about an anti-police demonstration turning into a riot — they were at a serious disadvantage here. Some of the people here had never been in such a situation, and were understandably nervous; but others had more experience in them than any of the police officers present. It seemed, were we possessed of the desire to do so, that we could hold this intersection to dance and sing around the fire for a good part of the night — and there was in fact a precedent for this possibility: such things had happened before in this town.

But then, suddenly, the atmosphere changed. Someone grabbed a megaphone, and shouted, "Scatter! Disperse! Disappear on the four winds like the anarchists you are!" It was — did you see it coming? — the vocalist from the band playing the reunion, taking charge. Many of us looked up in surprise — our sixth senses, developed through years of gauging situations like this one, told us that there was nothing to fear yet, that this was not the time to retreat. But when a crowd takes over a street or carries off some similarly "impossible" action, all their strength comes from the sense that they can count on each other, all their confidence depends on the confidence of their companions. What a group, acting together, believes to be possible, becomes possible; what some believe impossible, becomes impossible, and thus no one can believe in it to make it otherwise. And so, hearing one prominent personality loudly doubting the possibility of holding the intersection any longer, many suddenly doubted it themselves, and made ready to leave, as if taking orders.

Some of us who had more experience rebelled at this — it was ridiculous for us to leave now, when we sensed no great threat and had barely begun to make our point! This guy wasn't even from here, he had no local perspective, nor any right to make decisions for everyone — and to make things worse, his motives were questionable: "Stop drumming! Do NOT take this back to the venue!" he added, still shouting into the megaphone. Still, the damage was done, and there was nothing to do but make our way out of the inter- section with the others — though one last group did pull a dumpster into the middle of intersection and set it on fire as a parting gift. That was lovely to see!

All in all, the night was a success — though, sadly, too late to do any good for the man the police had murdered — and also an important lesson: we must be ever-vigilant, so self-appointed leaders cannot set the limits of our activities for us. Perhaps the bands themselves needed to leave

at that point, but for that guy to assume that this meant the event was officially over, or that in their absence the rest of us lacked the sense to keep ourselves out of jail, was really presumptuous. It may seem ironic that we, having deployed a secret plan of our own that was not exactly "voted for" by all present at the concert, would be frustrated with him for taking it upon himself to seize the reins; but the critical difference is that we never gave any orders — we simply opened a window of possibility, leading with our own bodies and carrying out activities that left room for others to participate in whatever ways they felt comfortable. For a total, self-managed revolution to be possible, every individual must be versed enough in self-determination, and every group experienced enough in quick collective decision-making, that no one can usurp control. In the meantime, those of us who want to see things happen need to be ready to counter self-appointed leaders and "peace police" by presenting other options and keeping them visible and viable at all times. Had we immediately counteracted his instructions by loudly emphasizing that we could all remain in the intersection if we so chose, it would have been more likely that whatever happened next would have been the result of reasoned individual decisions rather than mob psychology.

Speaking of the tensions and occasional contradictions between individual decisions and group decisions — there was a little controversy over the dumpster, which, it turned out, had been the dumpster used by a fair-trade coffee house that hosted liberal and sometimes radical meetings and performances. To my knowledge, no one ever found out if the coffee house was actually inconvenienced by the lire; the dumpster itself was seen in use on another street shortly thereafter, so I seriously doubt there were any consequences for the cafe. Such minor mishaps are inevitable, but it was humorous what an obvious excuse we'd provided liberals to concentrate their criticisms on our tactics rather than the offenses of the powers that be. Maybe next time someone should apply for a grant with which we can rent a dumpster of our own to set afire?

Hitchhiking

Asking an experienced hitchhiker how to thumb is like asking a no-year-old woman how to live long. She'll say something like, "I've drunk a fifth of gin every day since I was ten years old!" Some other 110-year-old will swear it's the companionship of cats. And that's as dose as you'll get to the secret of living long and riding with strangers: there's a lot of magic and luck involved, and hence, a lot of superstition. What works for me may leave you, thumb high, frozen to death on the ramp. All the same, here are some tips; the magic, luck, and superstition parts are up to you.

Ingredients

- Road
- Thumb
- One of the six million cars that are being driven with empty seats in them at this very moment
- A map
- Thick black marker and cardboard for making signs
- Tools for self-defense — knife, pepper spray, burning cigarette etc.

Instructions

Find a Good Spot

It's important to be visible, both to avoid getting hit and for exposure. You want to give every person driving by as much time as possible to decide whether or not they want to pick you up; a few hundred yards of clear visibility only provides a few seconds in the eyes of a moving driver. You also want to be in a place where a driver can easily and 296 safely pull over.

The most common interstate launch pad is the on-ramp, because of its slower traffic, wide shoulders, and status as a semi-legal hitchhiking zone. If you can, be somewhere where drivers paused at a light will have time to look you over. Hitchhiking on the interstate is much more dangerous. If s also illegal.

If you're in Madison, Wisconsin and you're headed to Homer, Alaska, you'll be traveling west. Get to the western side of Madison. The further out you are the more likely you are to get people who are going far, not just to another part of the city. If you are stuck in town sometimes you can take a local bus to get near the highway. Let the bus driver know what you're up to and you'll

probably get good advice. Pick a spot with a lot of traffic of the kind you think might pick you up.

Extend Your Arm and Point Your Thumb to the Sky

Next to the road, you are face to face with every imaginable social prejudice, and every exception, too. How you want to play this is up to you, but keep in mind that the way you look, your entire presentation's the only thing drivers have on which to base their decisions. Furthermore, in most scenarios the driver will have less than five seconds between noticing you and their last opportunity to hit the brakes. It's probably a good idea to be the cleanest cut version of yourself you feel comfortable being, to keep the pool of potential rides at its widest.

Eye contact is an important part of your presentation. Eyes communicate a lot. Look at drivers even when you can't see who is driving a car; they can probably see you. The energy you communicate in your expression, your bearing, and your attitude is crucial, far more important than your physical appearance. You should radiate friendly, non- threatening self-assurance; not only will this identify you as a safe, amiable traveling companion, it also will decrease the chance that predatory drivers, should there be any, will identify you as promising prey.

Relax. My personal experience is that I don't get picked up until I've been out long enough to settle in and stop being anxious. If I've been out there long enough to get to the I-hate-everybody stage, I have to get to the laughing-to-my self stage in order to get picked up.

Use a sign. This identifies you as a practical, experienced hitchhiker, as well as clarifying your needs. For long trips, bring a fat marker for making new signs. People are going fast, so make the sign big, even comically so. People will also be doing amateur handwriting analysis, so don't use that cool insane-asylum handwriting you developed in high school: use bold letters, write clearly, and spell correctly. Your sign should say the name of a well-known place. If you are going to a small town, choose a city nearby. If you are going dear across the country, choose a major city a half-day's drive away. If need be, you can dear this up with the driver later. If your destination is simply "away," put something interesting on your sign: "adventure," "overseas," "AD 2013."

Always have your thumb out — it's the international signal for "I need a ride." Even if you have a sign, even if you have a twenty-foot-high flashing sign, stick out your thumb. The thumb shows initiative. Throughout history, the thumbs-up gesture has been used to express "yes," "life is good," and "let the poor guy live," all sentiments you want to persuade your driver to share.

Make a Decision

Tens, hundreds, maybe thousands of people have driven by, summarily rejecting you and your cause, so when someone finally pulls over you'll be inclined to be quick and gracious about hopping in. Slow it down a notch — this is a crucial point in your journey. Ask yourself: Is the driver drunk? Why is this person picking me up? How many people are in the car? Do I feel safe? Ask the driver, "Where are you headed?" It's a reasonable question. The answer will tell if the ride is practical. It will also tell you something about the driver and give you one more moment to make your decision. A kindly driver won't

be annoyed by the small delay. If you don't feel safe, or if it's not a good ride, don't be afraid to decline. It's awkward, but, unlike a bad ride, it'll be over in a second. You can always explain

that the driver isn't going far enough or dose enough to your destination. When you get in, keep your bag within arm's reach, definitely not in the trunk.

The Ride

You're cruising down the highway, feeling the surge of confidence and sense of accomplishment that accompanies triumphs like hitchhiking and dumpstering. It never gets old! Now what?

You have a job to do. You've joined the secret union of attention workers: bartenders, psychologists, waiters, and others whose job it is to listen.

Make conversation with your drivers. More often than not, they pick you up for this, and you have a duty to leave a good impression on behalf of hitchhikers everywhere. It's not just a question of duty, though. Hitchhiking is one of the best ways to get perspectives from a broad range of human beings; it's also a reliable way to pick out the most interesting and generous people on a road — don't miss this chance to learn from them!

Ask questions. Get ready to hear the life stories, crises, dilemmas. There are a lot of lonely people in the world; sometimes the best thing you can do to empower people is simply to listen to them. Occasionally, you will be encouraged to play personal storyteller for a bored or sleepy driver — you hitchhike, so you must be a maniac with ridiculous stories, right? Practice your skills: mystery, adventure, intrigue. Of course, the driver doesn't need to know anything more about you than you want to share.

Weather

Make sure you are prepared for the elements. You don't want to get badly sunburned if you have to stand by the road all afternoon, and holding up that sign in a freezing wind can really be hard on your fingers. Your bags should be waterproof, in case the clouds burst and you can't get out from under them in time. Few drivers will want to pick up a hitchhiker who is literally dripping wet, but mildly bad weather may win you sympathy and a sift rescue. Hobo folklore tells that in Alaska, it's illegal not to pick up hitchhikers during the winter.

Maps

No matter how far you're going, a good map is well worth the space it takes to pack. If you don't want to pay for one, go to a tourist spot: hotels, airports, bus stations, tourist information booths, and rental car places all may provide free maps. In choosing a hitchhiking map, find one that shows every road you'll be traveling; a map that includes rest areas and gas stations is ideal. Your map will be important in your relationship with drivers; you'll frequently have to tell them where you want to be dropped off, and you'll want to choose wisely and explain it precisely. From time to time, you may even have to help a driver navigate.

Truckers and CBs

When truckers are helpful, they can he very helpful. They are also quite familiar with the cast of characters that live on the road. Truck stops bustle with drivers, prostitutes, wheel polishers, and, of course, hitchhikers. At larger truck stops, you will find just as many drivers who are waiting until they are sober enough to drive again or until some warehouse opens as drivers

who are actually going somewhere. Even if a driver isn't going your way, he might be willing to make use of his CB radio to advertise your plight, asking around the lot if anyone is going your way. Alternatively, bring your own CB radio and do the same! In common trucker CB radio talk, "hand" is the expression for hitchhiker. It can help to call out individual truck names as they're driving off, asking them which way they're headed. If you sound like a trucker, or at least someone who knows what's going on, you're more likely to get a ride. Listen to people speaking over the CB , and learn what you can of the vernacular. "How 'bout it, anybody out at this Pilot headed north? Can you give a hand a lift?"

If you are working the truck stop route, you should know that "lot lizard" is the term for prostitutes who hang out at truck stops. Don't get in a truck with anyone who de- scribes you that way or is looking for one.

Bicycles

Hitchhiking with a bicycle limits the number of drivers who can pick you up; it can also get you rides from people who might not pick up ordinary hitchhikers, but make an exception for what appears to be a bicyclist in distress. A bicycle is certainly an invaluable tool when you are within a few miles of a truck stop or town, or trapped in the middle of one you want to leave.

Traveling Together

Traveling with a partner is always safer, and may not slow you down. Of course, if you are both large men with Manson beards and bleeding head wounds, you will have to wait a long time for a ride; on the other hand, some men may find that they are picked up more quickly when they hitchhike with a female partner. Whatever your team looks like, talk about your approach before you go, be understanding of each traveler's needs, and look out for each other.

Talking through the process in advance is especially important if one partner is more experienced hitchhiking, or feels safer with strangers than the other, or benefits from social privileges that the other partner does not, as in the case of a man traveling with a woman or transgendered person. Before you set out, establish together what your expectations of one another are, how you will handle trouble, and how you will communicate your needs in the presence of others. During the trip, stay aware of your partner's comfort level, and always defer to the less comfortable person's judgment. This might mean declining a ride that you would accept if you were alone; it might mean that you do the talking or make the requests if the conversation takes an unpleasant turn, but it could also mean not putting yourself in the role of protector unless you are invited to do so. Be aware that there may be vibes that your traveling partner is affected by that you don't notice. Never make someone feel foolish or cowardly for feeling unsafe.

Self Defense

Hitchhiking is considerably safer than it sounds in the lurid urban legends that our foes circulate to keep us afraid of one another; all the same, you may one day find yourself in a ride you don't want. This may not be clear immediately, so pay attention. Know your route, and keep track of where you are going. If the driver changes course, ask why. Keep alert for conversational cues. A huge tip-off is frequent references to sex. It's best to put a stop to this immediately. Change the subject, or casually mention some of your exotic diseases. If the driver is persistent, don't be

afraid to insist, with whatever degree of politeness seems necessary, that you'd like to talk about something else. If you become uncomfortable with a ride for any reason, ask to be dropped off at the nearest opportunity. It's rare that I hear of an encounter that escalates to this, but it does happen. If a driver won't stop, consider making a threat, hopefully one you're able to enforce. "I don't care if we both die, but I will stab you to death if you don't pull over right now!" got my friend out of an uncomfortable situation unharmed once.

Many people hitchhike with dogs for safety reasons; a dog can provide the same protection a weapon would, and discourages predatory drivers from picking you up in the first place. If you pull out a weapon, you had better be ready to use it, with everything that entails. Carrying a knife for defense means you must be physically, emotionally, and spiritually prepared to cut a person. If you aren't, pulling one out can only make things worse. Pepper spray is an alternative, but there are drawbacks to applying it while flying down the highway. Standard pepper spray may not be powerful enough to stop an attacker; ask for "law enforcement formula" pepper spray at military surplus stores.

Alternatives to the Thumb

If you don't feel comfortable standing by the road letting drivers choose you, you can choose them. Do some research beforehand, and bring a list of hostels along your route. Go there and strike up conversation with travelers; that way, you can form an impression of a person before you ask for a ride. If the hostel scene doesn't sound right for your needs, think about other places you are likely to meet traveling people with whom you have something in common besides a destination.

You can also hang out at a travel plaza, rest stop, restaurant, or gas station and approach drivers with whom you believe you would feel safe. Talk to each driver a bit before deciding whether to ask for a ride; this makes it easier for the driver to evaluate you, too. Using this method, you can end up with kindly drivers who would never have stopped to pick you up by the road.

Bulletin boards are another recourse for travelers without a car. Universities often have physical ride boards with separate sections for those needing rides and those driving. Online message boards can be useful, as well.

Some people hitchhike around the world, hitting the highway to seek their fortunes. Myself, I'm not so adventurous; I split my life between two small cities, and I use hitch- hiking to make the commute between them.

I've been doing this for a year and a half now, making the journey about twice a week. The average trip takes me two rides; in addition to advantageous departure points in the cities I call home, I've found a busy on-ramp in a town between them that serves as a good midpoint. When I'm picked up by a driver not going all the way, I ask to be dropped off there; I usually turn down offers from drivers going shorter distances, since there aren't any other points along the route as conducive to hitchhiking. Sun, rain, or snow, it never takes me more than three hours to travel the sixty miles of my commute, and I've made it in a third of that before.

Account

To date, I've been picked up by well over one hundred different drivers, and I'm happy to say that I've never had a single bad experience. I am a white male of small build, now thirty years old, and surely that slants the results; all the same, I think this record indicates that the line I get from every driver — "you can't hitchhike anymore, it's too dangerous" — is sheer mythology. The only people with whom I've had unpleasant encounters have been the police officers who have harassed me on a couple of occasions ("What law am I breaking, exactly, ma'am?" "Oh, I'll find something!"). I've learned that if I keep an eye out for them and pick up my bags and start walking away whenever one appears, they won't bother with me; apparently, it's only the brazenness of trying to circumvent capitalist economics in their presence that affronts them.

I've started to get repeat customers, drivers who have given me rides before and now pick me up whenever they see me. If I made my commute at the same time every day, I'm sure this would happen more often. Drivers are glad to have company, and many dearly appreciate the opportunity to do a good deed; many of them have expressed gratitude that I choose to hitchhike instead of buying a car and creating more traffic and pollution. Hitchhiking has helped me get to know more about the people and cultures of my region; once people learn that I'm from the area, many want to talk about local issues and history. I've learned a lot from these conversations, and it helps that I've been living here a long time myself.

In my experience, hitchhikers are most likely to be picked up by drivers from demographics that resemble their own, so it makes sense to hitchhike at times and places that provide many such opportunities. All the same, I've received rides from everyone from an Indian professor of economics, who orated at length on the importance of mutual aid, to a teenage mother from Texas, who confided in me about her struggle to leave her abusive husband. One crippled Vietnam veteran explained to me that he picked me up because God told him to take me wherever I needed to go, and responded to my query

about the bullet-hole-riddled targets in his van with a sermon that warmed my atheist heart: "God is angry with the Federal Government! God's not going to take it anymore!" A black man my age told me of the prison time he and his mother had done as a result of their efforts to provide for their family, and gave me precise details of when and where to find him if I ever needed a ride again. A professional hula-hoop dancer who picked me up went on to join me in organizing a social gathering.

So it is that hitchhiking not only reliably gets me where I need to go on a regular basis, saving me hundreds if not thousands of dollars in the process, but also keeps the journey interesting, and connects me to others of all walks of life. My friends and I were brainstorming challenges for each other recently, and here's one m pass on to you: spend a year hitchhiking everywhere you need to go, and form a revolutionary organization composed of everyone who picks you up. You'll certainly have an easier time engaging people than you would if you were to spend the year driving, separated by metal boxes and furious with each other for congesting the highway!

Infiltration

Instructions

Going Undercover

Everyone is undercover. It's just a matter of degree. Look around — just about everybody you see is in disguise, terrified of being unmasked as the complex human beings they are. Street's corporate murderers, after all, don't wear their murder suits when they take a vacation, nor do they wear their vacation suits when they're certain they're alone. Like shoplifters, stockbrokers wear certain things and act certain ways so they can move through a repressive social environment without arousing suspicion. Even in anarchist circles, many adopt certain conformist postures, though we'll save everyone the embarrassment of listing them here.

So everyone is an expert on acting; the distinction is that most are acting unconsciously, while the one who goes undercover does so deliberately to undermine the systems of control that necessitate acting and unconsciousness. If shoplifting a gallon of olive oil from a supermarket for your local Food Not Bombs has become old hat, you may be ready for more involved undercover work. Do you find yourself wishing that a passerby would take advantage of his squeaky-dean look to do some truly dastardly revolutionary deed? It's time to become that squeaky-clean passerby yourself.

A demonstration of thousands outside an evil institution can be given teeth by one undercover agent who asks an embarrassing question at the news conference, two agents who drop a banner from atop the building, three who switch off the lights during the meeting, or four who mash pies in the faces of the directors whenever they get up to speak. There are all sorts of places and groups to infiltrate, and a wide variety of r reasons to do so: to gather intelligence, to spread disinformation, to create disruption.

There are also different degrees of infiltration, and different extents to which it can be taken. Long-term infiltrators, sometimes called "moles," must be extra cautious, while short-term infiltrators can essentially burn their bridges after their job is done.

Getting In

Before attempting to infiltrate a group physically, learn as much as you can about it by means of the internet and libraries and asking around, being careful not to attract any attention to yourself in the process. It's amazing how much background a few internet searches can provide.

All the same, there are cultural details the internet won't provide. Just as we identify people from our own communities through minute details in their behavior and dress, every other social group from Nazis to business executives has its own codes of behavior and dress by which they recognize and assess each other. These details tend to be subtle: skinheads hint at their political views with the colors of their shoelaces, salesmen communicate their status through the brand

names of their watches. It's generally wiser not to attempt to camouflage yourself as a member of a social group whose intricate iconography you don't thoroughly understand; if you don't know which color sheet to wear to the Klan rally, present yourself as a sympathetic journalist who wants to learn more. Best-case scenario, you or a friend once legitimately belonged to the demographic you are trying to infiltrate; for example, if you are trying to infiltrate a organization of right-wing politicians, the best person for the job would be someone who was brought up in a family with right-wing viewpoints and became an anarchist only later in life. In that case, many key words and signifiers would already be familiar to the infiltrator. Similarly, if you were trying to infiltrate a biotechnology conference, a dreadlocked punk rocker would probably suffer immediate expulsion, but a young college student with a background in biology could speak the lingo and pass as someone seeking a job with a biotech company.

To go undercover, you must dress and act in character. To the extent it is possible, dress as someone you could be comfortable being. If you are going undercover in a region unfamiliar to you, get your supplies and clothes there: dressed up and harmless in Boston looks nothing like dressed up and harmless in Texas. Going undercover can be expensive if it requires a new set of gear, especially if you are an impoverished revolutionary attempting to appear to be a respectable member of society. The suit, the car, the smell: these things are all important, and can be arranged given enough time and resources — but every civilian who goes undercover for work every day is trying to do so as cheaply as possible, just like you are, so it can be a challenge to afford the requisite commodities without making the standard compromises. Pawnshops and thrift stores often provide decent garb at affordable prices. Carry a prop: a clipboard for office environments, a wine glass for parties.

Spend time learning your character. If possible, don't use a completely fabricated identity unless you have a very good one. Instead, borrow an existing identity, perhaps that of a friend who is comfortable with this. Watch movies about your subject, talk to people about it. Pretend you are the best actor in the world, and you will eventually become so. A good cover story for your behavior, into which you can slip comfortably, is absolutely vital. Think through possible questions you might be asked. Get in character and try the character out in non-threatening situations- say, while hitchhiking. Remember, never volunteer any more information than necessary, but have possible stories ready so you're not caught tongue-tied by an embarrassing situation.

All social groups are essentially networks of who knows who; from Congress to your local drug dealers, people operate in networks of trust. Once you've entered such a network, a whole horizon of new contacts opens before you. To get in, you need a "hook," some legitimate reason why you would be involved. If you're going into an office, your hook could be delivering a package; if you're gathering intelligence on a company, you could pretend to be a student writing a report about them. Drop names. You don't necessarily have to know the person whose name you drop — just make sure they're in a position of trust and respect within the network you're trying to infiltrate, and that, if you are lying, the person to whom you are lying can't easily determine this. Strike up conversation, subtly dropping in references that identify you as an insider. Always try to plunge deeper with your comments and questions, in what appears to be innocent chatter.

Lying

When you lie, there are telltale signs that many, particularly those well versed in interrogation, can recognize: nervousness, motion of the eyes, reddening or touching of the face, tapping of the

feet, a bit of sweat at the brow. The best lies, therefore, are not lies at all, but half-truths. If you're undercover as a delivery man at the office of a major corporation and the security guard asks you what you're doing snooping around someone's desk, don't run or make up some tall tale about how you were good friends with that person back in high school. Instead, try something actually true, such as "I didn't expect to see you here — oh, I must be in the wrong office," then walk calmly off. After all, you are metaphysically in the wrong office, and you did not expect to see the security guard there.

If he grabs your shoulder, you may want to proceed to the next level, the plausible lie. "I must have been given the wrong office number… I'm sorry." The key to a plausible lie is that it explains away irregularities. It should be simple and succinct. If the web of lies you weave becomes too intricate, you will be more likely to tell lies that are implausible or that conflict with each other.

If the security guard demands to know "Who gave you the office number?," remember one of the golden rules of lying: be vague. "The guy up front," you explain. Try being vague and ambiguous, you induce the person to whom you are lying to interpret the lie in the way that makes the most sense according to the workings of the world as he knows it. With any luck, the guard will interpret your statement as a reference to someone who legitimately gives out office numbers, such as a receptionist or boss.

If the clever guard suspects a ruse, he may ask for clarification. You should provide as little verifiable information as possible, while simultaneously making the best claim to legitimacy you can. Any reference to authority is a good source of legitimacy; God is the best one in certain circles, but He's a bit too far out there for everyday lying purposes.

Never underestimate the power of sticking to your story. On the other hand, if the jig is finally up, it may make sense to surrender to the forces of the law without a struggle and once you do so, you must stop speaking altogether except to state that you wish to speak to your attorney. If you're only gathering information, the law you actually broke is probably quite small; often, security guards will just kick you out of the building and tell you not to come back. Then again, if you can be tied to an act of hard-core property destruction that just took place, you'll want to put into action some of the tactics covered in the Evasion recipe on pg. 234.

Complications

If you're going undercover, you must appear to be normal come hell or high water — but when that becomes utterly impossible, you might as well try the opposite. If things are only slightly weird, people will tend to search for a logical explanation for events. If things are so strange that they are off the charts, people may do their best to ignore them — that's a standard response to cognitive dissonance, as psychology students learn. Accordingly, one should either be completely undercover, or, when one' s cover is blown, go all the way. Once, while fleeing through the woods from riot police, a friend and I came to a road traveled by law-abiding civilians. At first, we pretended to be wholesome young hitchhikers, and everyone smiled but passed us by. Soon, the police were closing in, and our nervous behavior freaked out the one driver who nearly picked us up. Realizing that our situation was too desperate for any pretext, we frantically flagged down an old couple and explained to them that we were anarchist fugitives from the nearby anti-globalization protest, who were being chased by the police as we spoke and needed a ride as far away as possible at this very moment. While at first stunned, they immediately let us in the car.

Once inside, we normalized the situation by talking about the weather, and they dropped us off with a smile.

Another good rule of thumb: quit while you're ahead. If you have reason to believe that the situation is about to go horribly awry, get out. Don't fear being abrupt — just do it. If you think you just need to cool off, to check on some data or re-establish your security, make a brief and reasonable excuse, such as going to the bathroom or on a family vacation, depending on the time frame you're working with; in the moment of calm that provides, you can figure out where you stand, and whether you dare go back.

There are two types of people: those who have good intuitions, and those who do not. Through experience, ascertain which type you are, and rely accordingly on gut feelings or rational calculations. It is often useful to go undercover with at least one other person, so you can compare notes and balance out each other's fits of paranoia and delusions of invincibility. If you operate mainly by intuition, bring along a rational thinker, and vice versa. If you are working with a partner who is nervous or panicking under the stress, engage in small talk, tell a funny story, be relaxing to be around.

Speaking of having a partner, nothing makes for a good cover story like being in a generic love-struck heterosexual couple. This pretext enables everyone to assume they already know what you're up to, not to mention why your palms are sweaty and you keep whispering in each other's ears. And just what are you two doing atop the courthouse, on this portentous night? "Oh, officer, I'm so sorry," you gush, cologne in the air and lipstick on your neck, "we just came up here to … admire the view!"

Counter-Surveillance

Counter-surveillance is the game of spying on spies. Any group that has valuable secrets has a stake in defending itself against infiltration. The amount of security depends on the type of organization: a supermarket might only have a security guard and a few cameras; a right wing hate group might have a group of bruisers to defend its turf, and probably makes a practice of keeping up with the websites of hostile organizations; the government has nearly infinite resources for counter-surveillance, and may well know a lot about you, whether or not they've yet had occasion to make use of that information. If federal agents think you have lots of guns and are preparing for armed struggle, they are likely to bum your house down with your children inside; if you are just causing minor disturbances by wheatpasting posters and Reclaiming the occasional Street, they probably won't care enough to track you down, although their surveillance and counter- insurgency measures can be shockingly arbitrary. When in doubt, be careful-consult the Security Culture recipe on pg. 461 for more specifics.

There are things you can do to trick infiltrators into revealing themselves. Send out an announcement about a blatantly fabricated demonstration over a listserv, and take note of who shows up. Bait fascists: insult them, and learn what you can from their angry responses. Take circuitous routes when driving, so you can't be followed without it being obvious. Before trying something really sketchy, do something moderately sketchy to see if you get caught for it. Never look directly at someone you suspect of following you. If you know you are being observed and you do not wish to let on that you know, pick your nose, talk to yourself, do something harmless but embarrassing.

Timing when to act on the information you glean from infiltration is also a fine art. Often spy intelligence, like revenge, is best served cold — not right after you have garnered it, when it could give away that you were the one who did so. Hold on to information until the connection to you is implausible, until telltale data is cleared from surveillance infiltration^ videotapes and short-term memories. In some situations, if the intelligence is needed immediately or you feel you are in danger, it might make sense to broadcast whatever information you have to as many people as possible, obscuring the source from which it came. Otherwise, keep what you know a secret and use it only when needed.

Deep Cover

In addition to single-goal infiltration missions, it can be worthwhile to position yourself in a milieu in order to obtain intelligence over a long period of time. The continual practice you get from being a long-term mole will keep your undercover abilities in top condition; however, as time passes and access to information increases, so do the chances of being caught, so weigh carefully how far it's worth going. Often, especially in the case of political groups, it is enough to join listservs and go to meetings; never neglect the small things, like the visit to the bar after the group you are monitoring finishes its more serious business. To build up trust, unassumingly do the jobs nobody else wants to do. If you are particularly ambitious and gutsy, you can even attempt to obtain a position of authority; with this, you can easily induct other members into the group. Think of the havoc you can wreak if you build up trust and responsibility within a group over a long period until the perfect moment arrives!

At some point in your life you may have to go undercover and never emerge: this is called going underground, and we can't tell you anything about it except that it is emotionally taxing and rarely ends well. You may want to adopt temporarily the behavior appropriate to someone going underground, however, in order to carry out a project that you do not want linked to you, such as a direct action resulting in lots of financial damages and a likely investigation. In such a case, always use cash to pay for food, hotel rooms, and other expenses, so there will be no check or credit card trail. Don't use a gas card, either, or a personal phone card, or a cell phone registered to your name. Rent or borrow a car, if you don't want your vehicle's motions to be tracked. Obey the little laws: don't risk getting caught for speeding or jaywalking before or after robbing a bank.

Move within faceless masses, or far from the madding crowd and the surveillance cam- eras that attend it — never in between. Give your credit cards and cell phone to a friend to make a misleading paper trail far away, if you're ready to back that alibi up under scrutiny. When you go undercover, you should be like Santa Claus: you have a mission, you're never seen, and you're in and out with the cookies and soymilk before anyone knows what happened.

Account

While I'm not exactly the most organized of revolutionaries, I knew something had to be done when I got wind that a group of fascists were having their national conference just a few hours away. The Anti-Racist Action email listserv to which I subscribe announced that the Council of Conservative Citizens was having their national meeting just down the road from my hometown.

The Council of Conservative Citizens was the above ground political organ of the racist ultra-right wing, known for wining and dining senators and holding public anti-immigrant rallies. Historically, they were descended from the White Citizens' Councils that were set up to oppose integration and aid the Klan. This was an opportunity to make their work more difficult, but it came with a hitch: while the webpage to which the email had directed me announced what city the meeting was in, it also proclaimed, "Because of extremist Lefties, the exact location of our meeting only be announced to members." "Lefty" or not, I was one extremist who would not be put off. Clearly, I had to join the Council, and to do this I had only one month to transform myself from a black-dad scraggly anarchist into a passable good-ole-boy racist.

Luckily, I was born and bred a Southerner. My family on one side was descended from farmers and cops, full of women named Bonnie — I even had an Uncle Buddy. I had spent my childhood going around to Civil War reenactments dressed as a miniature Confederate solider, and worshipping at a back-to-the-roots apocalyptic church in which the United Nations were regarded as the Antichrist and the black helicopters were spoken of more often than Jesus' love of all His little children. I had been fortunate enough to come of age in a multiracial neighborhood, which gave me the perspective to realize that some of my parent's viewpoints about race were unwholesome and uninformed. All the same, whenever I spent enough time with my older aunts and uncles, who were former tobacco farmers with Southern accents as thick as grits, I could not only talk the talk, but talk it with the proper accent! I may be a raging antifascist anarchist, but I'm also a Southerner by the Grace of … hm, let's not say God, but definitely genealogy. Anyway, I did what every self-respecting revolutionary would have done: I went home and hung out with my family for a few days.

I spent an afternoon catching up with an old friend from my pre-radical high school days, who was working construction. It happened that he looked more or less like me. Despite my best attempts, he still had some ideas that I considered mildly racist — "I don't mind Mexicans, but there's so many of them coming over the border it makes it tough for me" — but even mildly racist people often bear a deep and abiding hatred of fascist groups like the Klan. When I confided to him that I was trying to infiltrate a group of neo-Nazis and Klan members, he was down to play a supporting role. He was too busy at work to take time off to help me infiltrate personally, so I asked if I could use his name, and possibly his address or ID. if it was absolutely necessary. He agreed, on the condition that I promise not to bring too much heat down on him. Presto, an instant new identity: I was now "Bob Noble" (names changed to protect the innocent). A simple, unpretentious name, and not even imaginary. Remember, your enemies will often do a background check on you, or at least see if you exist in the phone book.

The Council of Conservative Citizens had a national contact number listed on their website. Since there was still a month to go, a call to it by a complete stranger would not be a dead giveaway that antiracists were trying to infiltrate their conference, so I gave them a ring. After a few rings, an answering machine picked up and asked for my name and phone number. I was not interested in leaving my friend's contact information on the answering machine of hatemongers, and as I was calling from a payphone at a deserted gas station, Caller ID. could have blown my cover quite easily. So I started out with a grumbly drawl: "Well, I've just been reading your webpage for a long time and I agree with your views, especially those about states' rights and freedom of speech, and I was wondering..

As if by magic, the phone was picked up on the other end, and a not-so-Southern voice addressed me: "Oh, sorry about that, we screen our calls. You know, there's a lot of wackos out

there." I had used a key phrase that the mysterious racist on the other end of the line had recognized, one that many born-and-bred liberals would never know to attach much significance to: "states' rights." This is the idea that states and other local authorities should have more control than the federal government, which according to standard racist mythology is infested with Jews, homosexuals, liberals, and even black people. According to neo-Confederates," states' rights — not slavery — is the reason the South seceded from the Union, and as this is barely mentioned in history classes or leftist periodicals, only a true Southerner would use that phrase in everyday conversation. Also, freedom of speech, in particular the freedom to be a racist, sexist, and generally vile spewer of right-wing madness, is of great concern to this crowd. My use of these key words led to almost immediate acceptance.

"I know, I know, they don't respect a man's God-given right to speak his mind."

"So, what did you want?"

Now, here was a critical moment. I could have asked directly for the location of the conference. That would have been far too obvious. It was wiser to put off demanding the actual information I wanted and just ask for a local contact, who might be less security- conscious. "Can I get a local phone number of someone to call to talk about how to take a more active role? I've been reading too long, and after what those terrorists did to us on September 11th , it's time for Americans like me to take a stand."

Within a few seconds I had the local phone numbers of Council of Conservative Citizens members in my area, and the name of the high-ranking Council member who had talked to me on the phone. After a polite goodbye, I made another phone call to my local contact. He wasn't home. So I called another, and another. I kept getting answering machines; racists love to screen their calls. The next time an answering machine engaged, I finally spoke: "Well, I just talked to Mr. [name of high-ranking racist previously mentioned], and he gave me your number. I've been reading y'all's webpages, and I really enjoy the *Alamance Independent* … "

Bang. The receiver on the other end picked up. The name-dropping, combined with a reference to an obscure right-wing paper available online, had got me the next contact on my hit list. Now I was part of the right-wing scene!

"How ya doing? Sorry about that, I just sometimes am slow picking up the phone.. "

Sure. Jeez, I wish anarchists had this measure of security culture on picking up phones. Given that, the ball was now in my playing field.

"Ah, I'm just wondering about how to get involved. I mean, I've never been much on getting involved in politics, since I'm not a fancy type of man and always feel a bit confused about things myself."

"That's how it is in these confusing times."

"But, I dunno … I just don't feel right about the way this country is going. Why, people are even insulting President Bush, and after what happened in New York why, we're under attack and these damn liberals keep trying to stop our good President from doing his job. And it seems like even our leaders are forgetting about states' rights."

"Have you read the latest article on the web about how the liberals with their left-wing agenda are demonizing us?"

"Sure … I always read your website. That's why I'm calling you. I've never … well, I was in the Sons of the Confederacy, and I did do some reenacting for a few years back in [name of state even more southern than the one I live in], you know at Gettysburg, Bentonville, Spotsylvania …yeah,

those were good old times, but it was just kids' stuff. I want to get serious about defending this country."

'You know, one of the biggest problems we face is immigration .. " My host began an impassioned tirade on how immigrants were ruining our nation.

"Well, I'm not racist, I've never considered myself a racist man," It's always good when infiltrating a group to come off as an honest, multifaceted, and even moderate human being, instead of some caricature of a white-hooded Klansman. "But I do know that if these people are here illegally, that's wrong, and I'm not in their country taking their jobs or nothing. I mean, compared to blacks, these immigrants are growing even faster... there's no reason they shouldn't have to go through the same procedures as the rest of us citizens."

Our conversation went on and on. After referencing obscure historical trivia ("You know, the first slave ship landed in the North, in Marblehead, Massachusetts") and confessing to bizarre fetishes ("I've always wanted a red shirt like our good Confederate general AP. Hill"), I had so thoroughly won the favor of this local fascist that he invited me over to meet him at a bar for a few beers. I could almost see him salivating as he tried to turn my "honest" confusions to a more racist and fascist stance. Being a "quiet man," I refused hi s offer of beer for the time being, and asked him if there was some C. of C.C. event I could meet him at. I was hoping I wouldn't personally be required there, since as a fairly well-known anarchist, it would be riskier for me than it might be for someone else. Also, since this was an opportunity to slip in a long-term mole, I made sure to give him no exact physical description of myself.

"Well, it's a bit of a drive, but there's this national conference coming up. I think you would really enjoy it, and we can hang out there."

"Can I just get the thing off your website?"

'Oh, no. We gotta hide it from all those commies. But I'll tell you. It's at ..

Bingo. Mission accomplished. Neva* ask them for the information directly if you can avoid it. Have them give it to you out of their own free will. It will be a lot less suspicious.

A few days later, I sent out emails to nearby Anti-Racist Action chapters announcing this location and calling for a demonstration outside. I'd waited a few days so that the fascists, if they were monitoring our listserv, wouldn't necessarily connect the ARA announcement to the strange new guy who'd called them up. As wiser and more experienced antiracist activists started planning the demonstration,! decided we could do better than demonstrate outside. We should not only be on the outside, we should be inside.

I sent a few emails and hung up fliers around town announcing the formation of a new chapter of Anti-Racist Action. Right before the meeting, a strange older white guy showed up. I got somewhat scary vibrations from him. He asked if he was at the right meeting location. Trusting my instincts, I told him I didn't know and that the bookstore the meeting was to be at was about to close, so he left — and just in the nick of time. Soon afterwards, about half a dozen people showed up, an interesting mixture of young white punks, black students, and one older white Southern woman. Although I was also a bit hesitant about this woman, who fit none of my cultural stereotypes of antiracist activists, I followed my instincts again, and decided to take the risk. It turned out she was a graduate student, writing her Ph.D. thesis on the radical right and antiracism in our state. I told everyone about the counter-demonstration, and after she recommended a few good books about the history of the Council of Conservative Citizens and the Klan to me, I decided to visit her in her office.

After some chit-chat, I popped the question. While we were outside demonstrating, would she mind dressing up and going inside the conference as our undercover spy, complete with camera and audio recorder? She was thrilled. After years of studying the detrimental effects of racism in society, she could actually strike back. While the young kids were out there fighting or at least intimidating the racists, she could sneak in and do the more subtle but necessary intelligence gathering: she could get the names, faces, and personal details of every would-be white warrior there. All of her attributes — age, sex, harmless appearance — would be advantages in this situation, and her encyclopedic knowledge of the far right would make her nearly undetectable as an antiracist spy. Her cover story would be that she was the wife of the character I had played during my earlier conversations. Later that day, she called up my previous local Council of Conservative Citizens contact and registered for the conference.

The day of the conference, we all met up in a parking lot before heading off for our separate tasks. Our undercover agent was dressed as the very picture of the genteel Southern woman, complete with broad-rimmed hat and a little umbrella with floral patterns. She took all the surveillance equipment, and we drove to the event separately. She arrived earlier than us, in order to disassociate herself from the activities outside.

When we got to the location, a remarkably nondescript beige building beside a highway, I shuddered to think that a hotbed of white supremacy could be hidden behind such a bland exterior. In the parking lot, the race war was already beginning. A few older white men, with the help of police officers, were holding off a small horde of antiracist activists. Both sides were throwing insults, with the protesters being called things as dated as "race mongrels" and "communists," and flinging equally vindictive vituperation back in return. The one thing that really seemed to terrify the racists was when one ARA. member took out his video camera and started getting everyone's license plate numbers.

As they screamed at the "dirty Jew," he laughed and continued to videotape them, daring them to step a bit Closer to prove their "racial superiority. " Another antiracist activist told the white homophobes that all their rude talk was exciting him, and he had always wanted to make out with a real honest to life Nazi; they seemed so revolted by this prospect a few actually fled. The ruckus was loud and went on for several hours, until finally the conference dragged to its end and large numbers of racists started leaving, sneaking by our video camera into the parking lot.

Little did they suspect the spy within their ranks. At our next meeting, she presented all the information she had managed to smuggle out of the conference. She had gotten inside without anyone blinking an eye, and audiotaped all the workshops, which ranged from a biblical case against racial mixing to a denial that the Holocaust ever happened. She had taken pictures of the various leaders of the conference, including not only Council members but also various Klansmen and neo-Nazis. She had approached many of them and obtained personal contact information including phone numbers and both email and street addresses. She had collected armloads of their literature and even a few magazine subscriptions. As we reviewed the photographs and hours of video and audio footage, making meticulous notes and working out who was friends with whom, it became apparent that we had indeed established the identities of most of the people there and had valuable leads on the new campaigns of the extreme right. As we arranged our files to be delivered to the Anti-Racist Action headquarters, we congratulated ourselves on a job well done. Who knows, maybe next time I will meet the Council of Conservative Citizens at a bar, after all — and bring along all my fiends for a barroom brawl they'll never forget!

Inflatables

<quote> Inflatable Bombs You Can Blow Up Again and Again, or, Civic Angioplasty for Heartbroken Towns </quote>

Angioplasty: *A medical procedure for treatment of a heart attack. A tube is fed intravenously into a blocked artery. A tiny balloon at the end of the tube is inflated to open the artery. When the balloon is removed, blood can flow freely.*

Civic Angioplasty: *A treatment for urban ennui. A space, empty of desire or creativity, is suddenly filled with these and more. The space is just as suddenly emptied, leaving a (more) conspicuous absence, a kind of newness, a sense of possibility.*

Ingredients

Plastic painters' tarp — This is available at any hardware store. You need a solid film material, not the woven variety with grommets for tying down. Rolls of plastic should indicate the weight (i.e. 2 mil, 4 mil, 6 mil) on the package. 2 mil is lightest and most compact, 4 mil is bulkier but more durable. You should never go heavier than 4 mil, unless you want your inflatable to be able to accommodate people, in which case you can use S mil material for the floor. Plastic tarps vary in size; we suggest acquiring the widest rolls possible (20'x 200' is good).

Clear 2" packing tape — Don't go budget on this, get the best name brand stuff. Start with around 4 rolls. Avoid anything that is advertised as "Easy Tear"; if you are 322 making a masterpiece, look for tape advertised as "long-lasting" or "U.V.-resistant."

A box fan — Any 2-speed box fan will do the job. You're not going to need an industrial fan to inflate a huge piece. A desktop fan can inflate a 50' sculpture — the only requirement is constant airflow. The advantage of using a bigger fan is faster inflation time. If time is of the essence, get an industrial fan.

A large, clean, flat space, preferably inside — This is the most difficult thing to come by. It is helpful if one of your collaborators is connected with a school, because a gym or auditorium stage is ideal.

A pattern — Among the most readily available patterns are stuffed animals . Every orifice of the world explodes with unwanted stuffed animals, so acquiring one shouldn't be a problem. You can create your own pattern, but this requires extra skills. If you go this route, make a paper model first, and throughout the remainder of this recipe substitute the panels of the model for the parts of the stuffed animal.

- Tape measure
- Permanent marker
- Scissors
- Utility knives, X-acto knives, or razor blades

Instructions

For our demonstration we will be using a teddy bear because of its availability; there are plenty of simpler shapes to make, for which all these instructions also apply.

Begin by making a drawing of your teddy bear from the front and from the back It doesn't have to look good; you just need it for reference after you've cut up the bear.

Measure the length, width, and height of the stuffed animal. Note these measurements on your drawing.

Carefully take apart and label each panel (e.g. right leg, left front torso). Indicate on your drawing where each panel goes (figure 12. i). Do not skip this step — when all your pieces are cut apart, it will be very hard to tell a right leg from a left front torso.

If you have not already done this, trim each panel along the seam line where it used to be sewn together. The shape of the piece of fabric may be quite different from the shape outlined by the seam lines.

On graph paper, trace each panel (figure 12.2). These tracings will serve as your blueprint when you lay the shapes out on the plastic.

Now decide how large you want to make your inflatable, and work out the ratio between the length of your small teddy bear and the length that you want your inflatable. For example, the teddy bear we used was about eight inches long, so to enlarge it to 40 feet we made each square inch of our blueprint grid equal to five square feet of plastic.

Unroll and unfold your plastic; if you want to be especially conscientious, you can make a grid of one-foot marks along all four sides of your floor so that you can easily align the uncut plastic. Make sure the grid you lay out is square (90 degrees).

Armed with your blueprint, permanent marker, and tape measure, transfer your small plans onto the plastic (figure 12.3}. With care you should end up with a very close (scaled up) duplication of the shapes on your graph paper.

Cut out the pieces of plastic and label them as you go so you can remember how they fit together and what part they belong to.

When all of your pieces are cut out, tape them together. I suggest doing the parts (torso, arm 1, arm 2, head, etc.) separately. When you have completed all of the pieces, assemble them into your final shape.

Taping is the most labor-intensive part of the project. We have developed a system of taping in pairs while seated on the floor. Person One tears pieces of tape into 6" to 12 11 pieces (12" for seams that are straight, 6" for seams that are curved). Person Two holds the two pieces of plastic to be joined flat together, like two pages in a closed book. Person One applies the tape lengthwise onto one piece of plastic, so that 50% of the width

hangs over (figure 12.4), and then folds the overhang onto the other side. When you open up the plastic, the two pieces should be joined edge to edge with the tape centered along the seam. While Person One is tearing off more tape, Person Two squeezes the seam to make sure it is sealed tight.

When the inflatable is assembled, cut a round hole somewhere in the body, approximately the diameter of the fan you will use. Make an air tube from another piece of plastic and connect it to the hole. Be especially thorough with your taping; this will be a high-stress connection. Tape the fan to the other end of the air tube.

Blow up your inflatable by turning the fan on high. Once it is fully inflated, it is important to turn the fan to low. When your bear inflates for the first time, seams will pop open — this is normal. Leave the bear inflated, and have one person get inside while the other remains outside. Do not try to pull the ripped seams back together to tape them. Simply add patches to the inflatable that are the shapes of the holes. Small holes are not necessarily a problem — the fan will constantly be pumping in air, and that air has to go somewhere. If you want to leave some holes, just reinforce them with tape. We found that the older our bear got, the stronger her seams became; maybe tape gets stickier with age?

Your giant inflatable sculpture can roll up to an amazingly small size, and weighs very little. Recruit help to roll it- the more people you have, the smaller your inflatable can be packed.

Become a secret agent — stalk your city in disguise looking for lifeless spaces. They're everywhere: public parks, street comers, town squares, corporate campuses, municipal lobbies, schools, children's playgrounds … Now pack up your giant teddy bear, fan, and extension cord, take it to your spot, and blow it up as if it were a bomb. This is poetic terrorism. Such transformation of the environment is a gift to yourself and everyone who bears witness: make it an occasion. Dress up. Claim credit under a false name. Be legendary. Make art that is an event, then steal away in the confusion. Hammer out reports, dispatch bulletins; you are a phantom, a heroine, a soldier, a pillar of your community.

Other Applications

Watch for heating vents on buildings and sidewalks, hand-dryers in bathrooms, and other public sources of air that can be used to expand inflatables, which can be custom- made to fit these sites. One folk scientist made a series of inflatable tents that could be attached to the outtake ducts of building ventilation systems to provide housing and warmth for their homeless occupants.

Account

We once made a full-size inflatable circus tent that could fit over two hundred people inside. It was floorless, a dome constructed from long panels of black plastic with a clear skylight at the apex, and weighted down around its circumference with chain taped into the plastic. We made our pattern for it from the skin of half an orange. Once it was inflated, people entered by lifting up one side and swiftly getting in. From without, it looked like a titanic trash bag, but inside the atmosphere was strangely transformed and the outside world seemed far away. It could be used to create a magical performance environment in any setting with a flat, spacious area. Though it served us well on many occasions, we did encounter some challenges with it. On account of its great surface area, any amount of wind tended to buffet it or knock it over. On one occasion, we set it up atop a mountain in West Virginia, but the hundreds of feet of extension cord delivering the electricity to the fan diluted the power enough that we were barely able to inflate it. The acoustics inside were interesting — there was a central point in which an echo could be heard from all sides — but the noise of the fan made it necessary to speak loudly when addressing a group. Finally, it trapped heat, which could make it uncomfortable in the summer. All the same, it was incredibly cheap for a movable structure of its size, and demanded attention wherever we deployed it.

When we unfurled our circus tent at an anarchist convergence following a tour of the Midwest, our friends demanded to learn how to make their own inflatables. Some went to scare up the necessary supplies, while others gathered around to discuss what we could make. The ideas came quickly:

"Something people can get inside of."

'A prop for a performance. "

"Something to make a presence when we go into town for Food Not Bombs."

"An inflatable stage."

"An inflatable television ..."

"... that we can get inside ..."

"..and be TV stars!"

It was settled. This time we weren't just making idle threats, we were actually going to blow up a television. Three hours later we were putting the finishing touches on a black and dear model, American-made, with a twenty-seven-foot screen. Despite its size, it packed down into a milk crate for the ride downtown, so we brought along the circus tent for good measure and threw in a few 100-foot extension cords.

The cooler of Food Not Bombs spaghetti hit the sidewalk. Public electrical outlets were located. The fan blades began to churn. Two massive forms began to rise from the concrete like whales surfacing in slow motion.

Food Not Bombs was serving in a public plaza that happened to be across the street from the city's event coliseum. As we ate, played music, and goofed off in our television, its vast flashing signs reminded us of that other world. One of those pop stars so famous as to go by her first name alone was to perform that night. Thousands of people were about to pay as much apiece to see her as the seventy of us had spent on food all week. It was a vivid juxtaposition of modes of life, and we thought it a fortuitous chance to interact with the masses.

By the time the line of consumers had formed, we had been improvising together for some hours on our homemade musical instruments and were eager to invite the newcomers to join in. But as soon as we prepared to wheel our jerry-rigged drum machine across the street, the audio-van of the local corporate rock station pulled up on the sidewalk and cranked up its volume. The subtle sounds of the drum machine were lost in the din of blaring commercials.

It was war. Mustering our entire may of bucket drums, whistles, boviphonic ohm cannons, and other sonic weapons, we converged in all our numbers in the middle of the street beside the van and the column of concert-goers. Dancing and yelling ardently, we drowned out their sound system, and created what must have been a startling spectacle for the spectators, who looked on as though they'd never seen people enjoying themselves in public without buying tickets first.

Inspired, a few of us went to get the inflatable television from our base camp across the street. We found another outlet on the wall of the coliseum, and plugged in the fan, only to be scolded by some petty administrator before our conversation piece was fully inflated. Not to be denied, we plugged into an outlet on our side of the street, and ran extension cords all the way across it, holding the official at bay with references to our unintelligibly- worded permit. He went off in a huff, and a raging dance party commenced around and inside the television.

Soon, corporate music fans were making their way up to us in twos and threes; our weirdness and excitement were simply irresistible. Before the evening was through, several of them had joined us in dancing inside the television, and some had even elected to spend the night doing so instead of entering the coliseum. Never underestimate the power of outlandish props and

shenanigans — the masses want to join you m the streets, but they know it's not their revolution unless they can dance.

Legal Support

Instructions

Before any risky action, you should prepare to minimize the impact of arrests. These preparations will vary in scale according to the number of people involved in your action — you'll need more lawyers and more phones at the legal aid number for an unpermitted march of thousands than you will for a five-person graffiti outing — but the essential structure will remain the same.

Find a sympathetic and trustworthy lawyer, or perhaps a few of them for large actions. Get general legal advice about the risks you will be running — to the extent you're able without giving away anything sensitive-and let them know the dates and times you may require their services, but do not let them know anything that could implicate them: in order to do their job, they need to be able to prove that they are not connected to anything illegal.

Next, you need a legal aid number — this is the number those arrested will call using their single jail-allotted phone call. The person who receives their calls at the legal aid number will then call the lawyer and inform him or her where arrestees are, so he or she can spring into action on their behalf. It is important that this number not be used for anything else — you don't want to be in jail, struggling to reach the legal aid number, getting a busy signal because it's tied up by phone calls from affinity groups trying to figure out which of their members have been arrested or where they can get a good burrito. To answer such queries, another number should be set up and distributed in advance, the legal information number: the person receiving calls at the legal aid number can call this number periodically, passing on the names of arrestees, and people can call the legal information number to ask if their comrades have been arrested.

The legal aid number should be written in marker on a hidden part of the body of anyone risking arrest, perhaps with numbers inverted or coded — it's important that this number doesn't fall into the hands of anybody who might want to jam it, since the legal support of all arrestees depends on its staying open. Such provisions notwithstanding, the police will have the number as soon as it is dialed from their premises, and may investigate it or even raid its location. For this reason, it's important that the site of the legal aid number be prepared for trouble, so the number will work come what may. Sometimes security matters will necessitate that the number not be connected to any individuals, lest they be investigated; for such actions, the number could be a public phone of some kind — say, a payphone in the middle of nowhere that takes incoming calls, flanked by scouts who can announce incoming police. The drawbacks of this approach are obvious, so don't employ tighter security precautions than your action warrants.

If potential arrestees plan to do "jail solidarity," tying up the penal processing system by not revealing their identities, the group handling legal support should have a secret list of the identities and aliases of everyone risking arrest. Arrestees who call the legal aid number will give their aliases, and their true identities can then be passed on secretly to their affinity groups, lawyers, and families. There's little reason to try jail solidarity tactics unless you actually have enough people to tie up their system, so be conservative when considering this tactic; if the authorities

are expecting a demonstration or similar event to result in arrests, they may be prepared to jail hundreds of people without difficulty.

It will happen that people will be arrested when no support structure has been prepared. In this case, the first challenge is for possible supporters outside to find out that people have been arrested, and where they are. If you are being arrested and you don't mind identifying yourself publicly, call out your name and a contact number to anyone who can pass word along for you — better yet, share this information in advance. Likewise, if you see others being arrested, you can offer to do the same for them, while being careful not to get yourself arrested in the process. If nothing else, always have a person in mind that you can use your one phone call to contact. If you know or suspect that someone for whom you are willing to do legal support has been arrested, and you don't have reason to keep her identity a secret, you can call the precinct to which she has been taken — or any precinct to which she may have been taken — and demand to know whether she has been arrested, whether she is at the precinct, what the charges are, what her arrest number is, and if she will be released from the precinct or taken to a central booking or holding location. If the authorities refuse to cooperate, try showing up in person — it always helps for the police to know that people are concerned about the individual they are holding. Depending on the mood of the officer in charge, you may be able to get your friend food or a note, pick up her belongings, or even see her. Collect money for bail, if necessary — you'll probably need to have it ready in cash.

To bail someone out of jail, you can either give the entire amount of the bail to the court system, in which case you will presumably receive it back when the legal process is finally concluded, or you can go to a bail bondsman and pay 10% of that; in the latter case, the bondsman's fees may cost you a significant amount of money. If no one can pay bail for someone, they may sit in jail until their court date, although in the case of minor infractions it can happen that police release people on their own recognizance so as not to have to deal with them.

Any community whose members may suffer arrest would do well to establish a bail fund in advance. This can save a lot of running around in the middle of other emergencies. Throw benefit shows, set aside infoshop profits, solicit donations from wealthy sympathizers, and make sure that the fund stays with someone who is even-handed, trustworthy, and always easy to reach.

As arrestees are released from jail, greet them with food, drink, and open arms. Make sure they know when their next court date is, what their charges are, and the identity of the lawyer at their arraignment; make sure everyone in the community knows that they are in legal trouble and need support. Get contact information for everybody involved in the incident: these people may later be able to provide testimony or evidence, such as video footage, that will be important in the trial. Likewise, if you have any documentation or evidence that might help others, or you are willing to serve as a witness if others go to trial, track them down and offer your services. After any interaction with the police that may result in legal proceedings, immediately write down every detail you remember about it that you would share with a court of law, including times, locations, names, words exchanged, and possible witnesses. Have witnesses verify the date and time you made these notes.

Police will often charge arrestees with every crime they can think of, even though most of these charges will not stick, just to frighten them. Don't let them intimidate you. Things may not be as bad as they seem. Consult "In Case of Arrest" in Health Care (pg. 275) for more information about how to prepare for the possibility of arrest.

Shooting the Wounded

If you have been injured by the police or others and there is any chance that you might bring suit or file a complaint against them or help someone else to do so, document your injuries as soon after they occur as possible. With the best possible camera, film, and lighting, start out with photos of your entire body, then take close-up shots of every wound. Don't use the flash for the dose-ups, as it will create glare off your skin; include a ruler or item of standardized size in some close-ups to give a sense of scale. Continue taking photographs of your injuries as they heal, noting which pictures were taken which days and by whom. Take photographs of the scene of the injury, too, if possible, once again starting with a panoramic view and then focusing in on details. If you can, go to a doctor or free clinic and get official documentation of every injury. Save evidence. If you have bloody clothes, seal them in a plastic bag and keep it in a freezer. The same goes for tear gas canisters, rubber bullets, and the like.

After Bailout

Remember, after you've bailed your friends out of jail, the most significant part of their struggle with the legal system remains ahead. Awaiting trial can be terrifying; provide as much emotional and practical support as you can through the entire process. Often, the trial will be postponed over and over, as a means of keeping the accused paralyzed. When planning actions that may result in lengthy legal proceedings, factor in the energy and effort that it will take to support arrestees; everyone who gets caught should have such a positive experience being supported by their community that no amount of intimidation can shake them from their revolutionary commitments. Go with them to every single appearance in court, bake them treats, raise money to offset their legal costs, be there for them as emotional support. Don't gossip about what happened to them — if the police beat your friend into unconsciousness, she probably doesn't need to answer questions about it all the time, and she might not be comfortable feeling that everyone is talking about it behind her back. Don't unthinkingly belittle anyone, either — "I can't believe they beat her, she's so small and gentle. " After the legal struggles are over, don't forget about them: if they're in prison, write to them and visit often, and if they're free, don't assume that means they're over the trauma. People willing to risk arrest to make the world a better place are heroes, all of them, and should be made to feel that they are.

Account

When one of our members got arrested at a small demonstration at the United Nations, her legal support person got the word that she had been nicked and rode his bicycle to the precinct. He persuaded the sleepy desk sergeant that he was her fiancé, and got a note into the jail for her saying supporters were outside and providing the name and phone number of a lawyer she could call. She spread the word to the others in her cell who had also been arrested at the action that supporters were outside and that they had a lawyer. Meanwhile, her contact person was able to find out her docket number and where she was on the list to be arraigned, so when she talked to her lawyer, she knew when she would be up. He also arranged to get her house keys so that her cat could be fed. When she was finally arraigned, her contact person and other members of her affinity group were waiting with hugs, support, and Chinese take-out.

Marches & Parades

Instructions

Marches, from Permitted to Unpermitted

Permits are basically a scam by which the powers that be charge you for your right to freedom of assembly, enlisting you in the process to inform them of what to expect and when to expect it — and also to monitor what happens on their behalf, since they now have you as a hostage. Indeed, it is typical of the permitted march organizer that he develops an authoritarian obsession with regulating the behavior of everyone in "his" march, since he can be held responsible for whatever happens by the next people up the chain of command. The permit system also helps the powers that be limit the option of engaging in public activity to those privileged enough to speak the language of bureaucracy. All the more reason for us to build up enough social power to march whenever we want, permits be damned.

Still, it's worth doing things to spice up permitted marches, since the poor organizers have their hands tied. At the very least, you can hand out leaflets informing other participants of more radical alternatives. Better, dress up in costume, and make your statement with humor or theater; this can also be an unthreatening way to disguise yourself, which you may want to do for any number of reasons — just make sure your costume doesn't greatly hinder your vision or mobility, if any of your "reasons" require these. Puppets, too, can be festive and expressive, and they can function as shields, obscure police vision, or smuggle in useful resources, according to your needs and ingenuity.

A percussion bloc equipped with drums can really add atmosphere to any march. Drums can be made by affixing string shoulder straps to empty water cooler jugs, or to those five-gallon buckets you find behind corporate businesses. Big traffic barrels can also be requisitioned, equipped with wheels, and applied as bass drums. A little practice can produce a marching band to be reckoned with. You may not all need to bring drums — street signs, dumpsters, police cars, all these make great percussion devices, and it can be inspiring for others to discover that the oppressive city environment is a veritable sea of musical instruments just waiting to be utilized. Don't forget, either, the variety of other instruments that can be integrated into marching music, including saxophones, megaphone sirens, and whistles — the last of which can be clenched in the teeth of people who have their hands full drumming. Singing, topical or wordless and improvisational, can really raise spirits, too.

Speaking of singing- chanting almost always breaks out at permitted marches. You may be one of those sheep-like sods whose heart thrills at the sound of a mass of people repeating the same few inane syllables in brainless unison; but if you're not, consider how you will handle the situation if it arises. At the very least, you can always make up your own: "Hey hey, ho ho, megaphones have got to go!," "Rob the rich, arm the poor, social justice is civil war!," "I say something, you say something: Something! ('Something!') Something! ('Something!') You say

nothing, I say nothing! ('Nothing!') No, you idiots!" All this is not to say that there's never a place for chanting — sometimes it can be an important affirmation, or exhortation — but there's a big difference between shouting, "Whose streets? Our streets!," as you sweep the police off the highway and mumbling those same words from the sidewalk.

Banners, on the other hand, serve a variety of important purposes in almost every march scenario. These can be made from painters' drop cloth coated in white primer paint and decorated with mis-mixed house paint, which you can find cheap or free at most hardware stores. They can be reinforced with bamboo or other sturdy (but light!) materials. In addition to making your views more explicit to others , banners held firmly along the front and sides of marches will help keep police out and obscure their lines of sight into your ranks. Remember, always aim the business end of a banner away from your fellow activists, in the direction from which the march is most visible to everyone else; it's remarkable how slack people can be about keeping a banner legible to viewers.

Cloth banners have the benefit of rolling up easily, but if you can transport them and you think you can get them in place without prematurely occasioning too much attention from the police, you can always make banners out of other materials. One group took six boards of tough cardboard insulation material, each four feet high and ten feet long, painted messages on the fronts, and cut handholds on the sides. With chain or rope, these signs could be bound together, forming a virtually impregnable, mobile barrier up to sixty feet long. This barricade could be shifted at any one of five hinge-points to form any shape, and yet was light enough to carry for long periods. The material had enough give that it could bear a few blows without breaking, and, carried by a minimum of seven courageous people (one at each joint), could secure a broad area from police incursion. When these were deployed in a liberal town without much history of political street confrontation, the police didn't know enough to seize them when they arrived at the demonstration before they were safely in the hands of the crowd.

On the other hand, if the primary purpose is to maintain visibility and morale rather than secure and defend your space, consider a more unusual format. In another situation, our group painted a circle-A on a round piece of lightweight wood three and a half feet in diameter and made a pair of wings for it out of stolen tablecloths, using fabric glue to cover them in cut cloth "feathers" spray painted white and blue. We set the whole thing aloft on poles of PVC pipe, two for the big A and one at the end of each wing to hold them extended to their full twenty-three-foot span, so it could be carried up to twelve feet in the air, above all other banners and signs. Later, we replaced the PVC pipe with bamboo, which proved lighter and just as durable.

There's more! You can decorate the convergence point or march route ahead of time with graffiti, wheatpasted posters, or broken windows. This can raise morale, and help less radical marchers get used to the idea that unlawful self-expression also has a legitimate place in the tactical toolbox. That's starting small — if you feel your fellow marchers are ready for more, and you trust them not to betray you or have great faith in your own powers of blending and evading, you can use the crowd cover to spray paint through stencils onto the street in the middle of the march, leaving radical messages behind as the mass moves forward. If the sides of your march are not thoroughly lined with police, you can also drag barricades into the middle of the crowd, which can interfere with the police cars following behind.

Setting up barricades might be especially useful if you're interested in turning your permitted march into an unpermitted one. Except in conditions of extreme surveillance and police repression, such re-routing is not particularly difficult to achieve, provided you have a small group

ready to take the first risks. The police will be herding you along the prescribed route; at some point, they will leave a side street virtually unguarded, or attempt to steer everyone into a turn, leaving a thin line of gesturing police symbolically blocking the way forward. At this point, if a determined, tightly-hit group surges forward, close enough together and fearless enough that the police cannot snatch up some and thus intimidate the others, they can open a space for the rest of the marchers to follow. If you are attempting to reroute the entire march, hoping all those behind you will follow, you should position your group at the very front; if you are breaking off from the main body of the march with only those who are ready to contest public space actively, you might want to do so starting in the middle of the march, or even toward the back. In the latter case, you can count on confusion among the surprised and newly-divided police to give you something of an advantage, but you should also be prepared for much stricter repressive measures, as you are now isolated from your law-abiding fellows. Make sure you have a few possible courses planned out, including escape routes, should your breakaway march be broken up; scouts and means of communication are important for staying informed of the movements of the police on nearby streets. See Blocs, Black and Otherwise (pg. 127) for more discussion of unpermitted group activities. This, like any tactic, should only be applied in a context in which it makes sense, of course. Your goal, presumably, is to empower and inspire your fellow marchers, even the more timid ones — not turn them against you by endangering them or making them feel disrespected.

All this assumes your permitted march is already in the street, which may not be the case. If a line of police is confining you to the sidewalk, and your objective is to take the street, wait for a turn and suddenly flood out into the street, just as you would if you were trying to reroute a street march.

Banners, especially reinforced or solid ones, will be especially useful in such a situation. If the banner-bearers can use them to block the street for a few seconds, and the crowd is swift and decisive enough to fill t he space they open, this can provide the necessary opportunity. Banners can even hold police on motorcycles at bay, if brandished bravely enough. Once you cross the line into unpermitted, unlawful activity, your courage and community spirit comprise your .new permit, and you'd better be ready to stick to them together.

Sanctioned Town Parades

It's not hard to reserve a section in most town parades, and participation is often free.

Usually you just need to obtain a form from the city and fill it out with a (fabricated?) name and contact for your organization - call yourselves the [name of your city] Buccaneers, if you can't think of anything else. Such events, just like street fairs, are excellent opportunities to make the anarchist presence visible and welcome in communities. If 340 people have seen you waving and giving out free food at every public event for a few years, they're less likely to feel intimidated when they see you masked up in an unpermitted march — or to think you deserve it when the police beat you for marching and then charge you with assault.

If you already have banners from other marches, you can bring them out on these occasions (don't forget, also, that these banners can hang on the walls at every punk show, speaker event, and independent video night you put on) — but make sure you're not needlessly alienating your audience. Better yet, put together something fun and tailored to the specific event — make a pirate ship float complete with eye-patched pirates flying the black flag, or, for the Christmas parade,

put together a Santa Claus bloc of white- bearded, red-dad anarcho-communists distributing gifts and advocating the redistribution of wealth. Consider what you can give out to folks watching the parade — the fortune cookie model is hard to beat for combining sweet sustenance and information — and what kind of spectacle you can put on for their entertainment.

Account

For the July 4th parade mentioned in the Banner Drops account (pg. 75) we reserved spaces for two groups: a peace march with the usual signs and chants, and an anarchist contingent featuring a marching band, crazy home-engineered circus bicycles, two fire- breathers, our flying circle- A with the 23-foot wingspan, and people giving out fortune cookies (in this case, vegan chocolate chip cookies in plastic baggies, each with a quote of subversive implications from some "founding father" of the American revolution) and little fliers explicating anarchism. The peace march, being the only contingent in the entire parade to take the year's theme "celebrating our heroes" seriously, actually won a prize ("Best Use of Theme")for their posters of Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and Emma Goldman. On the other hand, we anarchists unexpectedly turned out to be one of the most popular sections in the march, thanks to the liveliness of our approach. At one point, when I was carrying the pipe holding aloft one of its wings, a man in conservative dress there with his wife and child asked what the big A was for. "Anarchy," I replied, and he nodded approvingly. After the parade, a street festival began at which we manned a table, giving out literature and recruiting for Food Not Bombs for the rest of the day. The next year, we participated again — and this time won "Best in Show," of course.

Appendix: Noise Parades

Instructions

When you're not interacting with an official city parade or a march called for by other activists, but you're also not looking to provoke a confrontation with the powers that be, you can organize an event that isn't illegal, strictly speaking, but still falls outside the bounds of the permissible and predictable. One of the models for such an event is the "noise parade": rather than fighting for the street, a group accepts the scant public space set aside for it, but transforms this space by means of entertaining or challenging sounds, visuals, theater, and so on. Such an action is bound to be fun at the very least, and can be good for starting conversations, achieving visibility, and startling slumberers from their ennui-induced sleep.

If such an event isn't dosed to outside participation, it can engage passersby in transfiguring their own oppressive environments — e.g., a parade that goes up and down a boring teenage hang-out street until everyone has joined in. The absence of an explicitly political message can often be a good thing — not everything we do has to be topical or reactive: it's also important to be consistently present as a welcomed source of entertainment and good cheer.

Account

It was in the car on our way back from a Reclaim the Streets in Raleigh that a noise parade was first suggested. "What can we do to shake things up?" Downtown Greensboro seemed the perfect

canvas — a place designed for routine, for the soulless, lifeless exchange of capital, inhabited by robots, the businessmen and -women who've had all their creativity suppressed by a lifetime of bourgeois comfort and control.

So the idea was to create a breach, an interruption, by means of noise and costuming. To this end, we made elaborate noise devices; some were designed to be percussive, others to create droning, constant sounds. We made enormous, absurd costumes with giant masks and metal frames; we devised bizarre uniforms and color-coordinated protest signs proclaiming nonsensical slogans. But our inventions and proclamations were only instruments; the creative medium that really interested us was inside the onlookers. When we walked by and they said, "What the hell is that!?,"that would be our painting, that confusion our poetry, that curiosity, that disbelief, our sculpture.

And we couldn't resist the opportunity to make demands. So we targeted the owners of this town — the Jefferson Pilot Corporation, the only ones with enough resources to make the necessary changes.

From the outset of the organizing, we realized that we needed a delicate balance between spontaneity and precise planning. We established an elite corps responsible for the planning, so the project would be focused and coordinated, and invited a large number of others — the "periphery" — to join at the last minute, bringing with them the fresh enthusiasm that can otherwise be destroyed by a month of weekly meetings.

The core group began meeting about a month and a half before the parade. At our first meeting we established our responsibilities: which of us would make the signs, who was in charge of costumes, and so forth. We chose a date for the parade, established a timetable for the coming meetings, and set deadlines. All our dates and deadlines were pushed and pulled, of course, but we continued to meet weekly. The Sunday before the Thursday of our parade, we held a "stuff meeting," and then a "final orientation" the night before. These last two meetings were more like art exhibitions than anything else, as our artists brought in their outlandish costume designs and noise instruments. We began to get excited, to feel like the event was actually going to happen.

The periphery began taking shape less than a week before the parade. Most of the people involved didn't come to a single meeting, they just showed up on Thursday morning, ready to make noise and get crazy. &/ noon, the preparation was over and the chaos began. We threw everything in the van and drove to the departure point downtown. We dressed and got ready in the Food Not Bombs park, and set off down Elm Street around 12:20 p.m.

All of us were dad in black choir robes that hung to the ground. A wore a backpack of percussion devices that jingled and boomed as she walked; one of them could be operated by a drawstring hanging before her. Mounted on J — 's shoulders was a geodesic dome that surrounded him to a radius of a few feet; a keyboard was built inside it for him to play. I was blindfolded, playing a boviphonic ohm cannon (see Musical Instruments, pg. 383), with a camera on my head recording everything I did not see as a man in a gorilla mask led me through the streets. Three more of us bore an enormous drum on a stretcher. Others beat drums or brandished signs: "Just Married," "You Can't Push a Rope, Nope," "I Can't Fly Either." We had undercover agents planted in the lunch-rush mob, too: at one point, a man in conventional business-district attire leaped from the crowd, shrieking, "Oh my god, what are you doing? What's this about?" As the majority of the parade's participants had not known this was planned, it made everything that much more intense for us as well as the onlookers. We maintained our monastic muteness, of course, marching forward with only the cacophony of our instruments for an answer.

We paraded north into downtown, took a left on Friendly Avenue, and circled the block, arriving on the doorstep of the J.P. building on Market Street. We presented our ninety- five demands, which were printed on a Suzuki violin, and made our way back to the park. It was a quick in-and-out operation, lasting approximately 40 minutes, start to finish.

All in all, the parade was a great success. We got the reactions we wanted out of the shocked denizens of the business district, and in ourselves most of all- sweaty palms, pounding heartbeats, terror and exhilaration, tumult and exultation. There are things we could have improved on — better preparation, tighter marching formation, not forgetting the demands in the van and having to run back for them, and especially integrating the periphery more (bringing them in earlier?) so there would be no risk of anyone feeling like a mere warm body in someone else's project — but, overall, it was a good way to challenge ourselves and escalate the tensions in Greensboro, maintaining the feeling that something is happening.

Media, Independent

Why Do Media Yourself?

Creating your own media enables you to spread information without being censored or misrepresented, freeing you and those you reach from dependence on corporate media. Independent media centers can be hubs of radical activity, drawing together otherwise disparate groups and connecting the efforts of intrepid independent journalists. Anyone has the potential to serve the public as a journalist, videographer, radio technician, computer technician, or photographer without going to expensive universities or specially schools. Stop waiting for the corporate media to cover your stories, and begin making your own media!

Ingredients

A GROUP OF ASPIRING ANTI CORP ORATE JOURNALISTS

Optional Ingredients

- Computer with internet access
- Video camera
- Video-editing software
- Digital camera or a scanner
- Microphone and audio tape recorder

Instructions

There's Already Independent Media in My Town!

There may already be media outlets in your community that are independent to some degree. While you can bet your bottom dollar that every nationally-affiliated news station is utterly at the mercy of their corporate masters, there are often smaller venues that may have some integrity left. These can include public access TV channels, low-power community radio stations, college radio stations, alternative websites, and local cultural, subcultural, and news magazines. Work out which stories they aren't covering, and how your independent media group could provide them with material no one else offers — local and global news from a revolutionary perspective, for instance. If there is already a group working on radical media production, you may want to join their collective or at least build a relationship with them. Always welcome connections, and be on the lookout for new media activists and free or cheap equipment. At the same time,

be wary when considering joining an existing group; almost every established media institution has strings attached, just as almost every paid journalist has ulterior motives.

Becoming the Media

After checking out your local media scene, see if you can get a collective of radical media activists together. As in all collectives, diversity is strength: in media work, a diversity of technical strengths and social backgrounds is a must. Media work can attract a wide range of people of differing ages and demographics — and beware, these people may fight amongst themselves! One of the most difficult parts of working in your group may be dealing with the wide variety of differing political beliefs and goals while keeping everyone focused on productive activity.

It is essential for radicals to stick to their principles in media work. To protect your group from being co-opted by liberal interests or internal hierarchies, be consistent in operating by consensus and direct democracy and make a point of having no ties with the corporate media.

Media Organizing and Focus

Many media groups use an open-membership collective model that allows anyone to attend meetings, present ideas, and participate in the production of media. These groups operate by consensus and encourage new individuals to join. Media affinity groups may form for specific projects, such as covering an illegal direct action that cannot be announced in advance to the public or even to the rest of the media collective.

Once your group has gotten together, you will want to focus on your goals as a media collective. There are several options for making media: releasing information through websites, producing videos for community screenings or public access television, producing newspapers and magazines, creating audio productions for pirate radio stations, low-power FM stations, even college radio. Anything is possible, provided your group has the time, proper organization, and skills or at least willingness to learn. Your group should discuss what equipment you can access, and what you will need to accomplish your chosen projects. Always offer training to people who are interested in learning new skills: this will help to spread power and technical ability evenly both inside your group and in the community around you.

Publicizing Your Media Outlet

It won't matter how good your webpage or paper or videos are if people never see them. Especially at the beginning of your enterprise, you'll do well to put as much energy into promoting your news sources as you do into providing news through them. People need to be used to coming to them on a regular basis for information. Your long-term goal may be to wean people off corporate media sources entirely, and if that's the case you need to let the world know that you can offer everything the corporate media offers and more. Distribute your papers everywhere. Arrange for local establishments to carry them regularly, and get them into unexpected places, too (see Distribution, Tabling, and infoshops, pg. 210). Get other websites to link to yours, and put up stickers with its address everywhere. Promote showings of your videos, tying them to other events or making them into social gatherings with refreshments. Hold guerrilla showings in busy public places, using a projector to show video or photos on the walls of buildings. Encourage activists who receive corporate press coverage to use it to direct people to independent

media coverage. Also, solicit constantly for people who might want to use the means you provide to tell their own story, or make their own media.

Joining Indymedia

Indymedia is an example of an international media network. Much like Crimethlnc., it is as much a brand name as it is an established body of media collectives; the main advantages it has to offer are the name recognition associated with its radical media centers and the opportunity to network with other media activists. The Indymedia network is composed of local Indymedia-affiliated Independent Media Centers (IMCs). An Independent Media Center operates by the principles of equality, decentralization, and local autonomy. If there's no local Indymedia group you want to join, you can create one yourself. Provided that the collective agrees with the IMC Principles of Unity, if your group so wishes it can become part of the global Indymedia network. To join, you must compose your own Mission Statement and Editorial Policy, which can easily be plagiarized from one of the hundreds of IMCs already out there, have representatives join various Indymedia communication email listservs, and set up a website. See www.indymedia.org for details.

Media Websites and Open Publishing

Starting a website is straightforward, provided that one person in your collective has a computer with internet access. You do not personally have to be very skilled with computers; it is only necessary that you be willing to learn skills and ask people for help with your problems. Free web space is available through various servers, including those of Indymedia and other nonprofit groups. You should use a fairly reliable server, with lots of space if you're doing video work or expect your site to be viewed during a major protest; you should have a backup site, preferably based in another country, in case government agents try to shut down your site. An obscure web server in a country like Vietnam may well just throw away letters from angry lawyers or foreign governments.

Just like the corporate news, a website should be updated constantly, providing up-to- theminute coverage and interactive forums. Providing an open publishing newswire, a forum on which anyone can publish news and discussion, is one way to facilitate this.

Allowing anyone to post on the site enables Indymedia and similar sites to react more quickly than corporate news to events as they unfold. However, fascists, federal and corporate agents, and other spammers may take advantage of the "open wire" to post to your site. If your site is flooded with offensive posts, people who actually need to use it will stop because they have to wade through so much filth to get to the news. The best way to prevent this problem is to have a firm editorial policy banning racist, sexist, homophobic, and other rubbish from the site.

An open wire is not usually enough to get quality news coverage on your website; it helps to have at least a couple of writers making a serious effort to report on events and issues.

Writing News Articles, Taking Photographs, Recording Audio

News articles should always cover the Who, What, When, and Where of an event first, and obey basic laws of grammar and spelling. It helps for them to be as concise as possible. This isn't the corporate media, so you don't have to be afraid to report some of your personal experiences

or opinions or to make articles exciting in other ways. Corporate news definitely isn't "objective," and you shouldn't pretend to be, either — be upfront about your stance, while avoiding rhetorical flourishes and rambling.

When it comes to getting good photographs, it helps to take as many as possible. Digital cameras are generally the easiest and cheapest cameras for this purpose. Take pictures from differing vantage points: get crowd shots, individual shots, shots of anything out of the ordinary. Take lighting into account, and aim for dean shots with the faces at mid-level in the picture. All this goes double for video recording, and you also have to pay attention to your balance and steadiness in holding the camera. If you can keep the camera in one place, consider using a tripod for extra stability. For audio recording, get the microphone as dose to each speaker as possible, and don't be reluctant to tell an interviewee to pause if the audio tape is about to run out. With all electronic gadgetry, always check the batteries, and have replacements!

Video Editing

Getting into video production may seem difficult and expensive, but nowadays, thanks to new digital video cameras, non-linear editing systems, and public access television, almost anyone can begin to make their own videos. If you can find a good library, a college media center with lax security, or a public access television channel, you can make a video without a digital video camera, an expensive editing program, or even a computer of your own. The main obstacle to overcome is the large amount of space video takes up on a computer. Try getting an editing program from friends or off the internet; once you have a good one, learning to edit is not too difficult. If you complete a video, you can hold public showings, book a tour around the country to show and speak about it in person, even syndicate it on an independent television station. All of these could also function as fundraisers for your independent media center.

Public Access Television

Almost all communities have public access television stations that offer cheap or even free classes on video editing, television show production, and fieldwork. If your com- munity does not have a public access channel, find out who the local cable provider is and demand one. Many states have laws that force cable companies to provide public access channels for the communities they serve. Not only do public access channels offer classes, once you have completed a basic course you can check out their equipment, use their video-editing suite, even sign up to host a live public access show.

Media Work at Direct Actions

Doing media work at direct actions is the lifeblood of many an independent media journalist, and it's a thrilling and dangerous undertaking. It's vital, since it's often the only way that news about a particular direct action will get out. If the direct action is highly illegal and the participants want to remain anonymous, you will probably want to remain anonymous as well, as any media work you do can tie you to the action. However, if you can upload your report and documentation from a computer that can't be traced to you and isn't watched by security cameras, you should be able to retain your anonymity. Be careful: if police or government agencies do investigate the action, they will definitely make an effort to identify the person who sent out the

communiqué or posted photographs. If the action is aboveground, on the other hand, you will probably have to compete with other news outlets — but if you are quick, you can break the news first, and venues such as the open wire will provide an opportunity for radicals to tell their own stories.

At any action, respect the desires of people who wish not to have their pictures taken or to be filmed or interviewed. Remember, many people rightfully want to hide their identities, at meetings and peaceful marches as well as during direct actions. Scuffles have broken out before between black blocs and well-intentioned Indymedia reporters. It can be a good policy to keep your cameras aimed away from your comrades and at the police, as defensive weapons.

In the halcyon days before the Seattle World Trade Organization protests, a press pass and a video camera could often fool the police into mistaking you for a part of the media establishment, but this is no longer the case: the police know very well that independent media are used by anarchists and other activists, and target independent media accordingly. It is possible to rescue people from serious legal difficulties with the documentation provided by independent media work; it is also possible to document police brutality, even get individual police punished or departments sued. Due to the possibility that footage will be used against them in court or on the corporate news, the police sometimes attack video camera operators and arrest media activists without provocation just to get their hands on their videotapes or photographs and destroy them.

If you can afford it, insure your equipment against damages before any major protest, and always have a partner with you when you videotape. Change tapes often, giving footage to your partner to convey to a secure location. To help you see while videotaping, you can install on your camera a rearview mirror from a bike; to fool the cops, you can attach a dummy tape underneath the camera with Velcro. Wear a watch, and film your watch and road signs or other location markers frequently to show location and time of specific incidents. As in any direct action, know the area where you plan to shoot, and have a safe getaway plan. You can put black electrical tape over the "record" light so police and other enemies can't tell if you are shooting, but make sure you can still tell. For filming in sketchy situations, cut a camera hole in an old duffle bag. To get better audio, get a microphone that you can attach to your clothing. When in doubt, leave the camera running. Have a press pass, a notebook, and a pen handy so you can give out your contact details to people interested in your footage, and keep a lawyer's number on you in case you're arrested or hassled by the cops.

At large demonstrations, there is often an independent media center that provides internet access for posting reports and equipment for digitizing and editing video. Since the forces of darkness have realized that independent media serves as an important means of communication, police often attempt to raid these centers. This makes it unwise to store any video or equipment there. The same applies doubly for media work in international hotspots like Iraq or Palestine. Hide your media footage in clever places when crossing through military checkpoints or risking being stopped and searched. Speed is of the essence at these events: get your news and pictures out the day they were taken. If you edit footage for press releases and press conferences after an event, leave long shots to reassure viewers the footage has not been doctored. Cutting footage or adding in slow-motion effects and music may make the news media reject your footage as "anarchist propaganda," or get your evidence dropped from court proceedings. Always make copies of your masters and hide them in a safe place. Consult a lawyer before releasing controversial footage. If it happens that you can sell footage to the news media, don't let the evil corporations rip you off: learn their rates for purchasing video and use a standard contract.

Account

We arrived in Genoa a few days before the demonstrations were due to start, to help set up the Indymedia Center. I traveled in a tiny camper van with my friend Maria from Germany. The border caused no problem — we told the border guards we were holidaying on the coast, giving each other a little knowing look. When we arrived in Genoa, the heavy police presence was immediately apparent.

The convergence center for the Genoa protests was being set up down near the beach. At the stadium just a hundred yards away, there was a huge police headquarters. After wandering around for a while, we camped for the night parked out of sight beside one of the big tents of the half-finished convergence center. In the morning, after meeting up with other groups, we made our way to the Indymedia Center situated in the Diaz School.

We found a place to stay in the Indymedia Center. The video room was full of technical equipment, but none of it seemed to be available for public use. Fortunately, two computers were "requisitioned" from other rooms and the needed video-editing software installed — although predictably one of the computers soon broke, never to work again.

Maria and I took to the streets to make the first report from the convergence center. It wasn't long before we were stopped and detained by a group of undercover police while filming. We were outside the main police accommodation stadium, which mysteriously happened to be right next to the convergence center. We were held for a few hours while more undercover police arrived, until there were ten or twelve police and two cars around us. They asked me for the tape in the camera, and I refused. They took down all our details and checked our passports — it became a bit nerve-racking. However, I secretly filmed some of the secret police.

Maria recalls, "It was the first time I was in a big protest event like this, so I was rather naive about what to expect… It felt like being suddenly inside a movie. Luckily, I found people explaining to me in detail what to expect from police during the day of action, how to deal with tear gas, and so on … in that sense, the Indymedia Center was a somewhat casual but rather helpful and warm place to be."

We continued to dodge around the streets, trying to film the barrier being constructed that would surround the G-8 leaders. We were stopped and detained twice, for an hour the first time and nearly four hours the second time. Arguing with the police and attempting to exercise any civil rights proved fruitless. This was the first nagging Orwellian feeling that was reinforced over the week of demonstrations. The police were a State in themselves, and there was obviously no respect for the role of any other law in their actions. Fear was starting to stalk the streets, encircling the meeting of the cabal of world power. All the same, we kept filming, to record the historic event.

Following a heavy day of rioting and police brutality, in which demonstrator Carlo Giuliani was shot and killed. I headed back to the Indymedia Center. After the shooting, the tension was rising, along with paranoia about police repression. People began to leave both the Indymedia Center and Genoa. There was much discussion of what to do, but no firm consensus was reached. Many people made the decision to leave independently, to such an extent that at the Indymedia Center our numbers were cut in half as the night wore on. More reports of police movements came in. Some protesters threw stones at a police car outside the IMC, which only heightened the tension and paranoia. We held a meeting to try to decide what to do with the video material

and ourselves if the police did raid, which came to no conclusion. So Maria and I decided on our own emergency plan: to hide out on the roof in a water tower.

At midnight, there were shouts that police were coming. I looked out the window and was unable to see anything, but people started running around grabbing things and barricading doors. I ran to find Maria, and reminded her about the hiding place on the roof I had checked out earlier. She grabbed the tapes and equipment and headed off to the hiding place. Looking out a window, I could not see any police around the front door, so I shouted this information to the people blockading the door, trying to calm the situation.

I went up to the roof and filmed the carabinieri (Italian police) breaking into the school building opposite our building. Things were getting out of hand across the street: a police van smashed through the front gate, and the police began breaking windows with chairs and smashing down the doors with tables they found in the courtyard. Worried for my safety and for the safety of the video I had just recorded, I decided to head back downstairs to see if the police were coming after those of us in the IMC building as well.

Everything seemed calm down at the IMC. I wondered whether the police were going to invade this building. I decided to go further down and check. After two flights of stairs, 1 turned a comer and came face to face with a policeman dressed in fill body armor, his truncheon drawn, panting his way up the stairwell. I turned and flew up two flights shouting, "They are in the building! " I scrambled past the barricaded door to the IMC and up to the roof. Dodging the spotlight from the circling helicopter, I headed over to the window looking upon the water tower and lowered myself out, whispering, "Maria, it's me." No answer. Creeping in the darkness to the water tower, using only the infrared beam of my camera to light my path, I made my way down through the corridor of water tanks. I kept whispering "Maria, are you there," and started to panic that she was not. A small and frightened voice finally said back to me, "Turn that light off." She was hiding in the space behind the last water tank.

We waited. She had brought a bottle of water and supplies. We talked about what we would do if the police came to our hiding place in the water tower. Would they come in and search? Would they throw tear gas in? Would they smash our equipment and break our bones? All of these possibilities were very real. Meanwhile, the helicopter circled very low, its spotlight lighting up the water tower, the propellers shaking the building.

The screaming went for what seemed like hours. Maria remembers, "I was sure there were people being murdered. It was not just screaming in pain, it was screaming in fear of death. So I sat there waiting for my turn to scream. Then the noises mingled into a frantic, maddening mixture of screams of fear, shouting of angry cries of "Assassini," ambulance sirens, and helicopter motors just above our heads. Suddenly, we heard noises of movement outside. Police were searching the roof. We kept very quiet and still for nearly four hours. When the helicopter finally disappeared, we dared to exit the water tower."

We met other survivors of the raid wandering across the rooftop in a daze. Crabbing our camera, we interviewed two English girls who had been in the Indymedia Center during the raid. Then we headed downstairs to survey the damage: doors smashed open, computers dismembered, hard drives ripped out and monitors smashed. Across the street, much worse was waiting. Blood covered the floor, congealing in puddles and sprayed upon walls. Trails of blood led into comers, clothes lay around in disarray, personal belongings covered the floor specked with bloodstains . Dazed people were searching through the piles as local reporters stood together in clumps. Up the stairs, bits of skin and dumps of hair stuck to the walls along a trail of broken doors and hasty

barricades. The police had ransacked cupboards and overturned desks, searching all the places where someone could have hidden. Heads had been bashed against walls and the smeared bloody handprints left a distinct smell in the building. The carabinieri had left their mark. We escaped with the footage of it all, and it spread all over the world.

Media, Mainstream

How to Write a Press Release and Talk to the Mainstream Media

Whatever your feelings about the mainstream press, chances are that sooner or later you will be involved in something where you either want to draw or have drawn-desiring it or not — mainstream media attention. Once that happens, it's not a question of how you feel about participating in the society of the spectacle, but of how you will handle its attentions. It's surprising that people will spend weeks setting up a Reclaim the Streets or a banner drop, will plan legal support, medical emergency support, escape routes, and even the after-party, but will not do the basics to protect their control over the message they want to get out. Whether you like it or not, in the world of mainstream media it's spin or be spun — or duck out of sight.

Ingredients

- Press contact list
- Dictionary or spell check
- Computer with internet access
- Fax machine
- An articulate and level-headed person to act as press liaison

Instructions

Know the Enemy

It is useful to bear in mind that the reporters you will be dealing with are eerily like you in many ways. They don't trust you; they are fully prepared to believe that you are lying; they hate to be told they can't do something or go somewhere. They are persistent and if need be they will scam, lie, and charm their way to what they want. They've got axes to grind and their axes are by no means yours. Be forewarned.

Becalm the Media

The first questions any group should ask itself as it plans its approach to the media are: *Do we want press attention? If so, why do we want press attention? and When do we want press attention?*

Do we want press attention? A lot of actions are at base an attempt to manufacture news. If you are planning a demonstration, a Reclaim the Streets, an important Critical Mass, or a banner drop you may want to increase its audience by drawing press attention — and even if you don't want

to draw attention you probably will. By the same token, if you are doing something completely open and aboveboard that makes you part of the wider community — setting up a free breakfast program, for instance, or opening a community space — you probably want people to h o w about it. On the other hand, however, there are times — when you are, say, breaking into an abandoned building or holding an action camp in the middle of the woods — when you don't want press attention and should even take steps to guard against it. It's best to h o w ahead of time which is which.

Why do we want press attention? The answers to this question may seem obvious until people in the group start to talk about it, and then wildly different views may emerge. Some people feel that mainstream press attention helps to widen the circle and change people's views; other people feel that the press is by definition manipulative and should be treated as hostile and dangerous. Both are right, of course, but it saves a lot of trouble when everyone in the group is telling essentially the same story. In preparing for contact with the press, make sure you understand at every step of the way what you want to get out of it, what benefit your project will gain from the attention. Chances are, the press will be looking for the most sensational angle; you can decide whether you want to give it to them. Say, for instance, you want people to h o w how angry you are about something: by all means mask up and yell. If, however, you are trying to get across a complex point about how IMF policies impact local migrant workers, it might be best not to wave molotov cocktails and shout "Fuck you!"

When do we want press attention? The answers to this question can be broken down to before, during, and/or after.

Before: If you are planning a conference or big demonstration and are hoping for publicity ahead of time, it's best to give the press at least two weeks notice; you may want to send out a series of press releases and make some phone calls to keep interest up. Also, keep track of the deadlines for free events listings in local papers, and send stuff in when it is appropriate. If a speaker or performer is coming to town, see if he or she might be available for a phone interview and make that offer to the press.

During: If you are planning a surprise action, you can send out a press release the night before or early that morning ; if you think you might draw a brutal police response, it might not be a bad idea to have the TV cameras already rolling when the plastic handcuffs come out. If you draw police attention, the press is pretty sure to follow the action anyway, whether you invite them or not, so you should have a press statement ready to hand out and a press liaison ready to answer questions and provide sound bites — that is, unless you believe it really doesn't matter what your action looks like in the news.

After: Once you are yesterday's news, it is much more difficult to draw press attention, but there are times — an ongoing court case, for instance — when you might really like to stay in the headlines. Keep in touch with reporters who write sympathetic or at least intelligent stories. Most especially keep up good relationships with the alternative press, who will often be much more receptive to covering something without waiting for a sensational news hook — that means alternative newspapers, public access TV talk shows, Indymedia, low-powered FM community radio stations, and outlets that serve a special community (African- American or Spanish-language newspapers, for instance).

Press Contact List

It's worth the time it takes to put together a good press contact list and keep it current. Include on the list all the television stations, daily newspapers, weekly newspapers, and a selection of radio stations (especially NPR stations and college radio stations) in your area. Look in the yellow pages for listings, then check the websites of places you want to reach. Most of them will have directions on how to send in press releases; put the phone numbers, fax numbers, and email addresses they provide on your list. Familiarize your self with daily newspapers, and note the names of reporters who cover the beats that might be useful to you (environmental, court reporting, etc.); look for regular columnists who might be interested in the things you're interested in. Newspaper websites will list email addresses and phone numbers for individual reporters and editors. If you can't find all the information you need online, call and ask.

The Press Release

Reporters get dozens of press releases every day. Yours will catch their attention if it is clear and easy to read and has something to say. Try to think like a journalist when you write your release: start with what, who, where, and when, and then give a clear and concise why. Leave the inflammatory rhetoric, wild unsupported claims, and angry rants for later-if you can't entirely let them go, you can put them in as a direct quote. Here's the formula:

1. In the upper left-hand comer write for immediate release, and underneath write any contact information you can give — name, phone number, email address, website. Leave this information off only if you want strict anonymity.

2. Give the release a title that sounds like a newspaper headline: CONFERENCE ON POLICE BRUTALITY PLANNED FOR APRIL 3 Or PROTESTERS TARGET BIOTECH COMPANY. Keep it short, simple, and informative.

3. Load as much information as you can into the first paragraph: "Antiwar activists from around the state will gather on the State House lawn on Saturday, February 15 to protest the Bush administration's policies in Iraq. The demonstration, which has been endorsed by X, Y and Z, will begin at 10:00 a.m. and will include a march down Main Street followed by an open forum. Organizers are predicting that the protest, part of a worldwide day of action, will draw a crowd of several thousand demonstrators ..."

4. Use the next few paragraphs for spin (try to keep the press release to one page if you can). This is where you build your argument, create context, and tell reporters why they should care: "Hegemonic Industries, target of the protest, is the world's third largest biotechnology company. It recently announced that it has developed a new strain of 'terminator seeds' that it plans to market in Africa despite objections from an international coalition of small farmers. Terminator seeds, banned in Europe by the European Union, have been called 'a Pandora's box; by the Council of Concerned People. 'Hegemonic Industries is putting us on a slippery slope,' said Mary Wollstonecraft, a professor of biology at Local University and a member of the Council of Concerned People. 'The world's food supply is not a plaything for irresponsible giants.'" Quote someone who sounds like an expert if you possibly can — the quote itself doesn't really even have to make sense, so long as the quoted person has some credentials that apply to the situation. Note that credentials can be pretty flimsy if that's all you've got — "long-time community

activist," "member of a local anti-police brutality group," "dog owner." There's no explanation for why it works, but for some reason it does.

5. Stay away from outright lies, at least outright lies in which you can get caught, and unsupportable claims. If you promise reporters a major demonstration, then you'd better deliver a major demonstration — a dozen of your friends beating on plastic buckets is just going to make them cranky. They may cover your protest on the nightly news, but they'll make you look like fools.

6. Check, double-check, and triple-check everything before you send your press release out. Make sure everything is spelled correctly and that every sentence makes sense. Make sure you have included all the basic information of what, who, when, where, and why — and that you've gotten it right. Get someone else to read it before you click "send. "

7. Most reporters accept email press releases, but in some cases you will just have to fax your release in. Important: If you are sending out a press release about a covert action, send it from a neutral computer, or most especially from a neutral fax machine (Kinko's has fax machines; so do many truck stops). Faxes automatically include the phone number from which they are sent; best not to have it be the phone number of your safe house.

Breaking News

So you've gotten the TV cameras to show up, and the newspaper reporters have their notebooks out. Now what? This is where your level-headed press liaison comes in. Her job is to make the reporters' job easy, but not too easy. The press liaison should have extra copies of the press release, a printed statement that gives more information if that is appropriate, and anything else that will keep the spin going in your direction. It is often helpful to have agreed ahead of time who will be available for interviews and sound bites: you can't stop reporters from talking to whomever they want, but you can certainly steer them toward the more articulate and informed members of the group. The liaison should particularly keep an eye out for reporters who seem to be singling out the youngest, angriest, or punkest people in the group — that's a pretty clear signal that he or she is going to start the story:

"A small group of self-styled anarchists gathered at the courthouse today to make noise and chant slogans. The group, part of the infamous Black Bloc, the organization credited with widespread violence at recent protests, was made up of mostly young people wearing dirty overalls and sporting a wide array of tattoos. While their message was unclear, their anger was not: 'This [expletive]sucks!' shouted one masked protester, who gave his name only as Dogmeat. Police, who could have been performing heroic rescues elsewhere but had to waste their time guarding the courthouse instead because a bunch of dirty, spoiled, middle-class white kids have too much time on their hands and don't have to get a decent ^ job as long as Daddy foots the bill, were commended for their restraint." If it looks as though that's the way things are going, it's perfectly OK: to go over and tell the reporter that you have lined up an interview with a nun or a kindergarten teacher or a veteran of the Lincoln Brigade (obviously you should actually have done so!) and offer to escort him or her to where the interviewee is waiting. At all costs get him away from Dogmeat.

Be Interesting

A sound bite, whether it's on videotape or in print, is just that: a very small forkful of information. Your message won't make it into print if it's weighted down with grandiose generalities and meaningless statistics. Choose two or three points and stick with them, and present your points without shouting, crying, or swearing. At the same time, don't feel that you need to fill in the shades of gray — the victim of police brutality you are championing may indeed have been a bigamist or have passed a bad check, but it's not your job to point that out: the point you want to make is that he was unarmed and not committing a crime at the time he was shot. The biotechnology company you are targeting may indeed fund community playgrounds, and the CEO may be a really nice guy, but that's beside the point if they are putting fish genes in the tomatoes. You want to tell a story that could be written on a 3"x5" index card; let the reporter dig up her own dirt.

Be Boring

On the other hand, there are times when you don't want any press at all. If you look as though you've got something to hide, if you act hostile, if you put your hand over the camera lens or give a reporter the finger, you're only going to whet her appetite. Say you are at a convergence and an S W full of camera people and on-air reporters pulls up. This is the moment when the press liaison puts on her other guise as someone so colorless and dull that the reporters lose interest and leave of their own accord. She should show her willingness to answer questions, but give the most benign and long-winded answers she can, sort of anti-sound bites. Slow the process down — if the reporters ask for access, the press liaison (who dearly identifies herself as such and not a leader) says that your group does not have a press policy yet and would have to decide that at a consensus meeting which won't be held until the evening, but that she would be happy to answer questions in the meantime. Treat inflammatory questions lightly and answer them with a friendly helpfulness. "Why yes, I know that some of the people here do identify as anarchists. Do you know the historical roots of the term 'anarchism'? Well, ... If need be, answer the question you wish the reporter asked, not the one he or she actually asked. Q: What are you people doing here? A: Our concern is with the spread of corporate globalization, which is destroying the environment and decimating Third World economies. Q: Are you terrorists ?A: We are trying to spread our message through a series of puppet performances and music shows. In particular we support the efforts of indigenous people to control access to water and native medicinal plants. Q: Who is the leader of your group? A: Our philosophy is based on the principles of consensus and non-hierarchical organizing. Q: Why won't you let me come in and film your camp? A: We are here to express our concern with the spread of corporate globalization, which is destroying the etc., etc. Remember you've got more to lose than the reporter does — all she has to do is make you angry and she's got a story, but it's not the story you want out there. Be boring.

Don't Overlook the Obvious

Indy media: Most sites have an open wire where anyone can post stuff; many have calendars as well. Get to know members of the local Indymedia collective (or become one yourself), and let them know what your group is up to.

Email: Rewrite your press release so it's a little less dry, and send it out to everyone you can think of with the heading Please Forward And Post Widely. Don't abuse your friends or your listservs, but take advantage of the technology whenever you can.

Links: Get your story on a website, or put up your own website, and get as many other sites to link to it as you can.

Mental Health

If you are experiencing a breakdown at this moment, skip to the section entitled "Crisis. "

It is important to break the silence surrounding the struggles many of us face with the states of being commonly characterized as mania, depression, schizophrenia, panic disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder. We need to establish networks of support and guidance for those who are suffering in these ways and are understandably distrustful of the psychiatric industry.

There are no correct or incorrect ways to develop a healing process. My experience, like yours, validates itself. I do not claim to be an authority on these matters, nor do I believe in institutional diagnostic treatment for mental and emotional problems. I have lived and am living through what I write about, and I offer the strategies that have helped facilitate my healing. Compare everything here to your own experience and see what resonates with you.

Instructions

Your Body

When I'm at my worst, I can't feel my limbs. My skin goes to sleep; I only experience sensation if I really concentrate. I totally separate my mind from my body. When I'm in that place, I eat nothing but sugar, I never drink water, I seldom move, and I barely even notice — the lack of awareness just feeds itself So many people in our society live this way. The behavioral patterns of self-neglect and dissociation from our bodies that many of us are taught from birth are reinforced by depression, and vice versa. We have 66 to break these patterns. Our bodies need us ! We must come back to ourselves.

A reintegration of mind and body must be the first step in a healing process. Many of us envision methods of healing consisting of hours of introspective writing, intimate conversations with trusted friends, crying, screaming, laughing, dancing, exorcism through art and music — but we can't do any of these things if we don't eat. And often, no one ever taught us how.

There has been a lot of research done about how different diets regulate neural-chemical and hormonal activity, and there are books in which you can read about this. Learning how to nourish your body is a conscious process that demands full-time commitment. It can actually be fun to look inward and notice how each different kind of food makes you feel — it's a way to get to know yourself that most people never think of trying. Your body has likes and dislikes, just as your mind does.

It can be difficult to meet all your nutritional needs through dumpster diving (see Dumpster Diving, pg. 219). One solution to this problem is government food assistance. Food stamps are issued and regulated by federal, state, and local governments; if you are in a low-income bracket, you are eligible for food assistance. If you live collectively, you can get most of your produce through dumpstering or from local farmers (see Unemployment, pg. 576) t and have one person apply for food stamps to provide for the house's nutritional needs that can't be served by other

means. If this person exceeds the income limit and gets cut off, another person can take this role, or more than one person can and you will live with great bounty and much rejoicing.

A few more tips on eating. Don't work for six hours, realize you haven't eaten, and then gorge yourself really fast. Don't get famished, fill your belly, and fill it up again as soon as there's a little room in it. It really is true what they say: multiple small servings, eaten slowly and chewed thoroughly. Extract every drop of nourishment from each bite. Don't forget to make it taste good.

Another important way to re-inhabit your body is exercise. All you have to do is get your heart rate up, break a sweat, and sustain it for twenty minutes. It doesn't matter what you do. You could take a hard bike ride, get a good pair of shoes and try some combination of walking and running, dance alone in your room, go for a vigorous hike, play drums, whatever. You will have so much more physical, mental, and emotional energy you won't even know what's going on. For this reason, it's probably best to do it first thing in the morning: it wakes you up, switches your system on, and gives you a feeling of vitality.

I can't write about health and wellness without mentioning yoga. As a practice of being present in your body, yoga is indispensable. It retrains your entire system, corrects bad alignments, builds strength and flexibility, even teaches you how to breathe. Yoga schools often have free introductory classes, so you can learn a few postures and practice at home. You can get books on yoga, but it's best to learn from someone with a little experience, because if you learn a posture wrong and do it a lot you can seriously injure yourself. The principle of holism is a big part of yoga; it trains us to reintegrate body, mind, and spirit into one whole being.

One more thing about reintegration: if you work, try to find a job that allows you to be outside using your body. Those of us who were brought up middle-class have been conditioned to believe that mental work is for the evolved and physical work is for the underlings. In addition to perpetuating class oppression, this belief encourages us to be even less present in our bodies. You can build trails for the parks department; you can do freelance construction or painting or landscaping; you can work at organic farms or be a migrant laborer. You'll learn your body's limits — believe it or not, most people never do! — and you'll exhaust yourself, which can feel really good. Even if you have to be out in the cold and the rain, it can feel more fulfilling than waiting tables, or making fancy coffee drinks for rude yuppies, or selling your plasma. Please don't sell your plasma. What a grotesque example of an exploitative industry literally sucking the life out of the poor!

I have only recently discovered the power of lists. Most people I have talked to about managing depression have a really hard time just taking care of day-to-day tasks. Making a list of things I have to take care of really helps everything seem less overwhelming. Get one of those little writing pads and carry it with you wherever you go. Make a "to do" list each week. When you finish an item on the list, put a line through it — this is so gratifying. If you don't get everything on your list taken care of, just transfer the leftovers to the next list, but take the time to make a fresh list every week. If I look too much at a list I can never seem to finish, it makes me feel more depressed. It reinforces my belief that I can't ever get my act together, and then, of course, that belief manifests itself in reality. The notepad itself is a great tool. You can also use it to write down those crazy ideas and fleeting fantasies you dream up when you're gardening or working or walking around in the rain. You can use it to write haikus about that suicidal squirrel that always waits until a car is about to come before it darts across the street with an acorn in its mouth. You can draw little sketches of all the weird people on the bus. After a while it becomes

a really familiar and reliable way to interact with your environment and be present in your lived experience.

More on lists: write down everything you can think of that is beautiful, that makes you feel alive, or that you simply like. It's so easy for us to forget these things when we're in our lows, and just naming them can help bring them back into our lives. Here are a few of the things on my list: moments of total silence on a city street; freshly opened lilacs; the smell of old books; drinking water when I'm really thirsty; cobalt blue glass; really good letters; the color of my skin under a full moon; wind; the color green, deep, deep green; cool velvet on my ears and cheeks; the smell of sheep; fresh, dean socks. This is the comfort food of my life and I had more or less forgotten about it, all of it, until I wrote it all down.

In addition to the list of things to live for, compose a list of actions you know will help ^ to pull you out if you're in a bad way. This could include anything from taking a walk around your neighborhood to eating a good meal or spending time with your dog. Give copies of this list to your close friends, so they have some idea of how to help you when you're in trouble. Another good tool to give to trusted allies is a list of warning signs that you're having a hard time. These could be subtle, like circles around your eyes from lack of sleep, or they could be blatant, such as not leaving your bedroom for days. Even if these symptoms seem obvious to you, it's important that you identify them to your friends, so they'll know to come to your aid when they first start to appear.

There is one more list that you cannot do without: a list of the people you will contact when you are having a hard time. Compose this list when you're in a relatively level headspace; if you try to do it when panic is asphyxiating you or you're paralyzed by depression, you will have a very hard time thinking of anyone, and this will make you feel ten times worse. Keep this list accessible — laminate it with packing tape and stick it to your phone or bathroom mirror, make a few copies in case you lose one. Even if it doesn't sound important now, believe me, it will be.

Create!

This almost goes without saying, but people who struggle with depression or other mental and emotional challenges can be gifted with tremendous creative energy. Perhaps when everything else seems totally out of control, people naturally gravitate to those things that can still be given order: words, notes, colors, shapes. When you are having a hard time, focusing on creative pursuits can be tremendously therapeutic. If you can shift your concentration from your feelings of panic and paralysis to arrangements of language, sound, image, or movement that express these feelings, this can enable you to regain your balance and your agency. Don't force this, or let your self-image come to hinge on your creative production — everyone gets writer's block, everyone experiences different phases of creativity — but don't underestimate its power, either.

Crisis

This is the best method I can think of to deal with a panic attack or similar situation. It is what I wish someone had told me to try when I was collapsing under the weight of fear and despair:

1) Breathe. Put your right hand on your belly and breathe into it deeply, feeling it expand. Now exhale for twice as long as you inhale. Count the seconds if you like. This will bring your heart rate to a steady pace and will keep your system from getting overloaded with oxygen. Repeat

this process. Stay conscious of your breathing. Remember: if you're still breathing, you're still alive.

2) If you are not at home, if you are at a show or a restaurant or are traveling and are in common space at a stranger's house, quietly leave the room. When there are lots of people around me and I feel the way you're feeling, it generally makes it worse. If you're with a friend, ask them to come with you; if you're alone, that's OK, too. Go out to the yard or into an empty room, perhaps the bathroom, somewhere you won't attract a lot of attention and where you are not in physical danger. Don't move very far. Don't cross any streets.

3) Now, come back to your body. You might not be able to feel your limbs, or your skin either. This is a reasonable response to fear, but returning awareness to your body will do a lot to make you feel safe. If you have someone you trust dose by, ask them to hold you, very gently. Focus on their arms supporting you, keeping you safe. If you're alone, wrap your own arms around yourself.

Sit down somewhere, a soft place if you can find one, and slowly, gently, rock back and forth. Your body remembers this from when you were a baby and it will comfort you now just like it did then. Keep breathing, exhaling twice as long as you inhale.

If you are still feeling disconnected from your body, dose your eyes and imagine you are filling yourself back up again. Imagine a warm, white light pouring into your feet and filling you up, moving through your legs, up your torso, into your shoulders — keep breathing — down your arms and into your hands, up your neck, into your face, all the way up to the top of your head. Now you are full. Rock gently back and forth until the rhythm naturally slows itself, until you are still and safe. Keep breathing, exhaling twice as long as you inhale.

4) If you're alone and still having a really hard time, find your list of people to call when you feel like this. If one does answer, call the next person, and then the next one. Go down the list, all the way down and back up to the top if necessary, until you reach someone. Tell them exactly what's going on with you.

5) Don't fight it. I cannot stress enough that the only way to get through difficult feelings is to let yourself feel them. Trying desperately to hold at bay everything raging inside you will only intensify the storm. You must move through these feelings. Don't deny the experience, acknowledge it for what it is. Name it: "I feel really scared right now," "I feel like the walls are dosing in on me," "I feel like I'm sinking."

And just hang out with it. Don't let it consume you, don't let it be everything that you are. Recognize it for what it is, a feeling, and then let it move through you. Soften into it and be with it and it will pass through ten times more quickly and cleanly than if you clench onto it.

If You're Experiencing a Breakdown

If something in your life causes you to experience an emotional or biochemical shift, or the memory of a serious trauma begins to be released, the result can be emotional fragility, deep depression, and generalized anxiety and suspicion. If you are undergoing this, you may feel as though you are falling apart.

The aforementioned guidelines can help you maintain your overall health and wellbeing, and can bring you to a better understanding of your natural rhythms and cycles. At the same time, it can also be unhealthy to focus all your energy on preventing yourself from experiencing a breakdown.

People come undone sometimes; this is inevitable and natural. Decomposition is a vital process in the cycle of life: everything falls, returns to the soil, is broken down, and becomes a part of life's renewal. We are no different — this pattern repeats itself over and over again throughout our lives.

This might sound absurd, but there's a certain skill to falling apart — it is possible to do so gracefully and with care. This is not to suggest that the process of unraveling can be painless or easy, or that you should be able to keep your life from becoming a mess when you're going through it; but there are ways to come undone without losing sight of your needs or those of others.

It is your responsibility first and foremost to be honest and real about what is going on with you. You may not know why you feel the way you do, but that isn't the most important question. What you can know, and must always try to acknowledge to yourself, is what you are feeling. Really try to be inside the feelings that you have. I'm not talking about developing a romantic attachment to craziness, inhibiting your ability and willingness to heal. I'm talking about eroding the resistance you have to feeling what you feel. I really believe it isn't depression itself that wrecks people's lives, but rather their responses to it: their fear of it, their unwillingness to deal with it and the problems it creates. Be honest with yourself.

The second task is to reach out to others. You may have already worked out an agreement with your trusted friends or housemates that they will act as support people for you when a situation like this arises. It is crucial that you have more than one person supporting you, especially if you are living with a romantic partner. It can be easy to develop patterns of insularity and dependence with a partner when times get tough, and if you put the entire weight of your recovery on one companion it can destroy the relationship, romantic or not. This stuff is hard work for everyone involved; don't forget that your supporters are going to need to support each other, too.

If you made lists of warning signs that you're not doing well and ways to help you feel better, these can be very helpful. When things are especially hard, it may be necessary for your supporters to be there for you around the dock. You must not refuse their help, even if it seems like they're making sacrifices for you — you'd do the same for them, wouldn't you?

It's just as vital that you be honest with your friends as it is that you be honest with yourself. Let them how what you're experiencing, how you feel, and the way their actions make you feel. If they're being patronizing, let them how. They have made a commitment to support you, and any feedback you can give them will make the process easier for everyone. If you aren't able to talk, or if you really just need to be alone, try to express this to your supporters as best you can. Don't reproach yourself for not pulling your weight, or tell yourself you're being a bad friend. Forgive yourself — you haven't done anything wrong by feeling this way. You have to focus on getting through this, and that may be hard work enough.

The capitalist machine does not permit those inside it to break down, ever. If someone does, they are ejected from its ranks and excreted into a psych ward or a welfare line or some other prison. As anarchists, we should be working to create a world in which people are allowed to fall apart when they need to. If you are in a situation in which you are falling apart and you feel you are being emotionally neglected or shut off by the people who are supposed to be your supporters, if you have made it dear that you're going through something really serious and they are still not giving you the support you need, look for it somewhere else as soon as you can. You might want to stay at a friend's house or with family for a while until you have built up your strength a little. If you remain in a bad situation when you are experiencing a breakdown, it can

prolong the process and worsen the pain. You owe it to yourself to get through this smoothly and without guilt or resentment.

Try to see your experience as something necessary and natural, as a kind of wake-up call, an opportunity to make positive, fundamental changes in the way you live your life. After all, it takes a total annihilation to find out what is truly indestructible. Ask for what you need. Be honest. Let yourself feel it. You will make it through this.

As a supporter, the most vital tool available to you is empathy. Try to bring yourself back to a time when you were struggling like your friend is struggling now. Remember how it feels to need support. You will need patience, and a dear idea of what you can and cannot do, which you must communicate to your friend.

It can get really hard and really scary; there will be times when you don't know what to do, or if there is anything you can do to help this person you care about so much. Do your support work in a team — this is the best way to preserve your own mental health, and it relieves a lot of pressure. You'll need breaks from the whirlwind, and time for caring for yourself. Meet with the other supporters and check in with each other: update one another on developments, discuss things that need to change. It can really help to be organized about this.

If You Are Supporting a Friend

As a supporter, some of your responsibilities might include getting your friend to eat, go outside, get enough sleep, and take care of himself in other simple ways. A person who is living through a breakdown can't be expected to have healthy habits; as healthy habits will help him get through this, you might have to be the one to initiate and insist on them, at least in the beginning. If your friend has made cards with advice on how to pull him out of despair, use them. You may need to take the initiative in getting your friend to see his counselor or go to yoga class. If he is on medication, make sure he takes his drugs at regular times each day; if he runs out, you may have to make an appointment with a psychiatrist for him. Approach his family or a friend who's known him for years and ask how they've dealt with situations like this in the past.

It is not appropriate for you to try to fix your friend — don't take away his agency like that. He has to fix himself, that's why he's falling apart in the first place. As a supporter, it is your job to create a safe environment for your friend to experience what he needs to, not to make his problems go away.

Try to restrain yourself from judgment. Focus on your empathy, no matter how hard it gets. When things are difficult, remind yourself of your love for this person, of everything he gives you when he is well enough to give. At the same time, be careful not to overextend yourself You will do yourself, the person you're supporting, and everyone else in your life a disservice if you take on more than you can handle. The part you play in his well-being should be a gift you give, not a burden you shoulder. Stay open and be honest, with yourself and everyone else, about your needs and limits. Keep the lines of communication open, especially if you're nearing the end of your rope.

Medication

This is a very sensitive subject among people dealing with these problems, particularly those of us who have been through the psychiatric system. Some feel that psychoactive drugs are purely

an oppressive tool of the State, others have no doubt they would have killed themselves had they not gone on medication, and are grateful for it; still others reject the idea that they need drugs to maintain mental clarity and emotional stability, while acknowledging the ways drugs have helped them reclaim their lives. It's a complex issue, one best not portrayed in black and white terms.

It's true that psychoactive drugs are the first card drawn by the mental health industry, and often are seen as a suitable replacement for therapy, lifestyle changes, and other forms of healing. This is typical of the tendency in Western medicine to treat only symptoms, not addressing the root causes of problems. Many drugs can cause side effects: emotional numbness, liver problems, nausea, insomnia, fatigue. Every individual's response to a given drug is unique.

I believe medication is a potent tool to be used when appropriate and then discarded when no longer needed. The thing is, you have to work on healing if you ever want to get off medication. I've been told repeatedly by therapists and psychiatrists that I am like a diabetic in that my brain doesn't produce certain chemicals I need to survive, so if I stop taking my medication the result will be the same as for a diabetic who stops taking insulin: I will die. Now that I have met people (including a diabetic, by the way!) who have used nutrition and a conscious lifestyle to regulate their various chemical imbalances, I know that it is possible to live without my drugs, and am developing a program to end my dependence upon them.

No one is entirely sure how most psychoactive drugs work. Psychiatrists will tell you, for example, that some regulate the levels of serotonin in your brain; how, they don't know. One thing I can tell you from personal experience is that the drugs called SSRIs (Selective Serotonin Re-uptake Inhibitors) are bad news. They have a way of deadening people, whitewashing their emotions, drastically altering their personalities. Their effects are very hard to predict. A few of the most common SSRIs are Prozac, Celexa, Zoloft, Effexor, Lexapro, and Paxil (which has a page-long list of side effects and withdrawal symptoms, including" electric-feeling shocks throughout the body" and "scratching sounds within one's head"). Keep in mind that almost every name-brand drug also has at least one generic version, so if you're being prescribed medication be sure to ask your doctor if the drug is an SSRI. If it is, ask for something else.

Wellbutrin has worked really well for me when I've needed it. It's not an SSRI and it doesn't numb me or sap my energy the way Prozac did. I liken it to a pair of water wings: it keeps me afloat just enough to prevent me from drowning, and I have to do the rest of the work on my own. If I'm taking my medication, I don't have to worry that I'm going to collapse on the floor thinking the walls are closing in on me, or hear voices in my head telling me to kill my lover, or become consumed by a delusional panic, certain that at any moment I'm going to die and anyone who touches me will die too. It took feeling things like that every day for a few weeks for me to agree to go back on my medication, just to stabilize. It was one of the best decisions I ever made. It came from a place of self-preservation, the closest I could get to self-esteem.

I've been on Wellbutrin for a little over a year now, and have experienced no side effects. I still get depressed, I still feel all my emotions. The difference is that instead of focusing all my energy on desperately keeping myself alive, I can step back, just a little bit, and allow myself to live.

So how do anarchists with no money get prescription drugs? I can think of a few ways. The first is to ask a trusted supporter who has a job that provides health insurance if she will help you hoodwink a psychiatrist. Get to know the details of her coverage and make sure the company will pay for psychoactive drugs before you do anything else. You'll need to know how much the

deductible is (how much your agent will have to pay the doctor or pharmacist before the insurance company picks up the bill), and have this money available. Send your agent, insurance card in hand, to a psychiatrist or psychopharmacologist to report that she has been having problems. For all intents and purposes, she will be impersonating you. Coach your agent in advance about what kinds of problems you are having, including how much sleep you've been getting, how your moods have been fluctuating, what emotions you've been feeling, what you've been eating and how much, how you've been behaving socially, how well you've been able to concentrate, how you've been performing in a work environment, and how long this has been going on. You need a pretty specific set of circumstances to pull this off; it may sound far-fetched, but I know it can work because it's what I do to get my medicine.

Another idea is to get on Medicaid, or whatever public health plan is available in your state, assuming any are. You might be able to get help at a free clinic or community mental health center. If none of these resources are available to you, public hospitals have psychiatric walk-in clinics and emergency rooms (see Health Care, pg. 275). and some have crisis teams who will send a social worker or psychiatrist to your home.

Counseling

I believe in counseling because I believe in teachers and healers, and these are the roles served by a good counselor. It is strange to have a person in your life with whom you share the most intimate details of your life, to whom you expose the most frightened and broken and cruel places inside you, but with whom you have no outside social contact whatsoever. However, this can make the work you do together feel safer than it would if you were confiding in a friend. There are things I can talk about with my counselor, suicide being an example, that would be too loaded to discuss with many of my friends or any of my family. The sense of responsibility! s different than in other relationships: if you stand up your counselor, you are not letting her down, only yourself. The relationship is entirely focused on you and your healing, so you don't have to fear that you are demanding too much.

My counselor is an amazing person. She listens to me, really listens. She doesn't let me get away with anything, but she never makes me feel attacked or violated. She's a queer mother who identified as an anarchist before I was even born! And she's connected to an entire community of healers and old-school activists that I never even hew existed. She works on a sliding scale, as many good counselors will, and has a really sharp critique of the psychiatric industry and all its exploitative tendencies — and she treats me with respect, as a peer.

In this society, we're never taught how to care for ourselves physically, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually. Healing is a skill we have to learn. We can wing it, teaching ourselves as so many anarchist musicians and bike mechanics have, but the stakes are higher. For those of us who suffer from serious chemical imbalances like manic depression, or are trying to recover from intense traumas like sexual abuse, the risks we take when we strike out on our own as if we already know how to heal wounds this deep are serious indeed. Counseling can equip us with tools to use in our own self-guided healing processes.

Accept Yourself

Here's a crazy idea: what if all your problems, your manias and phobias and dysfunctions, are actually natural, healthy reactions to a manic, paranoid, dysfunctional world? What if you are not messed up after all, but totally normal, and the hard things you are feeling are exactly what you are supposed to be feeling under these circumstances? Instead of thinking of yourself as a broken thing that needs fixing, consider what a healthy person would do if he or she were feeling this way. Rather than enthroning your problems as permanent fixtures in your life, accepting yourself can actually help you feel more capable of self-determination and transformation. Besides, who says that everyone has to be the same to be healthy, that mental health is a one-dimensional standard by which everyone can be judged? The idea that you are flawed, that you are crazy while everybody else is sane, can be paralyzing; it also sounds suspiciously like capitalist propaganda.

Talk of so-called self-improvement can reinforce the feeling, so prevalent in this society, that who we are and what we have is never enough. It's possible to become obsessed to an unhealthy degree with taking better care of yourself, being in better physical shape, doing better introspective work, becoming a better communicator. The harder you press yourself, the further these ideals seem to recede before you. As in dieting and bodybuilding, the pursuit of perfect mental health can degenerate into self-abuse.

Just as writers, painters, and musicians experience creative blocks, all of us have times when we feel lost and jaded. Everything waxes and wanes; that natural pattern governs our lives just as it does the moon and ocean. If you feel stagnant, the worst thing you can do is dwell on your perceived insufficiencies until you have entrenched yourself in total hopelessness. When something isn't working, don't beat yourself up about it; accept that it's not working for the time being, and focus on something else.

Sometimes the most healing thing you can do is simply be still, be present and in your body without any goals or intentions or pressures. Through the eyes of our competitive culture, this can look like indolence, but in truth, it's impossible to do nothing. Even if you're lying down, not thinking or hatching plans or dreaming, things are still shifting and growing inside you. Sometimes what you need is to regenerate, to let yourself rest and revive, and this can be as conscious a process as yoga or therapy or writing.

The Healing Revolution

Ultimately, mental health, like freedom, desire, culture, and everything else, is not produced individually, but by entire civilizations. No one can be wholly sane in an insane world. Discussion of mental health should not be limited to those who identify as mentally ill: it concerns all of us, for everyone is crazy to some extent. Treating mental health issues as identity politics, as if it were only a question of how the "normal" majority should take care of the mad minority, creates a false dichotomy; in truth, we all can benefit from self-care and self-healing.

If any of us are to heal, we have to heal our damaged, destructive society. Still, just as it can be unhealthy to fixate on self-improvement, we have to be careful to provide for our own emotional health and well-being in the process of fighting the system that undermines these. Capitalism is characterized by an inhuman emphasis on productivity and efficiency; naturally, we internalize this, and it infests our personal lives and dreams and political projects. Overworking ourselves in our struggles to abolish work, disregarding each other's needs in the heat of our battles against

the heartless establishment, we replicate the virus of self-destruction in our efforts to eradicate it.

Revolution is fought on two fronts, one outside, one inside. We won't be able to overthrow capitalism until we heal ourselves and each other, and we won't be able to finish healing ourselves and each other without overthrowing capitalism. Don't mistake the struggle in the streets for the only struggle, or misunderstand the time we must take to nurture ourselves and one another as a distraction from i t Healing is a form of revolution, just as revolution is a form of healing, and doing what it takes to heal yourself can be truly revolutionary.

Musical Instruments

Seizing the means of production doesn't just entail occupying the factories; it also means getting familiar with the more modest machines that produce our living environments, like musical instruments. Nothing liberates you from the dictates of a given technology like learning how it works and reworking it. You can make your own drums, didgeridoos, upright basses, and drum machines, not to mention instruments not yet invented — and when you do, please let us know, so we can compare notes. Here are just a few examples of our latest discoveries in the field.

Boviphonic Ohm Cannon

We reverse-engineered this holy terror from a children's toy. The toy said "tweet, tweet!" Someone at the lab accidentally dropped a decimal point and now it says "MOO, MOO." If you can use it as a musical instrument, you are possessed of pure genius. However, anyone in the world can use a boviphonic ohm cannon to make raucous bass blasts capable of calling cows (no shit!), rupturing internal organs (uh, not really), and adding a lovely ambiance to any public gathering.

This recipe is extremely forgiving. Alter any measurements you want. Any alteration will produce different tones and notes.

Ingredients

- Plastic or sturdy cardboard tubes — The length determines the pitch (the longer the tube, the lower the note), the diameter determines tone. We've used tubes anywhere from 1 to 4 inches in diameter and 1 to 16 feet long.
- Steel can — Food cans work well. The diameter of your can must be slightly smaller than that of your tube.
- Plastic bucket — The bucket should be sturdy. Its diameter needs to be at least four inches bigger than that of the tube you have selected.
- Plastic film — Almost any plastic works, as long as it doesn't have holes: try tarps, drop cloths, grocery bags, garbage bags. Some plastics last longer than others, and each will make a different tone. Plastics that are not stretchy, such as acetate, sound particularly nice and last long.
- Steel strapping — This is the stuff that is used to strap pallets of bricks. You can find it on construction sites, or just ask for some at a lumberyard.

Instructions

Cut a hole in the bottom of the bucket. Using pliers to hold the can, heat the rim, which must be of slightly smaller diameter than your tube, over a gas stove or propane torch until it glows bright red. Use the can to melt through the bottom of the bucket. If you fail to melt all the way through, you can finish the job width an X-acto knife.

Shove the tube through the hole. It should fit tightly. The purpose of this is to create a reasonably tight seal between the bucket and tube that will still allow you to move the tube back and forth. If it is too tight, use the side of a razor blade to scrape the inside of the hole to the proper size. If the hole is slightly too large, wrap the area to be sealed with plastic packing tape until the joint is smooth and snug.

Add stabilizers. Push the tube through the bucket, so you can work on the end without the bucket getting in the way. Using the tin snips, cut three lengths of the steel strap. The straps will keep the tube centered in the bucket while allowing it to slide a few inches forward and back; accordingly, each strip should be long enough to span from the outer wall of the tube to the inner wall of the bucket, with a few extra inches so it can be bent and attached at both ends.

Attach the straps to the tube. The straps should be spaced evenly around the tube. Screw or rivet the straps in place on the tube, then bend the straps out like spokes. Now make another go-degree bend in the straps where the tube reaches the inside of the bucket, so you have tabs to fasten the straps to the bucket.

Attach the straps to the inside of the bucket. Push the tube back so the end of the tube is even with the mouth of the bucket. The straps can be attached to the inside with rivets or screws. Drill the appropriate-sized holes through the bucket, and use them to fasten the straps {figure 13.1). Work from the outside of the bucket, so the outside remains as smooth as possible. The stabilizers make the boviphone more reliable and allow you to get cleaner, brighter notes, but they are not absolutely necessary.

Install sandpaper. Glue strips of sandpaper to the outside of the top of the bucket, with the abrasive side facing out; it is best to rough up the plastic surface before gluing. The sandpaper provides friction that will help keep the plastic skin tight. Wait for the glue to dry thoroughly before applying any stress.

Drill a blowhole. You can either cut a hole with an X-acto knife or use a drill. A one- inch hole will do nicely.

Make straps. Cut the inner tubes and tie them into two bands that fit very tightly around the top of the bucket. Do not put them on yet.

Add the plastic skin. First, make sure the end of the tube is even with the mouth of the bucket. Cut a piece of plastic that is about a foot larger than the diameter of your bucket.

Place the plastic over the end of the bucket. Fold the plastic over the bucket, then add the rubber straps. The plastic should be held tightly between the straps and the sandpaper. Adjust the plastic so that it is flat and tight across the mouth of the bucket. Now gently push the tube forward so that the end of the tube seals tightly against the plastic skin {figure 132).

Put your mouth to the blowhole and blow hard!

Tips

To produce lower notes, add length to the tube — but be warned, the longer your tube, the more air it takes to create and sustain a note. If you go low enough, use a foot pump, vacuum cleaner, or electric leaf blower to provide airflow. If you have access to a car, connect the exhaust pipe to the blowhole … my friend, you will not be disappointed! If your plastic gives out when you use powered blowers, experiment with something tougher: blue tarp material, acetate, or rubberized fabric.

Two-by-Four Marimba

This is an easy-to-make, loud, tonal percussion instrument, perfect for parades, rock bands, and your Mad Max junkyard percussion kit.

Ingredients

- A two-by-four
- String
- Foam rubber
- Drill
- Band saw — *you can substitute a reciprocating saw like a Sawzall or a bayonet saw, but the blade needs to be longer than the width of a two-by-four (which is, of course, 3.5")*

Instructions

Cut the two-by-four into different sizes, ranging from a foot to two feet long.

Use the saw to remove the middle of the underside of the board. Depending on the length of your two-by-four, leave two to four inches of unmodified board on either side of the chunk you remove. This should leave your two-by-four flat on top and curved underneath, looking like a bridge. Repeat this process with each of your lengths of two- by-four. These are your keys.

Drill a horizontal hole across the end of each key. The hole should be big enough for string to pass through.

Place the keys on the foam rubber in the order you want them. Sew each one in place by passing the string up through the bottom of the foam, through the end of a key, then back into the foam. Leave the string loose; the keys should be able to slide around on the foam a bit.

Bang on your marimba with sawed-off broom handles.

When fixed to a surface, these little discs turn vibrations into a tiny signal that can be amplified by guitar amplifiers and PA systems. Tape them to your temples when you are eating. Glue one to the bridge of your acoustic guitar or bass. Swallow one and let the wires run out of your mouth to your amp while you digest this book. Stick one to a small, quiet percussion device.

Piezo Buzzer — You have most likely seen these things before. They are thin and flat brass discs about the size of a quarter. You see them inside telephones, where they act as speakers, microphones, and ringers; they also serve as speakers for musical greeting cards. If you can't

scavenge one, it is best to order them. Radio Shack offers a wide assortment of them, but they all come encased in a plastic housing that is hard to open without causing damage; these also have an unnecessary circuit board attached.

1/4" jack — These can usually be scavenged from old guitars, stereo equipment, dead amps, mixers, or similar musical equipment — basically anything that uses guitar cords or 1/4" headphone jacks. They can also be found at electronics stores.

Piezo Buzzer: Contact Microphone

Ingredients

- Flux-core solder — thin solid-core solder with an electronics flux paste will also work
- Insulated wire — Stranded is better than solid wire because it is more flexible and easier to solder. Thinner is better; don't go too much thicker than the wires that are inside telephone cords.
- Soldering iron

Instructions

If the piezo buzzer comes with its own wires already on, solder these wires to the two leads of your 1/4" jack. If you have a piezo disc that has no leads, strip the ends of two wires and solder them to the two contact points that ought to be obvious on the disc. Solder quickly, avoiding heating up the disc too much. Discs are really delicate — you can expect to ruin a few before you get the hang of this.

Mount both disc and jack securely to the item that is to be amplified. It is best to glue the disc directly on a surface. If that is impossible, use a tight rubber band. It is important to attach the mic firmly it will pick up its own rattling if it isn't secure. Attach your jack securely to a place where it will not interfere with vibrations. Plug the 1/4" instrument cable into your device and an amplifier of some sort, and you should be in business.

Piezo pickups are extremely sensitive. The signal is very crisp and tinny, so you may want to play around with the EQ. When you get it sounding sweet, turn the little "master volume" knob on the front of the amp up to eleven and make friends and enemies dance and give up, respectively.

This bow will work on most any stringed instrument, cymbal, or musical saw, and is exceptionally easy to make.

Instrument Bow

Ingredients

- Glue
- A Wood File
- Drill

- A thin, flexible piece of wood the length of the bow you want
- A spool of thin monofilament fishing line

Some dry pinesap for rosin — I get mine from a building downtown where a huge pine board perpetually leaks sap; you can also spot it bubbling from wounds in living pines. You want it to be a bit sun-dried, not runny or sticky. When it's dry, you can crack it off with a knife.

Instructions

Your piece of wood should be thin enough that it bends easily, but is not floppy. A sturdy wooden yardstick can work, but you'll probably want to cut it shorter. If you are using a softwood lie pine, 1/4-inch thick by about 3/4-inch wide will provide plenty of spring. File a notch in each end of the wood, as shown. The notch should be about 1/2-inch wide, or as wide as the bowstrings will be. Drill a small hole in one end of the wood. Tie the fishing line through the hole. Start wrapping the line around the wood, the long way. When you wrap the line, keep it taut, with the bow slightly bent.

As you wrap, move from one side of the notches to the other. After you have wrapped one layer of line, apply glue to the two ends of the wood where the line wraps around. Apply enough to soak through the line to the wood. Continue wrapping so that each successive layer is submerged in glue. After you have built up a sufficient mass of line — about three layers — pass the end through the hole, tie it off, and add a little glue for good measure.

Before the glue dries, wedge some small pieces of wood between the bow and the bowstring at one or both ends so there will be more clearance. Pieces of wooden pencils work well for this. Add more glue so these will be more likely to stay in place. Now set the bow aside so the glue can dry completely.

Apply rosin to the strings, liberally. Try to avoid touching the strings; finger oil will prevent rosin from sticking or defeat the extra friction of the rosin, which is the whole point. Now play for us, won't you?

Phone Ocarina

Ingredients

- Handset from an old-school rotary-dial or push-button telephone
- Hand drill with drill bits of a few different sizes

Instructions

1. Remove the cord from the handset.
2. Unscrew the mouth- and earpiece covers, and remove all the entrails: speaker, microphone, wires, plug jack and any pieces of foam. Save these for other projects, of course.
3. Drill eight or fewer holes along the spine of the handset. Start at the mouthpiece end, where the jack is, and dill progressively larger and more widely spaced holes down the length of the handset. Don't go so large that you can't cover a hole with one finger.

4. Replace the mouthpiece cover on the end with the empty jack hole. If you like, replace the earpiece.

5. To play your homemade ocarina, seal off the little holes in the mouthpiece cover with the palm of one hand. Blow across, not into, the cord hole, just as you would blow across the mouth of a bottle. You can generate different notes by covering and uncovering different finger holes.

The Strax

Instructions

1) Walk into a fast food franchise, ask for a drinking straw, buy nothing.
2) With a pair of scissors, make two slices in one end of the straw to form a point like this: >
3) Pinch the side of the straw near the other end and cut a hole in it — it doesn't have to be round, but your finger has to fit over it to close it completely.
4) Repeat step three a bit higher.
5) Repeat again until you don't want any more holes, or you run out of fingers or space on the straw.
6) Roll your lips into your mouth to cover your teeth.
7) Put the pointy end of the straw in your mouth.
8) Cover all the holes with your fingers.
g) Blow into the straw and wiggle your fingers!

Diddley Bow

Instructions

The diddley bow is a simple stationary instrument that you can install anywhere you'd like to play. Drill a screw into the top and the bottom of a wall, door, or tabletop. Tie a guitar string or some similarly strong wire to both screws. Wedge pieces of wood under the string at both ends so the string becomes tight. Move the wood bridges closer to the screws to increase tension on the string. You can play a diddley bow with a pick, changing notes by holding a chunk of metal or glass against the string like a slide.

Newspaper Wraps

Ingredients

- Newspaper wrappers
- Vehicles
- Quarters

Optional Materials

- Newspaper dispenser key

Instructions

A newspaper wrap is a great way to get a message out and in the process lampoon the media who refuse to share the means to do so. It gives the lie to the rhetoric about freedom of the press by taking that freedom by storm from the cartel that monopolizes it — and simultaneously entertains, informs, and empowers witnesses. It gives the underdog leverage in social struggles, proclaiming: *Don't think you can keep misrepresenting the facts — well hijack your channels of dissemination if you won't tell our side of the story.*

First, pick your target, according to your goals — is your wrap intended to front and thus confront a certain established newspaper, or is it an all-purpose broadside to wrap every paper in town? The former approach is more effective for subtle parodies, and provides an excellent opportunity for humor; if people begin reading your wrap without realizing it is not the "real" cover of the paper they picked up, they will at first accept what they see with the same attitudes with which they receive mainstream media reports — and the shock of figuring out they've been duped just might jerk them out of putting unqualified faith in any such paper again. The latter approach — making a wrap to go around every paper in town — is more straightforward, and at least has the advantage of being universally applicable, if ubiquity is one of your objectives. Your layout will vary according to your approach — the former option requires a much greater degree of precision, of course, if the wrap really is meant to be mistaken for the object of your satire.

You can do almost anything with the content: just think, what would you say to the world if you ran the newspapers? Or, for that matter, how can you reveal what the newspapers are really saying with every front page, how can you make the implicit explicit? Humor can help keep the as-yet-unconverted reading after their initial curiosity is satisfied, as long as it isn't so heavy-handed as to alienate them. Alternatively, if you feel up for the challenge, you can try to make your content so convincing that it will not be recognized as a spoof, and thus precipitate a useful scandal around the resulting rumors, misinformation, and hysteria. It can help drive your

message home to include as many local references as possible; better yet, you could illustrate some of the articles with, say, photos from recent actions or interventions, to emphasize the contestation of power that is taking place in your area. For example, if somebody managed to put some clever graffiti on a well-known, well-guarded public monument, but it unfortunately only stayed up for a day (as the local authorities were intent on not letting anyone see that such a challenge to their power was possible), a picture taken that day could make a lovely cover illustration for a newspaper wrap; many people take the media representation of their home streets more seriously than their actual experience of them, and you can help them to feel they live in a liberated territory (or a police state, or a war zone) by capturing that moment in time. A photograph of a beating the police deny ever happened would also go nicely on the front cover of a newspaper wrap.

Find a local newspaper printing company. You'll want to use a false name in your dealings with them, just to be on the safe side. Most of the cost of newspaper production is in the start-up fees, so you might as well make a lot, unless you're so lazy the extras will just sit moldering somewhere until they are seized as police evidence. You can make a single newspaper sheet to simply go around the front, or a two-page spread to wrap the entire first section of the paper. Make sure you've got the dimensions right for your target(s)!

You won't need more than a couple of people to pick up the papers from the printer and chart the location of every newspaper dispenser in your town or borough, but you'll probably want to invite a couple dozen friends to join in the deploying — you'll have to be quick and numerous to get it all done in the brief window of time between the delivery of the day's newspapers and the hour people start picking them up. Papers are usually delivered around four in the morning, but you'll want to check this for yourself in your target area. The people delivering them are generally folks just like you, with vehicles not unlike your own (no, not the one with the stenciling all over it), so rest assured — chances are you won't look out of the ordinary carrying out your mission. They go from box to box, putting in a special key that opens them, taking out the old newspapers and putting in the new ones; you'll do the same, using quarters to open the boxes if you haven't managed to snag or replicate the special key, taking out the unwrapped papers and putting wrapped ones in their place. The most efficient method is three people to a car: one driver, one clean-cut person to go to each machine and exchange the pile of unwrapped papers within for a pile of wrapped ones, and one maniac in the back frantically wrapping away. At the very end of the trip, you can go back to the first box, where you got your first pile of unwrapped papers, and put in the last wrapped ones. Needless to say, this process works best if you're wrapping just one brand of newspaper; if you're trying to hit every one of a number of different newspapers, and there isn't enough space in the back seat to keep several separate piles going at once, you can either divide up the different newspapers between different vehicles, or just take each pile of papers back to the vehicle to wrap before returning them. It's been known to happen that people have participated in newspaper wraps on bicycles, leaving each box jammed open while they wrap its papers nearby; this is less efficient, however, and may be riskier, as it requires two trips to each box — or one long stay at each, in full view. Whatever your method, chart your route so it'll be least likely that anyone will catch on to what you're doing until you're done.

Bicyclists are best suited to going driveway to driveway, adding the wraps to individually delivered papers. Playing this role, they can round out the work of the drivers; in some areas, few people use newspaper dispensers, but if the wraps also appear in the front yards of the suburbs it will seem they are everywhere. If you can't hit every driveway in the city, pick out

a few important neighborhoods — and perhaps the driveways of a few significant people (say, editors at the targeted newspaper or rival newspapers, key players in the issues you're addressing, etc.). This can help ensure your action will achieve the notoriety and reaction it deserves — just be especially careful while carrying out this phase, so you don't get caught red-handed.

Afterwards, if it won't attract the wrong kind of attention, your leftovers can be dropped off in coffee shops, dentists' waiting rooms, and so on. Congratulate yourselves on a job well done, and don't ever talk about such things again — until it's time to round folks up for the next activity.

Account

At the conclusion of the second war with Iraq, we decided to do a newspaper wrap to push the citizens of our liberal college town toward more radical responses to our tyrannical government. We composed a satirical text with local reference points and photographs, including a redecorated stop sign across the street from the town council building. It cost us a little over a hundred dollars to make a few thousand papers, and we collected near that amount in change for the dispensers, as well.

We chose to spring into action the night before a well-attended downtown street fair, so our papers would be out during a period of especially high foot traffic. We'd solicited volunteers through the usual channels, taking people aside at potluck dinners and soccer games and so on. People were a little slow to show up at our convergence point, and we had to really hurry to get the routes divided up and set out in time. Six vehicles went out, two to three people in each, and a few pairs of bicyclists too; routes were chosen according to level of risk of the areas, level of experience of the participants, and distinctiveness of the vehicles. There were a few situations in which our delivery people were intimidated by police cars circling on their nightly beats, but every box in town was hit and nothing went wrong. A couple of hours later, the vehicles had all completed their circuits, and their occupants, on bicycles or on foot, were working on the driveways of the suburbs.

The next day, we walked about and saw people everywhere gathered around copies of our newspaper, laughing and pointing things out. The paper we had focused most on wrapping printed a peevish complaint on the editorial page, citing some other examples of direct action around town that would never otherwise have gotten coverage! All in all, it seemed like such an easy and effective project that most of us felt that, were we able to raise the money, we should do it every weekend.

Non-Monogamous Relationships

So You Want to Have a Non-Monogamous Relationship

… or two! Well, don't expect this text to be of much assistance — every relationship is different, and there is no system, no perfect procedure, guaranteed to make anyone "work." Besides — being non-monogamous, one might say, is about dispensing with protocol, not trying to make relationships "work" according to any standard: accepting them as they are and as they change. All the same, one can't deny that some approaches and behaviors tend to result in healthy dynamics, and some don't; and since most of us didn't grow up with many good examples of non-monogamous relationships to learn from, the more we discuss and compare our experiences the better-equipped we'll be to chart this unknown territory together. Shaking off conventional pair-bonding programming is nothing if not a first step toward being able to be good for others and help them be good for you.

Ingredients

- At least three people

Instructions

Being Honest in a Dishonest World

The first thing to emphasize is that being non-monogamous is not a way to sidestep the need for honesty in a relationship. If anything, it's a way to promote honesty. Monogamy, not in individual instances but as a monolithic expectation in a constraining culture, discourages honesty by punishing any desires or truths that fall outside the traditional romantic model. Non-monogamy is intended to open a space in which honesty is possible, but it also depends o n honesty to make such a space possible at all.

This is not to set a new rule, that all lovers must share everything with each other, detail by detail; but share whatever you agree to share, and be dear about what you need, too, including what you need to be sure you'll be able to be honest. The whole idea of being involved without attempting to impose a template upon your relations is to be able to be what you are without lies, guilt, or dissembling. All the same, many of us who grew up struggling in the monogamy model still retain all the bad habits we learned from it: dishonesty, shame, avoidance, fear. Even when we're in a relationship that provides room for our "dangerous desires, " we tend to wreck that space by not trusting it and thus losing the trust that sustains it. Push yourself to be honest, always — with honesty, you can have everything you want in the world, or at least all of it that the world can actually offer. If you can't be honest, try to work on that before you're involved deeply

with others. Nobody should be involved with anyone that can't be relied on to share important truths — specially frightening ones.

Establishing Expectations

Check in at the beginning of any relationship, or any interaction (like having sex for the first time) that puts the relationship on a new footing, about what your individual needs and expectations and comfort levels are, and make sure you've worked out a common understanding of them before you go any further. This will save a lot of headaches later! If your needs change, or it turns out you feel differently in a situation than you expected you would, it's nothing to feel guilty about — but you'd do well to let your lover know about it. In fact, you'd probably do well to check in with your lovers occasionally regardless, just to make sure their feelings haven't changed without them recognizing or articulating it.

It's probably just as common for lovers in a non-monogamous relationship to feel insecure about their longing for monogamy, or at least some of the reassurances it professes to offer, as it is for them to feel ashamed of their desires for others. It is important that we avoid developing a competitive culture of non-monogamy, in which people must feel shame for wanting anything "bourgeois" or "traditional." Everything, every desire and need, has to be respected, or else this is no revolution after all, just the establishing of a different norm. If it's important to you that you're non-monogamous, you may well have developed a insistent or even confrontational attitude about it, in the face of this unwelcoming society; make sure that this doesn't translate to you making others feel they must live up to some standard around you. Accept whatever others tell you about their needs supportively — they are doing you a favor by being up front with you. Maybe the differences in what you want mean you can't be involved in certain ways, at least for the time being. That's still better than making each other miserable, struggling to get each other to change or denying your needs for one another.

The terms your relationship starts on will probably set the tone for it for a long time to come. Lovers who begin on shared terms of non-monogamy and successfully establish trust with each other will probably have little trouble maintaining a healthy non-monogamous relationship for as long as both desire to. Lovers who start out in a monogamous relationship and decide to change the terms to non-monogamous, however, may well encounter difficulties, as their expectations and ways of feeling safe and loved may already be tied to the question of the other partner's "faithfulness." Now, if you really want to wreck a relationship, start it out on monogamous terms (or simply leave the issue unaddressed, so assumptions can develop unchecked by reality),then sleep with someone else, and afterwards tell your partner you want to be non-monogamous; for maximum destruction, don't even confide that you've slept with or are sleeping with someone else — let your partner discover it as a surprise. Obviously, this is not the way to go about having a healthy love affair.

Handling Jealousy

Never give one lover cause to feel threatened by another's place in your life or heart. In this society, we are constantly being made to feel that we are in competition with one another, so we feel threatened by others. Healthy non-monogamy should disprove this conditioning, not reinforce it. Make it dear, in actions as well as words, that your relationship with each person (lover

or not!) depends only on itself, not on the way it compares with other relationships. Hopefully, you're not cruising for the perfect wife or husband or trophy lover, picking up and discarding people as you hunt down the ultimate commodity on the partner market; instead, you're cultivating life-long, adaptable relationships with individuals you love and treat with respect, in which you enjoy yourselves consensually and maybe even support one another's life projects. * Lovers, in such a scenario, should have no more cause to fear or be jealous of one another than friends do — indeed, one good reason to be non-monogamous is to foster in your love affairs the qualities that make your friendships work, or, better, to blur the lines between the two.

ML the same, since you grew up in this society, there are going be situations in which one or both of you feel jealous. There are many things you can do to address this when you feel it yourself. First, try to separate and identify your different feelings, so you know what you're reacting to or acting on. The most prevalent cause of jealousy is insecurity: to be in any successful relationship, non-monogamous or not, you need to be grounded, you need to feel good about yourself and have a sense of your own worth and attractiveness. In this sense, leading a life that helps you respect yourself is practically a prerequisite for any intimacy with others. At the same time, you should be able to ask your lover for reassurance whenever you need it — don't be timid about this: if your lover loves you, he or she will want to let you know, and it's a lot better to speak up when you need it than to restrain yourself from "putting pressure" on him or her, only to explode or implode later on. To return to the subject of self-confidence, loving yourself will make it a lot easier to believe other people's reassurances.

Insecurity can manifest itself in projection: it may be easy to imagine that your lover's other lover, or crush, or potential crush, is absolutely perfect. Try to get some perspective; it may well be that you spend more time thinking about the other lover than your lover does. No one's perfect, anyway, not even the Other Woman; and, being in a non-monogamous relationship, you have less to fear than you would in a monogamous couple: your lover can experiment with others and enjoy being with them without having to feel that he or she should leave you. Outside the couple paradigm, no one can steal a lover from you — the extent to which you're good for a person determines how much he or she will stay with you. If you have a longstanding or strong love, no fling or flirtation can endanger it.

Insecurity may not be the only thing you're feeling, either. You might also feel judgmental of your lover — you might be disappointed in her or him for being attracted to someone you deem unworthy or you might feel protective for similar reasons. Either way, you have to trust your lover to know what's good for himself or herself — there's no way around that. Your partner probably can sense what he or she needs much better than you can, and the decision is not yours to make, anyway.

Jealousy can also proceed from feelings of competitiveness with other lovers, especially members of the same sex — these are fostered in this society, and often serve to isolate u s from potential comrades . Again, hopefully you trust that whomever your lover trusts is worthy of respect; remember, whatever really is good for your lover is, in some sense at least, good for you. Being able to see your lover's lovers as friends or at least allies can be revolutionary, in a society that would have us turn against each other over romance.

It might also be that your jealousy is caused by instabilities or incongruences in the relationship itself, which may need to be addressed. Jealousy isn't always a merely irrational, destructive feeling; often, it can be a useful barometer with which to gauge what is going on within and between people.

When you are feeling jealous and insecure, it may help to remember that the degree of freedom your lover has is extended to you, too. If you wouldn't want to constrained, be glad the two of you are not constraining each other. If you've had relationships with or been attracted to others besides your lover, ponder those experiences for perspective on what your lover is feeling; if those dalliances didn't decrease your lover's importance to you, these probably won't come between you, either.

When your lover is jealous, try not to feel accused or attacked. Try not to fall into the default setting of accusations, denials, attacks, defenses, suspicions, recriminations and self-recriminations. Step back and make sure it is clear how important your lover is to you; emphasize that no other attraction or relationship can threaten the one you share. (On the other hand, of course, don't ever say this if it's not true!) If the terms of the relationship or your mutual expectations have to be re-negotiated, don't put it off or skirt around the issue.

Here's another worst-case scenario: you're involved with two people, and they take an intense disliking to each other. This can be really unpleasant for everybody. There are still a few things you can do to keep things as smooth as possible, though. Don't take sides — refuse to sit as a judge while one tries to convince you of the other's wrongdoing. Have your own opinions of how they are conducting themselves, of course, but emphasize that you're not interested in being persuaded to be partisan. Emphasize to each that both are important to you — make it dear there'll be no choosing of one over the other, and that if either relationship ends it will be on account of factors internal to it, not external. Encourage the two of them work things out like adults, if possible. Don't ferry messages back and forth between them. Definitely don't let yourself make decisions to appease either of them, even unconsciously — this will only make you resent them, and disappoint yourself, in the long run.

Resisting Hierarchy

You may have heard about the "primary partner" model, one of the most widely discussed schematics for non-monogamy. Some feel such schematics suggest hierarchy or protocol: they hold that each person should be his or her own primary partner, and endeavor to be committed to all the partners with whom he or she shares life, whatever roles they play. Indeed, we risk a lot by not letting those roles be fluid enough to accommodate all the changes that relationships, needs, and expectations are always going through. It's important that people in a relationship know what to expect from one another, but formal titles should not be necessary for this.

Speaking of a hierarchy of partners — in addition to atavistic dishonesty and shame, another leftover behavior you may have carried with you from the monogamy ghetto is a tendency to treat lovers besides your "primary partner" with less respect or sensitivity. This is something people, especially men, do when cheating in monogamous relationships: motivated by guilt, they mistreat their fellow adulterer, as if to show that, though they are cheating on their partner, they still value him or her above all others. Non-monogamy is supposed to mean everyone in every relationship gets treated with respect: every plant and animal in an ecosystem is equally important, regardless of how great or small a role it plays.

Working Things Out

No one should pressure others into a relationship model with which they don't feel comfortable. That can only make both parties unhappy. At the same time, you're not forcing others into anything by making your own decisions about what is right for you. You make your decisions, let others make theirs; where there is common ground, you can meet. Ideally, every couple should have the same idea of what they want their relationship to be; realistically, people have to make compromises — just try to make sure they're mutually beneficial compromises. Again, there's no perfect model: each couple, threesome, and community must work out for itself how to get along and be happy together. What works for one may not work for another — it might not even look healthy or sensible to another, but that's the way it goes.

<quote> *"I have one last question. If I have more than one lover at a time, won't I end up calling them by the wrong names in bed and getting in trouble with everybody?"* </quote>

Actually, my experience is the opposite: when you're used to being sexually involved with more than one person, lovers' names cease to be noises you make out of habit whenever you're aroused and come to refer to the actual individuals in question. Being non-monogamous, you may discover that when you're in bed with someone, you're present with that person as an individual, rather than as a role in your life, more so than you would be with a girlfriend or boyfriend. If that doesn't prove to be the case for yon, there's nothing that says you have to go to bed with more than one person at a time to be non-monogamous — or even with anyone, for that matter. Non-monogamous and celibate, that's a legitimate option, too, with a lot to recommend it.

Parties

Ingredients

- A bunch of people who don't know each other but should
- Creativity
- Follow-through — optional, but a nice bonus

Instructions

All of us know a few people who would be the best of friends if they only knew each other. One fun way to take care of a lot of these introductions all at once is to throw what I've dubbed a Mutual Strangers Party, in which you gather them all in one room in a deliberate attempt to provide a catalyst for a blossoming and long-lasting friendship or several. You can announce these intentions of yours, if you have a sort of social-activist motivation, presenting a manifesto or otherwise making explicit your goals for the party; or you can simply provide the crudites or crumpets, and let your guests do the work. The problem with friendships born in this way, of course, is their fragility, and the likelihood that one or both parties will fail to pursue each one, so you might want to think of some ways to encourage your guests to make solid friendships of these tentative beginnings; some rapidly brainstormed suggestions include supplementary activities scheduled for a later date, a list of names and phone numbers to distribute, a homework assignment such as a gift exchange … At the very least, with so many wonderful people in one room, it should be a fabulous party!

Account

I was handed a mysterious folded up sheet of paper at a Rah Bras show, and instructed not to open it until I was alone. It turned out to be an invitation to come in disguise to an appointed place at an appointed date and time, and to tell no one of the invitation. When I got there, wrapped in scarves on a murderously hot North Carolina evening, I was blindfolded and led into a darkened room, where I was placed kneeling on the floor. I could feel other people around me, could hear them breathing, shifting their weight, but we had been instructed not to speak. Eventually, after listening to others being led into the room, I heard the door dose and silence descended. The sound of running water began, and then I could hear someone playing a saw. It was soothing and eerie. This quiet was harshly interrupted by flashing lights, startlingly bright through the blindfold, and loud noises, and the smell of burning. A woman (the same friend who had given me the invitation) talked about how contexts shape human interactions, and suggested that by placing people in unexpected and unusual contexts we can breakdown some of the barriers between

us, “break the silence of isolation.” She paused. “There’s tea and coffee in the other room.” We remove our blindfolds, and for a second I don’t recognize anyone through their disguises. Then identities begin to come into focus: some women I know, including my three housemates, some women I recognize but have never met, and some women that are complete strangers to me. In the kitchen, over tea and coffee, the woman responsible for all of this revealed that she wanted to do it because she felt there were so many amazing women in town, but no real network of female friendships. We agreed to try to reinforce our vague acquaintances and other associations with powerful bonding and energizing fun , and decided that our first activity would be a massive game of Assassin, carried out over the next couple of weeks, in which we were all assigned victims and tried to avoid getting “killed” ourselves. My housemates and I endured a series of threatening phone calls and letters (cutout of magazines, naturally), a doll tattooed to match one of us and hanged in a tree outside our door, and nerve-racking trips to the grocery store. I managed to kill off two people, but one got me at the final showdown, in the dub where we’d agreed to meet for another show to find out who’d survived to the last.

In the end, nothing more came of that party. We never got together again. Chapel Hill/Carrboro’s female population is perhaps even more loosely connected now than it was then. We were busy, active women, and we didn’t follow through on the initiative our friend had shown. But I still think it’s a fantastic idea, even if none of us ever makes it work perfectly.

Pie Throwing

Ingredients

- Deserving target
- Crazed, pie-slinging assailant(s)
- Pie — *see below for recipe and packaging options, and factors to consider in choosing*

Optional Ingredients

- Diversions
- Witnesses
- Photographers
- Scouts
- Getaway Driver

Instructions

Pieing, like property destruction, demystifies and undermines the power structures of our society by showing that icons and idols are not unassailable or above ridicule. It's like burning someone in effigy, only better, because it reveals how, in this media-addled society, public figureheads are nothing more than effigies of themselves, ripe for the roasting.

First Things First...

Choose a worthy target. It could be a specialist, CEO, or head of state — pie terrorists have already hit all of these on various occasions to great effect- or a less obvious quarry who nonetheless represents social forces imbued with a seriousness that must be undercut. Hitting a reporter during a live media event, for example, could send an important message.

The other question is when and where. Striking while your target is onstage giving a speech delivers the maximum shock and awe; on the other hand, it also involves the maximum danger of being caught, so if you're not eager to go to court and perhaps jail, you could try striking somewhere between the chauffeured car and the red-carpeted doorway and then making a break for it. Be on the lookout for perfect opportunities; don't force things, they'll present themselves sooner or later. As you balance risk versus audience and humiliation potential, factor in local legal precedents, the prevailing political climate, and the competence of your lawyer. Don't expect justice, but don't let the police state keep you down.

Dress the Part

It doesn't take an economist or espionage expert to figure out that if you try to enter a meeting of the pretentious and portentous with metal spikes in your nose and pie- stains on your t-shirt, you may not be admitted. Shave, put on a suit, wear an American flag pin, keep your hair short — you'll be able to go anywhere! More important than the accessories, however, is the vibe you project: you should radiate confidence, comfort, and a sense of purpose, as if you not only belong there but serve an important organizational role. It can be shockingly easy to sneak into high-security events: a few weeks ago, my student friends got in free to a top dollar fundraiser at which the Vice President was speaking, simply by introducing themselves at the door as the local Young Republicans group. They would have been able to stay for the whole event, had the Young Republicans themselves not eventually shown up! For more on such matters, see Infiltration, pg. 306.

As for the pie, carry it in a bowling ball bag, or keep it in a container with a plastic lid and carry it in a nondescript briefcase or top-secret spy satchel under your coat. The type of pie will dictate the details of concealment and delivery, while the environment will dictate your subterfuge; at a press conference, you might want to smuggle it in inside a smart attache case or large notebook, while on the street you could carry it in a pizza box, same as you would Stencils (pg. 516) or Asphalt Mosaics (pg. 66) another evening.

The Meringue Is the Message

The experienced pie assassins of the Biotic Baking Brigade use whipped cream on paper plates whenever possible: whipped cream makes a dramatic mess, and paper plates are harmless projectiles. On the other hand, if your target is surrounded by security personnel, you probably won't be safe stopping to fill a plate with whipped cream at the last moment; in such a situation, something with enough internal coherence to be kept sidewise until the moment of truth, such as a tofu cream pie, will serve better. Old-fashioned apple or cherry pies have a certain nostalgia value that can sometimes outweigh their unwieldiness.

Try not to do anything that will actually injure your target — your goal is to humiliate, not hospitalize, or else you'd be using a crowbar. If your target is wearing glasses, unless you are indeed using whipped cream on a paper plate or something similarly fluffy, try to hit from the side, avoiding the eye area. As for ingredients, staying away from animal products is not only eco-friendly, but also saves you the trouble of researching whether your quarry is lactose intolerant. Some pie fillings can look like blood on the recipient's face, so stay away from those unless that's the image you want the world to see.

Launch

Should you throw your missile, or mash it right in the victim's face? The former is less certain to succeed, but safer for the target, and more breathtaking to behold when it works; the latter is harder to carry off in the midst of high security, especially if you're hoping to escape. If you may indeed have to throw the pie, make sure you get plenty of practice in advance.

If there are armed guards present, "by to make it clear at the last instant that your weapon is a pie and nothing more: hold it high and move with steadiness and confidence — no desperate lunges! You want to retain just enough of the element of surprise to hit your object, without

getting shot full of bullets as a result. It never hurts to have a clever quip prepared, either: "It's a good day to pie," etcetera.

How many assailants is enough? Having several ready can increase the odds that one will succeed, but it might be easier to stay inconspicuous if only one or two people are sneaking around where they shouldn't be. If a diversion draws everyone's attention in one direction, the lone pie-slinger can approach from the other side. Again, the terrain will determine what works ; if you have to cover a broad area and don't know where your quarry will show himself, a dozen groups of three might fan out to be sure one could do the job.

Pies on Prime Time

A funny, dramatic photo and a witty press release (see Mainstream Media, pg. 358) will get you a long way, whether your intention is to get coverage in the corporate press or just inspire your fellow radicals through underground reports. To this end, having your own photographers on hand can be a good idea — if you do succeed in acting with the element of surprise, they'll probably be the only ones ready to snap the pictures at the big moment, unless you've interrupted a photo session to make your hit. A good image of a successful pieing can make it into commercial outlets that would otherwise never publish anything compromising the dignity of dignitaries. If you're set on making this happen, get your image and press release out the instant the event takes place, and have a press liaison ready to answer questions immediately about why anyone would want to pie your chosen target. Even if you're trying to get media attention, don't rely on those deceit-spewing mercenaries — make sure you're putting the necessary energy into supporting independent media networks that are ready to tell the truth for its own sake.

Account: A Pie Never Thrown

The President of the United States was running for re-election, and showed up at a city in our territory for a fundraising luncheon. Quite a few of the state's wealthiest and most conservative businessmen came to pay thousands of dollars a plate to hear him speak, a far greater number of angry protesters showed up to boo him, and the city brought in massive numbers of police to assist the Secret Service in protecting our Campaigner in Chief. The stage was set for something to happen — but what?

The character of the pre-protest rally was dictated by the "opposition" party, which was as repugnant as the incumbent himself. None of us had made it out in advance to beautify the terrain, and though there were some radicals present, there was no framework for militant action organized, either. Things only got a little interesting when everyone converged around the convention center at the end of the luncheon; finally, there was a little noise and spirit. The police had us lined up behind a metal fence on one side of the building, however, and it was still one of those disempowering, demoralizing situations where the best you can hope for is to perform your posed discontent for a camera crew.

I ran around to survey the area, and figured out which route the President's motorcade would be using to leave. The police had blocked all access to it except for an alley that could be reached by passing through a hotel parking garage. I slipped back to the main group, and let the drummers know about this; they proceeded there, to see the motorcade off. I was about to join them, when I spied a small group of men in expensive business suits. They were walking down the street in the

opposite direction, right past the protesters and away from the police lines, receiving attention from no one. In twos and threes behind them, more such groups were leaving the building and walking out of the area, presumably back to their cars. These were the men who had paid to attend the fundraiser. I decided to let the drummers handle the going-away party and investigate.

I accosted the next pair of businessmen, looked deep into their eyes, and raised my fingers in their faces in an insulting gesture. This did little to advance the struggle for social liberation, though it did prompt the Muslim minister who had been the only even vaguely radical speaker at the pre-protest rally to point me out to his friends and give me his card. I took a different tact with the next capitalist who came along — I fell in beside him, and began interrogating him about his social role and political goals. Well-practiced as his kind have to be in evasiveness and prevarication, he was nearly a match for me in the rhetoric department, and I hadn't quite finished converting him to anarchism by the time he got to his car.

At that point, we were quite far from the protest and the police — looking around the empty streets, I saw only a few figures, al I of them other bourgeois pigs leaving the luncheon! Christ, I realized, this is where the action could have been, if only we'd prepared. Fuck the big guy, with his millions of dollars of security — he only has power because these people pay so much to come to his luncheons, and here they are totally unprotected! If we had come in small groups with cameras and pies, we could have provided a persuasive deterrent to these folks showing up to future such events, and quite probably gotten away with it, too. I guess there's always next time — and yes, kids, if there's ever a noxious political fundraiser in your area, please do this at home!

Portrait Exchange

Ingredients

- A pad of paper to draw on
- Pencils, pens, or other drawing tools
- An eraser (optional)
- Reciprocation device (in this example, the "Grievance Board")
- A bicycle or other honorable means of transportation
- Solid listening skills
- A table, portable easel, chair, etc. (optional)
- Drawing ability- moderate to jaw-dropping; confidence may compensate for lack of skill
- A reasonably open mind — a tendency to give people the benefit of the doubt
- A tendency towards extroversion

Instructions

Foundation

Here's the short version: set yourself up in public spaces drawing free portraits for passersby, as a way to initiate interaction. Read on to learn about one agent's experiences inventing and testing this method.

It was my growing frustration with drawing in an isolated studio that led me to pack up some supplies and do my first "Portrait Exchange" experiment in the middle of the city. I was learning a great deal in my studio, but I felt disconnected from others, from the city, from the very system I was attempting to understand, critique, and change. Besides, I wanted people who didn't like galleries to see my drawings — some of my drawings don't like galleries. I wanted people to own my work without paying for it. I wanted to involve others in the process of making art, a process I find so wonderful that I would recommend it to a stranger on the street.

In the middle of a workday, I biked up to a commercial block where I was a guest/ stranger and whose supporting community I knew little about. I set up my portable easel on the side of a sidewalk block and, once I got the nerve, began hawking my "free portraits" shamelessly. I had no idea whether I would be embraced or booted off the block. I had a hand-drawn sign that said, "Free Portraits, 3 Minutes or Less, No Gimmicks!" People were naturally confused. I could follow

the progression of their conceptions of who I was very easily by reading their faces as I patiently explained the project and waited for their furrowed brows to relax. I found that emphasizing "free" and "three minutes" was helpful in getting my point across quickly. The time constraint was necessary because most of the people passing me were going somewhere and I knew I couldn't expect to engage them without a time limit. Once they calmed down and were speaking with me and being drawn, the actual drawing could take much longer than three minutes. I never really timed them.

The energy was electric. Sharing three minutes of intimacy with a stranger is exciting, and the speed with which anonymity melts is breathtaking. All sorts of personalities were captivated by the prospect of waiting away with a portrait, particularly a half-decent one. Some people hung around to be cheerleaders, professing my skills to new passersby. Some people hung around to talk shit, to see if they could get under my skin, to see what I was made of. All the while I was having the time of my life, busting my ass in an effort to do justice to each new curious face.

I had prepared a "Grievance Board" which I intended to use to collect people's grievances with the area or community that they lived in. This wasn't something that I wanted to push on people, so I went out of my way to explain that it was optional, but if they so desired they were more than welcome to add something to the Grievance Board. To my pleasant surprise people were all too eager to express themselves, to present both minor annoyances and major complaints. From the rotting produce at the local grocery store to the lack of strong interracial communication, the Grievance Board soon came to be a portrait of the neighborhood.

After some two hours my drawing hand was starting to cramp up and I knew it was time to go — I needed work on my endurance. I waited for the fluctuating crowd around me to die down long enough to rip my sign off the brick wall and start folding up my easel. A few minutes later I was back on my bike, heading home with the satisfaction of having drawn 30 portraits, the elation of giving them all away, and the weight of a limp left hand and a thousand new ideas.

Further Articulation

It took me a little while to comprehend just how successful the experiment had been. I'd been unsure if people would embrace me or beat my ass, but I put myself out there, and in doing so I was completely transformed. An experiment became a launchpad. It was immediately apparent to me that this project was ripe with potential far beyond what I had expected. I viewed this concept of a Portrait Exchange as not just a self-contained artwork, but also, and more importantly, a tool, a simple but potent invention teeming with uncharted uses and destinations.

For many reasons, my portrait-drawing enabled many different people to open up to me, to allow me inside their lives during a three- to five-minute blip in their daily routine. Their grievances were a documentation of existence at specific points along my path, specific points in specific neighborhoods of a specific city that is supposedly indexed thoroughly by the Census Bureau, life-affirming and captivating as the personal interactions between myself and those I drew were, I wanted the 'Exchange to fulfill a greater function. My ambition was brewing. I began to think of myself as some kind of bastardized statistician, some Census Bureaucrat with an unhealthy human streak and a penchant for accuracy.

The next step in the process for me, the tangent I decided to follow, was to "test" the Census data for the city of Pittsburgh neighborhoods. I did a little research at the public library in a room devoted to local and state-based information. Taking a look at the portraits that the Census draws

of different neighborhoods,! quickly realized that, whoever those people are, they can't draw for shit- Neighborhoods and boroughs are categorized by a few simplistic statistics, revolving around race (black, white, and other!), income, and level of education. What can possibly be learned from such portraits? I began to think about the ones who look at those statistics… property owners? businesses? politicians? Perhaps it would be wrong of me to call these statistics outright racist and classist, but they perpetuate a system of categorization that ends up being racist and classist. Either way, I realized that with my shiny new tool, the softly sharpened 3B pencil, I could gather data about neighborhoods that would be more representative of the people as individuals. By offering to take down people's grievances about their community I could accumulate "data" that would be insightful and relevant to humans, not just business. I could reshape the landscape of the city by presenting information that would completely dwarf the significance of the census. It could lead to a new convention, even, of the city hiring rambunctious portrait artists every few years to gather the consensus.

I had to start small, though. I chose the most statistically dramatic neighborhoods as my first destinations. The richest, the poorest, the blackest, the whitest, the most educated, the least. I brought a different Grievance Board to each place, labeled with the name of the neighborhood. I set up in spots that appeared to have a lot of foot traffic, mostly near commercial areas, and I opened my big mouth and asked if anyone wanted free portraits. The range of responses was tremendously diverse. Here follow a few anecdotes …

As a white guy in the blackest neighborhood (98.6% black), the skepticism was thick as I walked along the road looking for a place to set up my easel. As I found out later, white people in that neighborhood are most often police. Once I found a good spot to set up my easel, a young man approached and asked what I was doing. I told him I was drawing free portraits. He started to get agitated, assuming it was a business strategy … "Oh, I see, so you draw a few for free, and then we gotta start paying." Makes sense — why the hell would someone from outside the community come in and draw free portraits? I explained that they really were free, and he immediately read that I was being honest, and expressed complete support of my endeavor.

The rest of the day was amazing. People thought it was the greatest thing, lines formed, and many would come by just to watch. At one point, an older guy came by and stood right beside me, quietly watching me work. When I finished the drawing and gave it to the woman I was drawing, he looked at me and asked, "You're done with that? "He proceeded to critique my style, explaining details like how I shouldn't erase my initial sketch lines, because "you can use those." During the middle of the next portrait, I let him take over. He was skilled, using a much more graceful style than my own harsh marks, and applying careful layers of shading with the side of the pencil. However, his portrait probably took fifteen minutes, and the woman who was standing patiently while he drew called him out: "How many years have you lived here and you never came outside to do this?"

In the most well-educated neighborhood, I was invisible. I was amazed at how many people passed up free portraits. The area was thriving, with successful businesses hawking their wares all around me — perhaps in a neighborhood where money's not that tight, a free portrait really isn't that mouth-watering. Nonetheless, once I got a few people curious and started churning out drawings, a high level of interest ensued. I met a lot of older people I normally would never encounter: an ex-music professor and rabid vinyl addict who gave me an open invite to his listening study, for example, and an art professor who was curious how I got permission to do public art ("Well, I wasn't really aware that I needed permission"). The grievance list was laughable in

comparison to the lists I had already accumulated from rougher neighborhoods characterized by an overzealous police presence: noisy radiators, inconsiderate dog owners, and the like.

I didn't draw anyone over 3 0 in the whitest neighborhood. It was probably my timing, but also perhaps my location, two variables I am still learning to adjust for. This neighborhood seemed incredibly isolated, on the outskirts of the city in a particularly vacant area. I drew a lot of listless kids. For about an hour I was essentially hanging out with a crew of teenagers who were having a lot of fun getting their portraits drawn, complimenting my skills and calling their friends on cell phones to tell them to come on out. They were disappointed when I told them I'd only be there for a few hours. They think this shit is easy!

The project is far from over. I want to compile information about humans that is as human as the humans who offered it up. At the same time, I want this information to be considered on the same terms as existing Census statistics, so that it may compete with and combat Census dominance. I haven't yet found the way to have it both ways. How can I collect non-standardized information and compile it so that it can be analyzed efficiently? Maybe it can't be done. Much of the "post production" is still up in the air. This recipe is fresh like mom's bread, and can surely be sliced in many different ways.

General Cooking Instructions

Understand the difference between a park and a busy street, and the different attitudes that people may have toward your work depending on the time and place when and where they approach you. The only areas you want to avoid are those where you would simply be a novelty (such as a park area).

Be honest with the people you meet. Don't feign nonchalance if you're actually there as part of a multi-person effort to index the town based on human input. People deserve to know who you are, where you're from, and why you're doing what you're doing. Not everyone will love you for sticking your neck and your nose out. There are several excellent sociopolitical critiques of the motivation for this project. It's important to accept them, but not get paralyzed by them.

Don't step on anyone's toes. If you set up in a neighborhood and people make it clear to you that you're not wanted (i.e. , they tell you that directly), then pack up and go elsewhere. Maybe it's just one particular person, and you can come back on another day when things are a little warmer. On a personal note, I have never ever had a hostile situation arise, and I've drawn in many different types of neighborhoods.

Don't accept any money. It will be tempting, particularly because some people will feel intrinsically incapable of accepting your drawing without paying for it. And hell, you probably could use the cash — you're an artist, right? The problems with payment are serious, though. It sets a precedent of expectation both for you and for those being drawn. Placing your artwork within a financial framework will force a cold professionalism onto your intentions, and before long you'll lose context and become just another street vendor. As if that's not reason enough to avoid the green, the moment you accept a cent from anyone you play safely into the game of law enforcement. Any cop can then forcibly remove you from the premises for soliciting business without a license.

Strategize what can be done with the information you collect. My recipe, in this way, I is gloriously unfinished, I'm sure there are dozens of possible ways to see this through I to beautiful and effective conclusions .

Reclaim the Streets

Ingredients

- Lots of fun people
- Material por roadblocks — e.g. couches, junker cars, tripods and experienced people to be on the tripods
- Well-scouted meeting spot, route, and destination
- Handbills, posters, and other publicity announcing the event
- Fliers to pass out to passersby during the event, inviting them to join in and explaining the event
- Bullhorns
- Banners and flags bearing messages
- Chalk, spray paint, stencils
- Mobile sound system — this could range from a truck with a disc jockey and sound system inside to a bike cart with a boombox; remember, whatever it is, it could be confiscated by the cops
- Decorative props — e.g., inflatables, puppets, flags, enormous metal icosahedrons, large paper mache suns, moons, and animals
- Games — e.g., Twister, jump rope
- Polaroid camera and photos to give away — and perhaps stickers to put on them
- Free food, massages, etc.

Instructions

A Reclaim the Streets action hijacks public space to show some of the ways it can be used that are more creative, exciting, and community-oriented than mere commerce or traffic; essentially, it is a radical, do-it-yourself street carnival. It is not a protest confronting the authorities who inhibit such activities so much as it is a demonstration that sidesteps their control to provide a temporary example of what we're all missing. This can be an excellent way for a radical community to have a good time and practice reinterpreting and rearranging public life, while breeding new desires and an expanded sense of the possible in passersby.

The most basic element of such an action is a terrain to be reclaimed. Before you select a location, determine how much of a challenge you're ready to take on. There are many parks and sidewalks that deserve to have new life breathed into them, and it's wise not to overextend at first: if your city or town is devoid of social life, it's probably better to start out getting people together in a risk-free, low-key manner than it is to cut immediately to big confrontations with police. At the same time, if your community is ready, there's a lot to be said for highly visible, ambitious takeovers of areas that no one could imagine being used for anything other than the purposes to which capitalism has consigned them. One hundred people dancing, playing kickball, and picnicking in the middle of the freeway while everyone else sweats and swears in traffic certainly puts the conflict between the partisans of business and pleasure in clear terms. Such an occupation is bound to be frustrating for at least some of those who have cast their lot with the status quo; as a rule of thumb, it's generally best to go ahead and piss off the bosses and bureaucrats, while being careful to entertain and engage Joe and Jane Public instead of infuriating them.

Regardless of how disruptive you plan your event to be for business as usual, it should take place at a location where people naturally congregate, at a time when they will be most likely to stick around to see what's happening. Thus, if you've chosen a business district, the end of the Friday workday might be perfect, while a Saturday afternoon would be better for a downtown square. At their best, Reclaim the Streets actions are not invitation-only festivals of interference for an insider elite, but surprise parties with the public at large as the guests of honor, Think throughout the planning about how you will make strangers feel welcome participating in your event-if you do your work well, they will find themselves joining in before they've stopped to think about it.

When it comes to promotion and publicity, a Reclaim the Streets action, like any unpermitted action, presents something of a double bind in that it needs to slip under the radar of the authorities while being conspicuous to everyone else. Even if you're planning an event in a public park, you'll find that the rules surrounding the use of both private property and public space are rigged to prevent people from getting together outside the circuitry of commerce and consumption. Applying for a permit will most likely only incur more official attention and consequent attempts to prevent your event from happening at all, unless you're really ready to go that route the whole way and have the requisite legal counsel, financial resources, free time, and privilege to be respected by the authorities. This means that the right to organize public events is reserved for those that most resemble corporations and government agencies, so it can be worth doing things without a permit just for the sake of setting a precedent in favor of free speech.

If you work without a permit, you had better have the advantage of surprise, so the police won't be ready to shut your event down immediately. If you only publicize your went through channels that won't reach the ears of the authorities, this can secure you that advantage, but it will also limit participation to an invite-only crowd plus passersby. Alternatively, you can keep the location of the event a secret until the moment it begins, or somehow attract so many more people or display so much more energy and cleverness than anyone expected that the police won't be prepared to stop you.

According to your plan, you will either need to advertise your event selectively and securely, or as widely as possible. One way to combine the two approaches is to advertise the event with a slew of different posters — *open drum circle to welcome spring," "join the radical drum corps,"

"art bike rally" — while spreading the word to everyone you trust that these events will all fuse into a Reclaim the Streets.

If you must keep your target area a secret, but you want to promote the went widely, advertise a meeting point alone. Everyone can gather there, then proceed to the secret destination. If necessary, have the mass that assembles break up into many small groups, each led by someone in the know, so the police will be hard-pressed to keep up with them all; the groups can all converge suddenly at the same location and time, and the party begin. A bicycle parade (see Bicycle Parades, pg. 100) can also take place, to scout the area, keep police befuddled, and add to the festive atmosphere.

You may need to blockade the area you have selected (see Blockades and Lockdowns, pg. 162). It's generally better to reroute traffic than to stop it cold, both to maintain pleasant relations with other citizens and to make your event sustainable. Traffic signs and cones hunted and gathered from urban environments will give an official air to your barricade, while couches and easy chairs will emphasize the disjunction between work space and play space. You can buy old junker cars — paying in cash, leaving no record of how they were acquired — and disable them in the middle of key intersections. Ambitious, large-scale Reclaim the Streets actions have used tall tripods with people atop them to secure space before; this is dangerous, of course, and should only be hazarded by those with a lot of experience. If you want to reserve an area usually filled by parked cars, park your own cars in all the spaces in advance, then move them all at once, leaving the spaces occupied by the materials unloaded from the cars for the event. Alternatively, a truck filled with such materials can drive by at the critical moment and be unloaded by the crowd. Materials can also be concealed in an alley nearby — in a dumpster, if need be, assuming you've done your homework on trash collection times!

That's the difficult stuff. Now think about all the fun, exciting things you can do in your liberated zone! Roll out the red carpet, set up a sandbox, tie ribbons around everything, drop banners (see Banner Drops and Banner Hoists, pg. 75), throw flowers (see Dumpster Diving, pg. 219), decorate every surface with sidewalk chalk — decor counts for a lot when it comes to reinventing a space and setting a new tone for what can happen in it. Stage theatrical weddings, puppet shows, poetry readings, games of limbo, satirical political speeches, drum circles, street theater. Set up tables with free food, fortune cookies, literature (see Distribution, Tabling, and Infoshops, pg. 210), massages, portraits (see Portrait Exchange, pg. 415}, or palm reading. Lay down a mat for breakdancing. Bring stilt-walkers, DJs spinning danceable tracks, live musicians, guerrilla gardeners planting fruit trees and vigorous weeds, jugglers and clowns. Arrange performers throughout the space in such a way that they won't interfere with each other's acts. Broadcast pirate radio programs to inform and invite those nearby.

Electrical outlets are not hard to find in public areas — try lampposts or even stores. These will be useful for powering musical equipments, fans to blow up inflatables, projectors and lights, and other crazy machines.

To emphasize this once more: write walk-on roles into your street party! For example, you could paint a funny image on a wooden backdrop with holes cut into it, and give out free Polaroids to people who want to pose with their faces in the holes, slapping a sticker on each bearing the punch line for the image, information about the event, or the address of a relevant website. Also, have handouts ready for the crowd of onlookers, explaining the meaning of the event from the various perspectives of those involved.

Figure out ways to invite and involve people from every walk of life. For example, if you are teaching a class of kids, bring the class, with something for them to perform or do for the occasion. The presence of students may help to defuse the dangers posed by emotionally stunted law enforcement agents.

The police, once they arrive, will ask who is in charge. Make sure everyone involved knows to say they are just random passersby who happened to join in. The longer the authorities are confused and unsure of what to do, the longer your event can go on. At some point, once they've gotten oriented, they will close in to force people out of the area and perhaps make arrests. It's usually best to end things just before this happens, in order to come out ahead and ensure a positive experience for everyone — but remember, police will often try intimidation tactics before they do anything else, so it's good to develop an instinct for when they are bluffing. Make sure that everyone can disperse safely from the area, and that the police won't know which cars parked nearby belong to people attending the event. When it's time to go, precious materials can be secreted nearby and picked up later if need be.

Have a legal group ready to bail out anyone who is arrested, and if possible a lawyer to handle cases related to the event. At the beginning of the event, cards can be distributed with a number to call in case of arrest.

One more hint: during the preparation process, on top of everything else you have to do to get ready, let your collaborators know you will be bringing a special surprise to the event. Challenge them to reciprocate.

Account

In DC, we have had two Reclaim the Streets actions (and a few other actions that were not specifically billed as RTSs, but fashioned similarly.) This is an account from the first DC Reclaim the Streets, which took place on Saturday, June 23, 2001.

A small group of us started planning for the action a couple of months before the action date. During the first two meetings we talked about our vision for the event and how to organize it. In the second meeting we broke into working groups: outreach, tactical (and blockading, which in this case meant cars), art, and fun and games. The groups met independently and shared information with the other groups on a need-to-know basis. For example, I was in the core organizing group, but not in the tactical group, so I didn't know until the morning of the event what the final destination was- and only learned it then because 1 needed to drop off some supplies in advance. Others in the core groups did not know the location until we arrived. This was very important: for our plan to succeed, we needed the element of surprise so we could set up roadblocks without the police knowing what was happening.

The outreach group made hundreds of full-color posters and fliers. The front of the fliers read, "Street Party! Converge at Dupont Circle, 3 p.m., Saturday, June 23, Featuring: DJs [followed by the names of the five DJs], Free! Reclaim the Streets!" and featured our web address and a picture of people dancing. The back read, "Featuring live DJs, dancing, music, street theater & soccer. Bring chalk, toys (especially water toys and Frisbees),boomboxes, banners, signs, and costumes. Stepping off the sidewalks and into the streets brings us together and allows us to challenge the dehumanization of our lives. A street party is a liberated zone, where we can practice life as we'd like it to be — full of color, community, and mutual aid." We wanted the poster to be appealing to

a broad range of people, from rave kids and activists to parents and children. We also made 11" x 17" posters and hung them on lampposts all over town using wheatpaste (see Wheatpasting, pg. 598).

The tactical group was in charge of deciding where to hold the event, what route to take to get there, and how to blockade the road so we could hold the area we wanted for as long as possible. In our larger group, we chose the meeting point for the action, Dupont Circle. This convergence point was publicly announced on the fliers. We chose Dupont because it was a public park where a large number of people could converge on a summer day without attracting too much attention, it was accessible by public transportation, and, as a number of roads departed from the circle, it would be difficult for the police to block our exit from it.

A subgroup of the tactical group was the car group, who were responsible for finding and getting old cars that could run enough to get a few miles but were such junkers that it would be no loss to leave them behind. They ended up paying a couple hundred dollars, in cash, for two cars. The previous owners signed over the titles to the cars to the fake names the buyers gave them; for a later action, we were able to get cars for free with a little more time and searching. It was also members of the car group who, on the morning of the action, drove the cars to the two ends of the street we were to reclaim, acted as if the cars had broken down in the middle of the street, and then pretended to look to see what was wrong with the cars while actually disabling them so they would be difficult to move. Later, their tires were slashed, too. Only the tactical group knew who was in the car group, since the car people were in a high-risk position.

The arts group spent the months leading up to the event making beautiful banners and flags, which were carried in the march to the RTS destination and hung over the broken-down cars and at the entrance to the party. They also made large paper mache props — including a huge sun, moon, and lightning bolt (the RTS symbols),which were carried in the parade and used to decorate the party.

The fun and games group gathered lots of games and props to be used during the party — including multiple games of Twister, hundreds of water balloons, chalk, spray paint, jump ropes, and noisemakers. This group also spent some time dumpstering couches, chairs, road cones, and general junk for decorating the site and helping to block the road.

We probably should have had a fundraising group, since we did shell out a good deal of money and fundraising did not end up happening in a very organized way. We were able to collect quite a bit of money, though, by walking around the RTS with large trash- cans suggesting that people "throw their money away"!

A big problem with our organizing that we have tried to address since our first RTS is gender and experience divisions between the working groups. To illustrate, the tactical group was made up entirely of men who were experienced activists and friends, while the other groups were made up of women and many of the men who were less experienced in activism. This division, in which men do the "sexy" up-front work while women do the behind-the-scenes preparatory work, was fairly common in some of DC's activist groups. Having experienced people who know each other do high-risk actions together can make sense, but it can also be an excuse to avoid sharing skills, diffusing power, or taking on more thankless jobs. Each action should be an opportunity for new people to learn new skills and new challenges, and to challenge gender, racial, and other barriers to taking on new roles.

On the day of the event, between one and two hundred people met at Dupont Circle and walked en masse to our destination. During the walk, one Starbucks coffee shop window was

broken. Our destination was a busy street with lots of pedestrian traffic, in a moderate-income neighborhood with a diverse population that included many people of our own demographic (so we weren't taking over someone else's neighborhood). The three-block area we occupied had lots of independent businesses and some corporate ones, and would be great as a pedestrian walkway- so that's what we created for one day. The ends of the street were blocked off with the cars, couches, and other "junk" but we left one alley open through which we could escape or at least get the DJ equipment out if the police came in, and which cars that were "trapped" in the area could use to exit.

From most standpoints this RTS was a great success. Pirate radio people set up a broadcast simultaneous with the action to announce the events, encourage participation, and provide music for the walk to the end point. We had perfect weather, a mobile sound system and DJs, drum circles, free food from Food Not Bombs, Twister games, chalk and spray paint art, stilt walkers, propagandists, literature inviting onlookers to join, banners proclaiming "Free the City, Kill the Car, Reclaim the Streets," skateboarders who used the old cars as ramps, children playing double-dutch, and more. ,

Of course, we also had some police nearby — but surprisingly, they did not break up the RTS or come inside our temporary autonomous zone. As this was the first RTS in DC, the police were totally confused by what was happening. I overhead some cops discussing the situation: "They must have a permit. I mean, they wouldn't do this without a permit… would they?" It took them a couple of hours to figure out that yes, we would and were holding a street party without a permit. They then informed the crowd that we had to leave at six p.m. or they would arrest everyone. Since our purpose for this action was to have a day party and we were not prepared to hold the area longer than that, we agreed, but said that we would walk together (in the streets!) to a park about eight blocks away so people who wanted to could continue to hang out there. So, after four hours of reclaiming that space, we went mobile again, waked to the park, hung out, and then dispersed at our leisure from there.

How to Build a Rocketstove

This is an amazingly efficient way to extract the maximum amount of energy from limited stove fuel resources. In our final test before composing this, we made a large pot of old-style whole oat cereal boil fortwo hours with just a three-foot two-by-four that we yanked off a pallet.

Ingredients

- Five steel food cans. (Two 15-Ounce cans — the most common size of vegetable cans. One 26-Ounce can — this less common size is proportionately taller than regular cans; beans often come in cans this size. Two one-gallon cans — these can be found in restaurant dumpsters, especially those of pizza restaurants.)
- Annealed tie wire — available at hardware stores by that name; this is made for tying rebar together in steel-reinforced concrete
- Insulation — You can use cob, a mixture of clay, sand, and straw, but ashes work better. If you don't have enough, you can add perlite or vermiculite, which are both available at garden stores as soil additives.
- Can opener
- Tin snips
- Pliers
- Drill with hole-saws (optional)
- Permanent marker

Instructions

Using the can opener, cut off the top and bottom of the two IS-ounce cans, making them into tubes; cut off the top of the 26-ounce can; cut off the top of one one-gallon can; cut off the top and bottom of the other one-gallon can. Save the top from one of the one-gallon cans.

Remove the labels, glue, and food residue from all cans.

Hold the bottom of the 26-ounce can to the side of one one-gallon can, about one inch from the bottom. Trace the circumference of the smaller can onto the side of the larger can so you will know what size hole to cut. Use your tin snips to cut the hole in the one- gallon can. You may want to cut the hole slightly small at first, then remove more if need be; you want these joints to be fairly tight.

Hold the 15-ounce can to the side of the 26-ounce can — all the way at the bottom this time- and trace it. Use tin snips to cut the hole in the 26-ounce can. Make sure the smaller can fits snugly in the larger can.

Make a two-inch cut lengthwise in one of the two 15-ounce cans. This will allow the can to squeeze and fit snugly in the end of the other. Now you have a steel tube about two cans long. This is your chimney.

Cover the bottom of the one-gallon can with insulation. The insulation should come up to the level of the bottom of the hole you have cut.

Put the 26-ounce can through the hole in the one-gallon can so that the hole you cut is in the center facing up. This is your firebox.

Squeeze the chimney cans into the hole in the 26-ounce can. Adjust the position of the cans so the chimney is in the center of the one-gallon can. Make sure you haven't shoved it so far into the 26-ounce can that it blocks too much airflow. You can also cut a bit of material away from the bottom of the chimney to further accommodate airflow when there is a fire.

Pack the remaining space between the inner cans and the one-gallon can with insulation. If you have used cob for insulation, it will take a while for this to dry and begin to insulate. You can speed this process by poking holes in the one-gallon can, leaving it in the sun, or running the stove. If you run the stove with wet insulation, you will get less heat to the pot and there will be less "draw w — the flames will not be as readily sucked up into the chimney where you want them. This should improve greatly as the cob dries.

Use the lid that you saved from the other one-gallon can to make a shelf for the fire- box. The shelf should be a bit lower than the middle of the firebox. It should also be shorter than the firebox, so the space directly under the chimney is undivided. Fuel will go on top of this shelf; ash will fall down and collect underneath.

Your rocket stove is now complete, except for a pot rack. That is what the second one-gallon can is for. Cut a series of large holes along the top of this can so air can flow, but leave enough space between the holes that the can remains strong. Slice the can lengthwise so it can expand to fit over the other can, and slice a few inches off its bottom all the way around. Slide the sliced can over the other gallon can, so the former extends one or two inches above the latter; this is the rack on which your pot will sit. The chimney is your burner.

Wrap tie wire around the sliced can, and use pliers to twist it tightly so it is squeezed firmly around the other gallon can. You should tie at least three wires to hold the rack. Remember, the weight of your pot and food will rest on this rack.

To use the stove, place it on a level, steady surface that is high enough off the ground that you have easy access to the firebox. Use a hatchet to make small pieces of wood. Wood should be up to the diameter of a finger. Use paper and smaller wood kindling to start the fire. You can set and light the fire at the opening of the fire box, then shove it to the back under the chimney when it gets going. Be careful not to choke the stove — keep half or more of the volume of the firebox open to airflow.

When your fire is established, you can begin to cook. This is probably a two-person job: one to cook, the other to stoke. The stove bums the small pieces of wood very fast and requires constant attention. If your insulation is good and you are burning hot enough, the stove will produce very little ash. You shouldn't have to empty it until the end of one cooking session.

Tips

To further increase efficiency, put a lid on your pot and pile bricks onto the lid — the more, the better. This creates a low-tech pressure cooker, decreasing cooking time.

You can use longer pieces of wood by letting the wood hang out of the firebox, advancing the pieces into the fire as they are consumed.

Sabotage

Instructions

If you are going to be involved in sabotage, you should remove yourself from high- profile activism, resolve old warrants and speeding tickets, and otherwise arrange to appear to be a law-abiding citizen. You should be able to glide through a routine traffic stop without occasioning any suspicion. Anyone can engage in everyday resistance, but if your chosen approach to subversion includes serious illegal activity, you'll do well to make things as difficult as possible for those whose job it is to catch you. As they say, sometimes you have to obey the small laws to break the big ones.

Brainstorming

Before you even consider carrying out an act of sabotage, you presumably have established your general goals as a political activist or subversive. The possibility of sabotage comes up when you move on to working out a strategy to achieve those goals. Perhaps you need to draw the public eye to an injustice that would outrage everyone, if only they heard about it; perhaps you want to destroy the means by which a corporation or institution is carrying out its misdeeds, or at least provide it with a deterrent; perhaps you want to inspire your fellow activists or dissidents, and demonstrate a model for resistance in the process. If sabotage seems like it could be an effective element of your strategy, consider the possible targets, the actions you can take against them, and the means by which to do so.

Your action should be in proportion to the seriousness of the issues, the importance of the target, and the means at your disposal, and you should be prepared to handle all the potential consequences. If the effects of your action will be publicized, take into account the ways different tactics will play out in the public eye. Think hard about how to minimize risk, expense, and difficulty while maximizing effectiveness; through every step of the planning, consider if there is a simpler, safer way to achieve the same ends, and whether you are prepared for the risks you will run.

Consider the effects of your action in a broader context. Who will it inspire, who will it intimidate? Will it provoke more surveillance or repression of your community, or infighting within it? If so, is it worth it, and how will you deal with these consequences? Don't draw attention to an important target with a small action if you or others may desire to do something more serious with it later. Recognize that the authorities can use your acts of sabotage as propaganda to their own ends; think about how to offset or undercut this.

Reconnaissance

From the time you begin considering a target to the moment before you strike, you will be doing reconnaissance, and the quality of this preparatory work will determine whether your

action is a success or a failure. First, research the target and everything related to it — from a computer in a public space, for example, or by stopping by a tourist center or signing up for a guided tour. Be sure that anyone who does such investigation cannot be connected to the act of sabotage later.

Gather maps; if possible, get aerial photographs of the area and floor plans of any buildings. You can often obtain these on the internet. Make your own maps, combining the features of the maps you assemble with the information your scouting missions provide. Carefully check these maps against reality on subsequent scouting missions. Don't risk conspiracy charges by keeping maps of or notes about potential targets in your home.

To the extent that it's possible without attracting attention, become intimately familiar with the site of your intended action and the area surrounding it. It may be most advantageous for the people who do the bulk of the scouting not to be involved in the action; all the same, everyone who will be on the site in the action should spend time there, not just the scouts. Ideally, conduct a dry run, with everyone who will engage in the action participating. If need be, take photographs to study, but do so very subtly, and don't develop them in such a way that there is evidence of your reconnaissance.

While scouting, make note of schedules, security, random traffic, and the nearness of and travel time from locations such as police stations that may launch a response. Staff hours, garbage collection, janitorial service, the times at which trains pass by — anything pertinent should be known to you. Trash can often provide important intelligence on a corporation or institution (see Dumpster Diving, pg. 219). Keep an eye out for items in the area that can be applied in your action; the less you have to take in and out on the big day, the better. Survey the surroundings: are there heavy woods that could provide cover, or consumer outlets where people can be camouflaged as customers? Pay attention to changes in the area over the course of successive scouting missions, to minimize the chances that any significant ones will occur unexpectedly between the last scouting mission and the action. Scout at various times of day and night, but especially at the time of day when your action will take place; if need be, post a full-time watch. You may need to test whether and where there are security systems, and measure the speed and scale of the response; be careful not to give anything away in the process. Since your action likely depends on the element of surprise, you should probably cancel your plans if anything compromises this at any point during reconnaissance.

Finally, consider precedents for your action. Chances are someone has attempted something similar; learn what you can about how it went, and lay your plans accordingly.

Sometimes you can carry off a simple act of sabotage or subversion on your own. In other cases you will need a team to do so. This team should consist of the smallest number of people necessary to accomplish all of the tasks involved; the fewer people involved, the smaller the risk of misunderstandings and individual mistakes, and the stronger each participant's sense of personal responsibility. In larger groups, some people may drop out of the project in the course of your preparations, so be sure there are enough of you to provide for this possibility. If only a few people are needed, your affinity group (see Affinity Croups, pg. 28) should suffice; if more are called for, consider inviting other affinity groups to collaborate with you. Any large group working together should divide into smaller sub-groups, to simplify organization and decision-making.

You should only invite people to work with you that you have reason to trust deeply. Every person you invite who opts not to participate is another needless security risk, so choose with

care. Approach people with general questions first, in a private environment, and only make your proposal if they express concrete interest in doing something. Individuals who aren't going to be working with you shouldn't even be aware of your interest in illegal activities; innocent speculations as to who carried out a well-known action can be extremely dangerous. The team that forms should be capable of cooperating amicably in the most harrowing of situations.

Bringing in others means respecting them as equal participants in the project, with an equal say in how it will be carried out. Don't invite people to work with you unless you respect their judgment and are willing to adjust your plans according to their perspectives. Inevitably, some individuals will have more experience in a given field than others, and will be able to offer more pragmatic advice. At the same time, avoid a dynamic in which everyone in the group counts on one or two members to get the dirty work done; this centralizes skills that are better developed by all, and can result in your group developing an unhealthy, hierarchical structure.

Security

Planning and carrying out acts of sabotage requires tight security; before even considering such an action, a group should be thoroughly versed in Security Culture (pg. 461). From the very beginning, you'll need to establish safe meeting places to lay plans. Ideally, these will be outside, or at least in a safe space not under any kind of surveillance or connected to any known activists. You may want to develop a cipher for communicating about the action, or a pretext for getting together; but beware, a clumsy code is worse than none at all, and saying you're going to a wedding when no wedding is taking place can arouse more suspicion than it dispels. Keep your interactions with long-term companions in illegal activity to a minimum; go to see them in person when necessary, so there is no record of your association. It can be surprisingly easy to keep certain relationships and meetings secret simply by never mentioning them over email or telephone lines.

If everyone is really concerned about information leaks and has great confidence in a small team of organizers, this team can withhold the identity of the target until the last possible point in the planning phase. The drawback to this approach is that it centralizes important information, which can unbalance group dynamics, increase risks, and put off possible participants. It is most useful for low-risk actions that are open to many participants, or high-risk actions to be carried out by a tight-knit team; for newer groups carrying out actions of mid-level risk, it can be important that everyone involved participate in every stage of the discussion and planning.

Planning

As soon as the core group of participants is established, you can begin holding meetings. Make sure everyone is happy with the format you choose for these (see "Facilitating Discussions" in Affinity Groups, pg. 28), and that it is efficient and goal-oriented. At the first one, you should establish the target, goals, security culture, and maximum level of risk, and work out how you will continue to get together. In the following meetings, scouts can share intelligence, and individuals can make tactical proposals for the group to amend until they comprise a plan with which everyone is comfortable.

Such a plan must cover the full range of scenarios from best to worst case; the group should establish in advance under what circumstances they will call off the action. Don't underestimate

our power — small numbers of people with little funding can accomplish tremendous objectives — but be realistic. You should also establish structures to meet the needs of the action group; these can include communications, scouting, legal support, supplies, food and housing, and media work. Individuals can choose roles within this framework, and sub-groups can form to focus on bottomlining specific tasks. Avoid letting routines develop in which the same individuals always take on the same tasks; the more skills each participant develops, the better.

If the group organizing the action is composed of people from different regions, the locals will bear a larger portion of the responsibility to cany out reconnaissance; it may consequently be easier for them to compose plans, as well. Locals should be conscious of the potential imbalance of power this can create, and take care to extend to others whatever information and control they can. For security reasons, it can be wise to establish an exchange program, in which one group organizes an action in its local area for another to carry out, and vice versa. Repression will be directed at those activists closest to the target area, but they can have airtight alibis in place.

Action Camp

In the last few days before a serious action, there is often a lot to do. This is particularly challenging when security concerns dictate that you and your companions should not be seen together during this period, especially not hard at work on some mysterious project; it may even be necessary to hide the presence of participants who have arrived from far away. To solve these problems, you can organize an action camp: in a secure location, such as the private lands of a trustworthy individual who can be counted on not to notice anything, or a forgotten zone suitable for squatting or camping, get together for a short period of intensive preparation (see Thinktanks, pg. 550). In urban areas, the home of a vacationing trustworthy friend may suffice. Everyone should have an alibi — and not the same one! — going into the action camp. Organizing food and shelter for a group over a period of time can be taxing in itself; individuals who desire to play support roles can take responsibility for delivering food and other resources. Make sure that traffic in and out of the camp does not attract undue attention.

Legal Preparations

During the planning phase, establish the potential legal repercussions of every action you are considering, so you can weigh these as you make decisions. If you're not ready to do the time, don't do the crime. Before carrying out any serious illegal act, you should have a legal support structure in place in case anyone is arrested (see Legal Support, pg. 32–9). Be sure there are people not directly involved in the action who can provide legal support to arrestees, so no immediate link between them, the people supporting them, and the action can be made.

Conditions

Sometimes weather will be integral to your plans — you might need a full moon for cross-country travel, or a new moon for cover of darkness or a rainstorm to soften noise. Snowfall can make it impossible to pass through an area without leaving a track, while hot weather might make you look more suspicious in your disguise. Schedule accordingly. Stay abreast of other developments; if there's a manhunt on in the area of your target the night of your action, you'd better know about it before you head out.

Communications

Unless your action is to be carried out by one or two isolated individuals, you will need a secure and reliable system for communication and counter-surveillance. This could range from simply having the option for an emergency cancellation to be announced at the last minute, should something go awry, to several groups staying in close contact throughout the action. The more elaborate your communications structure, the more coordinated your activities can be; on the other hand, the more you rely on communications technology, the greater the chance that your transmissions can be monitored, and the greater the confusion should communication break down. The simpler your communications structure is, the safer it is, and this goes for your plan in general.

Scouts can be posted at entry points to await and announce police response, or can rove the area to keep tabs on security and passersby. A police scanner can be used to monitor police interactions, though it is illegal to use them from vehicles. A communications center can be established, to which scouts and action groups report, and which is responsible for contacting other groups to pass along news and announcements; alternatively, information can be distributed by means of a "phone tree," in which each person or group that receives a message is responsible for passing it on to a few others.

Communications technology is constantly evolving, as are police surveillance techniques; keep up to date on your options. Two-way radios come in varying ranges; they can be monitored easily enough, especially if police are prepared to do so, and often fail to work when they are most needed, but they can be used to contact a number of different people instantaneously, and if unmonitored they leave no record of use. Cell phones work more reliably and over much longer ranges, and are not quite as easy to monitor, assuming they are not already tapped; on the other hand, they leave a permanent record of where, when, and to whom calls were made. A cell phone borrowed from a noncombatant or registered to a fictitious owner is much safer than a personal cell Sabotage phone. This is the only kind of phone you should use in a serious action.

Action

On the day or night of the action, go over every step of the plan together, with each participant describing his or her role. This will provide crucial clarity and reassurance.

Your plans should specify the order in which activities are to be carried out; they should take into account the amount of time each activity will require, providing for transportation time as well. Everyone whose actions are to be coordinated should have synchronized watches. A full route, including alternate escape routes (see Evasion), should be charted for everyone involved — not just in and out of the target site, but all the way from the starting point of the day's events to their conclusion when everyone is safely dispersed. This route should be planned so as to leave as little record as possible of the movements of those who participate in the action; avoid toll roads, for example, and surveillance cameras at gas stations.

If there are getaway drivers, it's better for them to return at a predetermined time or when called for than to wait around attracting the attention of neighbors or passing police. Have your time budgeted in advance, and adjust your plans as you go in order to avoid awkward situations. If you have a time established in advance to be picked up, and it takes longer than you'd expected

to get onto the site from your drop-off and pick- up location, set aside the same amount of extra time for getting back, and subtract that from the time you had planned to have on the site.

You should have backup plans worked out, in case something goes wrong, and establish what conditions will prompt you to switch from one plan to the next. Everyone should have an alternate mode of transportation available in case they cannot leave the area by the planned means, and should carry cab or bus fare if applicable.

Make sure you have the necessary tools for the job, but take nothing extraneous with you — nothing potentially incriminating, nothing needlessly heavy, nothing you might accidentally lose. After the action, destroy all the tools you used, or, if you're sure the action was not dramatic enough to provoke a serious investigation, keep them far away from any space associated with you. Make sure all other evidence is destroyed-every last map, every scribbled note, every piece of clothing you might have been seen wearing.

Have an alibi prepared: arrange to have been seen in public, or to have a record — such as a parking lot ticket, movie stub, or campground receipt from a location you are certain is not under surveillance — of your activities away from the scene of the crime. Don't ever speak of the action again, except within the group with whom you accomplished it, and even then only under secure conditions. There are two exceptions to this: if you are caught, tried, and sentenced for an action, you can speak about the actions for which you were convicted, on the condition that you not give away anything about anyone else; and if you succeed in overthrowing the government and all other oppressive institutions, you and your friends and everybody else like you will finally be free to own up to having participated in subversive activities back in the bad old days. Imagine the stories well all have to tell then!

Communiqué and Press Coverage

You may want to disguise your strike as an accident or a random act of vandalism, so as not to help investigators by narrowing the pool of suspects. On the other hand, if one of your goals is to attract public attention, you will do well to take publicity into your own hands. The best of sabotage actions can go unnoticed or even be deliberately covered up, unless they are accompanied by compelling and wide-ranging media campaigns.

The simplest way to do this is to issue a communiqué. This is essentially a press release (see Mainstream Media, pg. 358): it should begin by covering the who, what, when, and where of an action, then explain why it was carried out and elaborate on the broader goals behind it. It should be written simply and precisely, in a generic writing style that will not give away the identity of the author or authors. Mainstream press coverage will include a sentence or two of the communiqué at best, so make sure every line of it is eloquent and capable of standing alone. Sometimes humor can be helpful for getting

your point across and maintaining readers' attention; this is most useful if your communiqué is going to be published in full somewhere, such as on an independent news website. Include a link to an informative webpage or two, if possible, keeping in mind that this can also bring attention or repression to those who host them.

Sending a communiqué can be one of the riskiest parts of an action. It should go out from a one-time-only email account on a public computer, and the person who sends it should be careful not to be detected approaching, using, or leaving the computer. At best, it should be sent from an area far away from the action and the homes and haunts of those who carried it out. Alternatively,

it can be sent through the mail — but the text should not be composed on a computer tied to any of the participants, and the paper, envelope, and stamp should never be touched without gloves on.

A simple text communiqué is often not enough to capture attention or convey the magnitude of an action. If possible, include photographs or video footage. One or more of the individuals involved in the action can be responsible for taking these during or after the action (see Independent Media, pg. 346). Be careful that such footage doesn't provide investigators with any useful information about your group. Independent media outlets are more likely to provide thorough and sympathetic coverage than mainstream media; if you don't know any independent media journalists you can trust to approach, you can anonymously tip them off or otherwise solicit their coverage.

In addition to seeking mainstream and independent media coverage, you can also arrange to have news and explanations of your action presented directly to the public through autonomous means (see Banner Drops and Banner Hoists, pg. 75; Graffiti, pg. 258; Newspaper Wraps, pg. 392; Stickering, pg. 520; Wheatpasting, pg. 598; also consider pirate radio). Consider how these can be used to communicate the necessary information without implicating those who apply them in greater crimes.

Afterwards

Immediately after an action, make sure that everyone is safe and emotionally cared for, and that anyone who was arrested or injured receives support. Aside from taking care of this, split up and get quickly back to the business of being unremarkable law-abiding citizens. Resist the urge to rush to find each other and compare notes. Eventually you may want to meet again, either in small groups or all together, to trade perspectives on what happened, but this will require at least as much security as your planning meetings did, since you may now be under suspicion. Consider limiting your involvement in aboveground political activities, but don't make any sudden dramatic changes in your lifestyle or commitments. It is less incriminating to maintain a visible routine than to drop out of sight completely. Keep your secrets to yourself and your wits sharp; often, the authorities won't strike until months or even years after an action, when they've had enough time to gather intelligence and prepare a case.

Appendix: Approach and Entry

If you have to pass fences, consider going through them rather than over them. If you have bolt cutters, this may take no longer than scaling them, and involves less risk of being spotted. With chain link fences, just cut the same thread of wire in the fence top, bottom, and three or four places in between, then pull out the wire with your pliers. The fence will then just fall into two. Keep in mind that a cut fence, if discovered, will immediately alert an otherwise unsuspicious person.

If you have to walk, try to stay off roads. If you need to drive, be aware of all the ways your vehicle can be tracked, including traffic cameras. Consult the recipe for Evasion (pg. 234) for more details about transportation and getaway driving.

If you have to cross a wall, you may need extra equipment. The simplest way is to bring your own ladder; if you leave this at your point of entry, however, it can attract attention, and if someone removes it you may be trapped.

Ditches and rivers can provide good cover, but it's always "better to work dry, so plan on exiting through one rather than entering, if possible. Remember that mud records footprints and other signs of human passage.

If a gate is padlocked, use bolt cutters to remove the lock. If you have the option, it is easier to cut a chain than a lock, and easier to disguise. Never leave a cut padlock or chain in new — it's a sure sign that someone's inside. If need be, replace a cut lock with an identical padlock of your own.

You can cover a window or a portion thereof with duct tape before breaking it, if you want to do so quietly and without making a mess.

Doors are often protected by alarms. If in doubt, you can always try going through the door itself, but the cutting operations will be noisy.

Roofs can provide numerous access points. Watch for heating and air conditioning ducts, ventilation fans, attics, and crawlspaces.

Avoid open areas, especially around factories and offices: they are likely to be under camera surveillance.

Account

In winter of 1992, my cell of the Animal Liberation Front (ALF)was waging a direct action campaign against the North American fur farm industry. Our targets were the half-dozen recipients of funding from the Mink Farmers Research Foundation, a fur industry group sponsoring research to enable the intensive confinement of mink. The recipient of the greatest amount of funding was Richard Aulerich, the head of Michigan State University's Experimental Fur Farm program. For the past thirty years, he had addressed the problems of disease encountered by the nation's then 600 fur farms.

No one in our group had ever been on MSU's campus; for security reasons, we kept all the information we gathered on paper. Our goal was to destroy as much research as possible, thereby setting back the efforts of mink researchers intent on further domesticating and enslaving a native North American predator. If we decided it was safe, we would Sabotage employ property destruction, specifically arson, to accomplish this end. We planned a reconnaissance mission for late February, when we would be driving across country.

After a short visit with family friends in Michigan, another cell member and I cruised the MSU campus on a Sunday afternoon when it was less populated. A staff directory gave us the location of Aulerich's office in Anthony Hall. I entered the stone building and waked around until I discovered that the rooms of the hall were separated from adjoining research offices by the old building's brick walls. This fact, and the general emptiness of the building during odd hours, indicated that it was safe to use arson to destroy the records.

Next, we drove off campus to the surrounding countryside of East Lansing, where most of MSU's agricultural research facilities were located. At Oregon State University, we had found the Experimental Fur Farm near the poultry research farm, and in Michigan it was the same: the

long barns of the poultry and mink farm were hidden against nearby woods, only a hundred yards from a state highway where a person or team could be dropped off and picked up.

We decided that the action could be carried out with only two people. Security was lax enough that minimal reconnaissance could determine our entry and exit points, as well as the frequency of security patrols and the direction from which a response would be mounted from the police station. We rented a car similar to those in MSU's own motor pool, and watched Anthony Hall all night from a parking lot on the same day of the week that we planned to carry out our action. I noticed numerous ground floor windows in the building that could be unlocked from inside easily and without attracting any attention.

Earlier the same night, I had been dropped on the shoulder of the state highway adjacent to the wooded area behind the Experimental Fur Farm and research barn. In the dead of winter, the facility had no electronic or physical security beyond the nightly random patrols of campus police, who we never saw entering the long dirt road leading to the facility.

As I neared the complex of buildings, I began by scouting the perimeter for signs of sophisticated motion detectors or infrared detectors; there were none. Next, I examined the construction of the research barn that we wanted to enter. Avoiding windows and doors, the most likely places for alarms, I climbed onto the roof of the building and discovered that the corrugated sheet metal panels comprising the roof could be partially removed, enough to allow me to crawl into the attic space and then into the building via an access door in the ceiling.

The heart of our target was Aulerich's office, which we knew would contain the records of his ongoing research. Nonetheless, this might be the only time his research would be attacked, so we decided we should cause as much damage as possible by also removing the breeding records of the 250 breeder mink Aulerich had on the farm, destroying farm research equipment, and, if time permitted, rescuing a few hostages.

After the night's reconnaissance, we completed the journey we had told friends we were taking, arriving in Washington D.C. from Michigan as planned. After we'd established a local presence there among aboveground activists, one cell member and I drove back to Michigan. We rented a hotel room thirty miles from MSU, with outdoor access so no one would see us coming and going. Even during our earlier trip, we hadn't so much as gassed up in East Lansing, not wanting to be seen by surveillance cameras or people in the same town as the college we intended to strike.

On the day of the action, in a car rented by a local friend who wouldn't ask questions, we drove the route of our planned approach and escape to ensure there were no changes. Next, my comrade tested the police scanner, which was programmed with the frequencies of the MSU Police, while I went to work assembling a timed incendiary device out of components purchased far away while on the east coast.

All the ingredients were nationally distributed items; I removed all identifying serial numbers, such as the one on the kitchen timer. Once the device was completed, I gently packed it with its battery disconnected into a small Tupperware container, and threw away all the remaining electrical wire, soldering gun, and wire cutters — all traceable items, and none as valuable as freedom.

After years of breaking into buildings, I had refined my fanny pack toolkit to include just a few items: a small pair of "Vise-Grip" locking pliers, indispensable for removing small screws such as those in the roofing material; a Leatherman-type multi-tool; a small pry bar or large screwdriver; a flashlight that could be held in the mouth; and a knife with a serrated edge for cutting screen,

insulation, sheetrock, or even steel cable and sheet metal. Last but not least, I carried the official ALF key, a small pair of bolt cutters for small locks such as those on the mink barns and file cabinets.

With just two people, there is less room for mistakes. First, we would visit the Experimental Fur Farm. We had agreed on the pick-up spot, and planned only to use our reliable radios as a backup. I would have my radio on at all times with silence being the continuing signal for "all dear. M If I needed more time, I would take it, and radio when I was ready to be picked up. My driver would be listening to the police scanner while watching for abnormal activity.

At 11:30 p.m., I was dropped on the shoulder of the state highway behind MSU's Experimental Fur Farm. In just a few minutes, I was approaching the main research barn; it was black against the moonless night. Taking a ladder from the farm, I climbed onto the roof and quickly used my small locking pliers to remove enough sheet metal screws to pry back the panel enough for me to crawl through. One last glance to ensure I hadn't been seen, and I was in. I crawled through the attic, removed a ceiling panel, and shone my flashlight into the darkened research bam. The room was filled with feed mixers, refrigerators, and other fur farm equipment. I lowered myself from the ceiling, dropped into the room, and listened to my radio for any sign that I might have set off a motion-detecting alarm.

It was still silent. I moved to the small office in the comer of the research barn, and inspected the thin hollow-core wooden door for an alarm. None was visible, so I pulled the pins from the door's hinges with my multi-tool, then removed the entire locked door without a struggle.

All the breeding records and other data necessary for the fur farm's operation were inside the office. I dumped computer discs, slides, and paperwork onto the floor. In a freezer, I discovered dozens of softball-sized balls wrapped in aluminum foil. I opened one; it contained an otter's head.

Everything inside the freezers and refrigerators went onto the floor. Lastly, I pulled a can of red spray paint from my pack and wrote, "MICHIGAN MINK MILITIA," "AULERICH TORTURES MINK," and "WE WILL BE BACK FOR THE OTTER" on the walls. The last statement referred to the lone otter I had found in a long concrete cage among the mink barns. On my way out of the barn, I poured two gallons of hydrochloric acid I had found inside into the machinery and electrical equipment and over the paperwork on the floor. Knowing now that there were no alarms, I left the building through a door.

The last stop at the experimental fur farm was the mink barns, where I stripped each cage of its breeder identification card. With the cards stuffed in my pack, I picked two mink to rescue, and transferred them into their detachable nest boxes. By the time I had set these boxes in some bushes dose to the state highway and radioed for a pick-up, an hour and a half had passed since I was dropped off. Within minutes, my getaway driver was flashing the brights of the car, signaling before pulling to a stop.

After a quick stop at a gas station to dump the breeding cards, I exchanged my pack for the one containing the incendiary device, and we drove to the MSU campus. My driver dropped me behind Anthony Hall, and parked at the spot across from the building from which we had done our reconnaissance. Walking briskly in the late winter night did not look suspicious, as it was cold. After glancing behind for anyone watching, I walked across the front of Anthony Hall to a ground floor window that was unlatched. I pulled the window open, lifted myself inside, and shut it behind me.

I peered around the comer, then climbed the flight of stairs to the first floor where Aulerich's office was located. I pulled a ski mask over my face, as this was the time I was most vulnerable to being seen. Kneeling before the door to the office, I pulled the small pry bar from my pack and broke the wooden ventilation slats in the door, then reached inside to unlock it. Although I had inspected the office as best as I could from the outside windows, it was still possible that breaking in would trigger an unseen alarm. My driver had the scanner, though, and would hear any university police dispatch.

I stepped into Aulerich's office and went straight to work scavenging wood to serve as kindling once the incendiary device ignited. I pulled every file drawer out so the records would be destroyed by the firefighters' water, if not by the fire. I didn't bother destroying anything else, as the noise might attract attention and the fire would hopefully take care of everything. I placed the incendiary device below a pile of desk drawers, set the dial on the one-hour timer for 54 minutes, and set the exposed light bulb "trigger" on an opened Stemo liquid fuel can. Just above the can were two two-liter plastic bottles filled with a mixture of fuel and oil; when they melted, they would dump the flammable liquid over the wood.

Suddenly, I saw the familiar reflection of red and blue lights from the road that passed in front of Anthony Hall. I didn't panic, though I knew a University Police cruiser was close enough that I could yell to the cop from Aulerich's window. I trusted that my lookout would radio if there were a threat. It was a routine traffic stop, and after a few minutes, both the police officer and the driver he had pulled over were on their way. I re-set the timer to its maximum, connected the 9-volt battery to the incendiary device, and exited the way I had come.

Looking like a student returning from a late night of studying, I walked across the lawn of Anthony Hall to the sidewalk; within seconds my ride pulled past, slowing down enough for me to climb in. We drove straight to the state highway, where we collected the two patient mink that still awaited the final stage of their liberation. When dawn broke, we were hiking along the shore of Muskrat Lake, carrying the two nest boxes. Beside a creek, we opened the boxes and watched the mink swim in moving fresh water for the very first time in their lives.

At approximately 4:35 a.m. on February 28, 1992, a fire tore through the offices of Richard Aulerich destroying thirty-two years of accumulated and ongoing mink industry research worth an estimated two million dollars. At the Experimental Fur Farm, irreplaceable breeding records were stolen or destroyed, along with over $125,000 in research equipment, $100,000 of which was not insured. The two missing mink were never seen again. Later, a communiqué relayed by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals would announce that the Animal Liberation Front had accepted responsibility for the fourth attack in eight months on a recipient of Mink Farmer Research Foundation funding.

Back at the hotel room, the mission accomplished, I penned a press release and included it in a FedEx box containing slides, a videotape, computer discs, and research records from Aulerich's office. As I approached the Fedex drop-off box, the driver arrived to pick up the packages; our eyes met, and I knew then that I had made a crucial mistake that might cost me my freedom.

The package was addressed to a house that, unbeknownst to me, was also a safe house for ALF material including my own hand-drawn maps of a primate research facility I was casing, and other equipment including night vision goggles. The package never arrived; it was intercepted and turned over to the FBI, due to the expired account number I had used. What did arrive at the house was a FBI task force with search warrants, who kicked in the door and seized our gear.

The action was a success, but I'm only able to tell you this story because I made a mistake that resulted in my being convicted. Luckily, it only cost me four years of freedom. Federal agents may not be that smart, but they are patient, waiting for your cell's one fatal error. Don't be discouraged: our enemies still have weaknesses, and even the most fortified target has its weak link. Find it, break it, and continue forward!

Screenprinting

Ingredients

- Frame
- Silkscreen mesh
- Staple gun and staples
- Photo emulsion kit — comes with photo emulsion and sensitizer
- Tablespoon
- Bowl
- Squeegee
- Darkroom or closet
- Fan
- Transparencies
- Clear tape or clean heavy piece of glass
- Shower or hose
- Two 100- watt bulbs and lamps
- Ink — *If you are printing on fabric, you will need acrylic textile ink or oil-based textile ink (also called plastisol) and paint thinner or turpentine. Basic acrylic inks and paint work for posters and similar media.*
- Fabric, cardstock, or some other material to be decorated

Instructions

Preparing an Image

Design or choose an existing high-contrast black and white image. This image should conform to the same parameters as an image you could make into a stencil (see Stenciling, pg. 516); the difference is that with screenprinting, you can print much finer detail, and even make areas appear gray by use of dots.

You might have to make a negative of the image. Some self-serve photocopiers have this function; if not, ask the people behind the counter at a photocopy shop to do it.

Basically, whatever is black on your starting image will be the printing area on your finished screen. Whatever is black will be dark.

You need to consider what color irk you will use on what color fabric or paper before determining whether the image should be printed or should be formed out of negative space. It is very important to get this right, especially when dealing with pictures.

Next, make a transparency of the image — you might have to ask for help from the people behind the counter again. Make sure the black parts are dark. For larger designs, you may need to tape two or more transparencies together; if so, be precise.

Making a Screen

This is a job for two. Acquire a frame. You could buy one already made, but what are you, a consumer? Reuse old frames, cutting canvas off them if need be, or dumpster wood that you can cut to size. Worst-case scenario, buy wood at a hardware store or lumber yard, and have them cut it for you. Miter the corners by cutting the ends at 45-degree angles (figure 16.1). This will make a super-study frame.

Staple the frame together on every side that you can. Try to do this on a level surface: the frame must lay totally flat. Stretch the screen mesh over the frame. You will need approximately two inches extra to work with on every edge, so keep that in mind while cutting. Have one person stretch and the other staple. I have found the best way to staple is by stapling alternating sides (figure 16.2). This enables you to stretch the screen evenly. Put in one staple every inch and a half or so the first time around. Leave the corners for last. You should stretch it so tight your fingers start to hurt. Once you've stapled around the frame once, go around a second time. This time, stretch the screen tight between every two staples with your thumb, pointer, and middle fingers, and add another staple (figure 16.3) Last, stretch and staple the comers. Feel the screen; it should feel tight with no bumps or slack. Wherever these appear, repeat stretching and stapling.

When the screen is totally stretched, you can trim the extra mesh around the edges, but leave at least 1/4" from the staples so the screen won't tear.

Applying Photo Emulsion

Prepare a darkroom. It needs to be pretty dark, but a crack of light here or there is all right. I use my closet. Set up the fan in the darkroom so that it can blow on your screen when you put it in there.

This next step you can do with the lights on, but you must work quickly because the mixture you are about to make will become light-sensitive as soon as it starts drying. For screens sized to print one or two shirts at a time, mix 4 tablespoons of photo emulsion and 1 tablespoon of sensitizer in the bowl. For larger, smaller or multiple screens, you judge how much emulsion you will need — the ratio of emulsion to sensitizer will always be 4 to 1. Make sure the emulsion is well mixed. Apply the emulsion to the screen with a spoon and squeegee (figure 16.4) It will be messy. Squeegee the front and the back of the screen evenly. Go over it repeatedly to work the emulsion into and through the screen. Find a balance between too thick and too thin — this will come with practice. Try to prevent the emulsion from seeping under the frame; if it does, it will

drip down later. You can leave the edges bare and cover them with masking or packing tape later, if you like.

Lean the screen against a wall in the darkroom to dry, with the fan blowing on it. Leave the room with as little light exposure as possible, and wait about 15 to 25 minutes before flipping the screen to dry the other side. In another 15 to 25 minutes, carefully feel the screen to see if it is dry. If it is wet anywhere, wait longer.

Setting Up Your light

While the screen is drying in the darkroom, set up your lamps. Set these up so that the light falls evenly where the screen will be. You should lay the screen on a flat surface so light will only shine on the top of the screen. For bigger screens, you may need to shift the light every 5 minutes so that all areas will be evenly exposed. The lights should be between 12" and 18" from the screen. Practice will help you know the best distance for each different exposure.

Exposing the Screen

When the screen is totally dry, bring it out of the darkroom into a work area that is as dimly lit as possible, or turn on a dim light in the darkroom. Place the transparency on the top side of the screen. You need to put it on reversed, so if you were to look through the screen from the other side, the image would be facing the correct way. Try to lay it as square as possible with the frame, so it will be easy to line up when you print. Lay your glass over the transparency, or tape the transparency flat to the screen exactly where you want it.

Place the screen under the lights (figure 16, 5). You will need to expose it for 20 to 40 minutes, although if your image has many tiny details you should expose it for a bit less, as light can seep under and expose small lines in your design. Once again, practice will help you to determine the length of time for different designs. "Try 30 minutes for your first screen. Make sure the comers of the screen get enough light, and that the center of the screen doesn't get too much. You can shift the lights around periodically to balance the exposure. During this part of the process, the light will "cook" the exposed emulsion onto the screen, so you will be able to wash off the parts that were hidden from the light by your transparency.

After exposure, turn the lights off. Try to prevent the bottom of the screen from being exposed to direct light. Bring the screen into the bathroom or to a hose and turn the water on cold. Remove the transparency and run the screen under the water. The water by itself should take off most of the unwanted emulsion; the rest you will have to rub off gently with your fingers. Do this on both sides. Hold the screen up to the light and check whether the emulsion has been totally removed in the areas that were blocked (figure 16.6). If any remains, repeat the washing and rubbing process. Dry the screen with the fan again. You should let it completely dry — this will take about an hour.

Printing

Whenever you print, you should do two or three preliminary prints on scrap fabric or paper, to look for flaws — which can sometimes be fixed with tape on the top of the screen — and work the ink through the screen.

Lay the screen on the fabric, top side down. Take a spoon and put a generous amount of ink along the top of the design. If s best to have two people for this step too, one to hold the screen and one to squeegee. Take the squeegee and gently cover the design with a thick layer of ink — you should not be able to see the design through the ink. Next, apply a good amount of pressure as you push the squeegee over it again. This time you are pushing the ink through the screen (figure 16.7).Swipe over the design two or three times with good pressure. You can go in different directions, too. Every design is different — you will have to experiment to work out the right number of times to squeegee over it.

To remove the screen, hold the fabric down with one hand and gently lift the screen with the other. You will be able to determine if you are using too much or too little ink by looking at the prints. If the prints start to become distorted, you will need to wipe off the top of the screen with a rag; if you're using oil-based ink, use a bit of turpentine or thinner to do this. Also, after a lot of prints, say thirty or so, the irk may start to harden, so you might want to take a break to wash and dry the screen.

Cleanup

Clean off acrylic ink with the cold spray of the shower or hose. It is important that you dean the screen and tools immediately when using acrylic, as it dries swiftly.

Clean up oil ink with paint thinner or turpentine and a bunch of rags. You can take your time with most oil ink, as it will take quite a while to dry on its own. Be aware, though, that there are air-drying oil inks that dry as quickly as acrylic.

Let acrylic ink on textiles or paper dry on its own. It could take between 15 minutes and 2 hours depending on the ink, the material you are printing on, and the humidity. You can speed this process up with a hair dryer if you want.

Oil ink will take weeks to dry on its own, so place your printed fabrics in the oven, and don't use oil inks on paper unless they are air-drying. After much experimenting, I have found that 5 to 10 minutes at 250–300 degrees Fahrenheit works well. You can put fabrics on a cookie sheet or tinfoil, or straight on the oven racks. Make sure nothing is hanging onto the element. M/ dad has a theory that if you're supposed to bake something for 2 o minutes at 2 o o degrees, you can instead bake it for 10 minutes at 40 o degrees. This was proven wrong when I set two Catharsis hoodies on fire. Check on your materials often until you determine how many minutes it takes to dry them. You can also use a heat gun, available at hardware stores for peeling paint, to dry oil inks.

Heat-Setting

You need to heat set printed fabrics so that the ink doesn't come off in the wash. Iron the print on the reverse side for half a minute or so.

Multi-Color Printing

Two-color designs require two screens, and three-color designs, three screens. It is the same process, but you will have to line up the second print carefully You can get hinges and make a press so that you can know exactly where the screen will fall.

Security Culture

Instructions

A security culture is a set of customs shared by a community whose members may engage in illegal activities, the practice of which minimizes the risks of such activities. Having a security culture in place saves everyone the trouble of having to work out safety measures over and over from scratch, and can help offset paranoia and panic in stressful situations — hell, it might keep you out of prison, too. The difference between protocol and culture is that culture becomes unconscious, instinctive, and thus effortless; once the safest possible behavior has become habitual for everyone in the circles in which you travel, you can spend less time and energy emphasizing the need for it, or suffering the consequences of not having it, or worrying about how much danger you're in, as you'll how you're already doing everything you can to be careful. If you're in the habit of not giving away anything sensitive about yourself, you can collaborate with strangers without having to agonize about whether or not they are informers; if everyone knows what not to talk about over the telephone, your enemies can tap the line all they want and it won't get them anywhere.

The central principle of all security culture, the point that cannot be emphasized enough, is that people should never be privy to any sensitive information they do not need to know. The greater the number of people who know something that can put individuals or projects at risk — whether that something be the identity of a person who committed an illegal act, the location of a private meeting, or a plan for future activity — the more chance there is of the knowledge getting into the wrong hands. Sharing such information with people who do not need it does them a disservice as well as the ones it puts at risk: it places them in the uncomfortable situation of being able to mess up other people's lives with a single misstep. If they are interrogated, for example, they will have something to hide, rather than being able to honestly claim ignorance.

Don't ask, don't tell. Don't ask others to share any confidential information you don't need to know. Don't brag about illegal things you or others have done, or mention things that are going to happen or might happen, or even refer to another person's interest in being involved in such activities. Stay aware whenever you speak, don't let chance allusions drop out thoughtlessly.

You can say no at any time to anyone about anything. Don't answer any questions you don't want to — not just with police officers, but also with other activists and even close friends: if there's something you don't feel safe sharing, don't. This also means being comfortable with others doing the same with you: if there's a conversation they want to keep to themselves, or they ask you not to be part of a meeting or project, you shouldn't take this personally — it's for everyone's good that they're free to do so. For that matter, don't participate in any projects you don't feel good about, or collaborate with anyone you feel ill at ease with, or ignore your gut feeling in any situation; if something goes wrong and you get into trouble, you don't want to have any regrets. You're responsible for not letting anyone (not even yourself!) talk you into taking risks you're not ready for.

Don't ever turn your friends over to your enemies. If captured, never, ever give up any information that could endanger anyone else. Some recommend an explicit oath be sworn by all participants in a direct action group: that way, in a worst-case scenario, when pressure might make it hard to distinguish between giving up a few harmless details and totally selling out, everyone will know exactly what commitments they made to each other.

Don't make it too easy for your enemies to figure out what you're up to. Don't be too predictable in the methods you employ, or the targets you choose, or the times and places you meet to discuss things . Don't be too visible in the public aspects of the struggle in which you do your most serious direct' action: keep your name off mailing lists and out of the media, perhaps avoid association with aboveground organizations and campaigns entirely. If you're involved in really serious clandestine activities with a few comrades, you may want to limit your interactions in public, if not avoid each other altogether. Federal agents can easily get access to the phone numbers dialed from your phone, and will use such lists to establish connections between individuals; the same goes for your email, and for that matter the books you check out from libraries . Don't leave a trail: credit card use, gas cards, cell phone calls all leave a record of your motions, purchases, contacts. Have a cover story, supported by verifiable facts. Be careful about what your trash could reveal about you — dropouts aren't the only ones who go dumpstering! Keep track of every written document and incriminating photocopy — keep them all in one place, so you can't accidentally forget one — and destroy them as soon as possible. The fewer there are in the first place, the better- get used to using your memory. Make sure there aren't any ghosts of such writing left behind in impressions on the surfaces you were writing on, whether these be wooden desks or pads of paper. Assume that every use of computers leaves a track, too.

Don't throw any direct action ideas around in public that you think you might want to try at some point. Wait to propose an idea until you can gather a group of individuals that you expect will all be interested in trying it; the exception is the bosom companion with whom you brainstorm and hash out details in advance — safely outside your home and away from mixed company, of course. Don't propose your idea until you think the time is right for it to be tried, to minimize the length of the vulnerable period during which the idea is out there without being put into action. Invite only those you are pretty certain will want to join in-everyone you invite who doesn't end up participating is a needless security risk, and this can be doubly problematic if it turns out they feel your proposed activity is laughably dumb or morally wrong. Only invite people who can keep secrets — this is critical whether or not they decide to participate.

Develop a private shorthand for communicating with your comrades in public. It's important to work out a way to communicate surreptitiously with your trusted friends about security issues and comfort levels while in public situations, such as at a meeting called to discuss possible direct action. Knowing how to gauge each other's feelings without others being able to tell that you are sending messages back and forth will save you the headache of trying to guess each other's thoughts about a situation or individual, and help you avoid acting strangely when you can't take your friend aside in the middle of things to compare notes. &/ the time you have convened a larger group to propose an action plan, you and your friends should be dear on what each other's intentions, willingness to run risks, levels of commitment, and opinions of others are, to save time and avoid unnecessary ambiguity. If you haven't been part of a direct action planning circle before, you'll be surprised how complicated and convoluted they can get even when everyone does arrive prepared.

Develop methods to establish the security level d a group or situation. One quick procedure you can run at the beginning of a larger meeting at which not everyone is acquainted is the "vouched for" game: as each person introduces himself, all who can vouch for him raise their hands. Hopefully, each person is connected to the others by some link in the chain; either way, at least everybody knows how things stand. An activist who understands the importance of good security will not feel insulted in such a situation if there is no one present who can vouch for him and the others ask him to leave.

Meeting location is an important factor in security. You don't want a place that can be monitored (no private residences), you don't want a place where you can be observed all together (not the park across from the site of the next day's actions), you don't want a place where you can be seen entering and leaving or that someone could enter unexpectedly — post scouts, lock the door once things get started, watch out for anything suspicious. Ill never forget exiting an ultra-high security meeting in a university basement only to discover that while we'd been locked in, a crowd of liberal student protesters had flooded the adjoining room to watch a slideshow — which all the organizers of the next day's militant black bloc had to wade through in embarrassment! Oops! Small groups can take walks and chat; larger groups can meet in quiet outdoor settings — go hiking or camping, if there's time — or in private rooms in public buildings, such as library study rooms or empty classrooms. Best-case scenario: though he has no idea you're involved in direct action, you're close with the old guy who runs the cafe across town, and he doesn't mind letting you have the back room one afternoon for a private party, no questions asked.

Be aware of the reliability of those around you, especially those with whom you might collaborate in underground activities. Be conscious of how long you've known people, how far back their involvement in your community and their lives outside of it can be traced, and what others' experiences with them have been. The friends you grew up with, if you still have any of them in your life, are the best possible companions for direct action, as you are familiar with their strengths and weaknesses and the ways they handle pressure — and you know for a fact they are who they say they are. Make sure only to trust your safety and the safety of your projects to level-headed folks who share the same priorities and commitments and have nothing to prove. In the long term, strive to build up a community of people with long-standing friendships and experience acting together, with national and international ties to other such communities.

Don't get too distracted worrying about whether people are infiltrators or not; if your security measures are effective, it shouldn't even matter. Don't waste your energy and make yourself paranoid and unsociable suspecting everybody you meet. If you keep all sensitive information inside the circle of people it concerns, only collaborate with reliable and experienced friends whose history you can verify, and never give away anything about your private activities, agents and police informers will be powerless to gather evidence to use against you. A good security culture should make it practically irrelevant whether these vermin are active in your community or not. The important thing is not whether or not a person is involved with the cops, but whether or not he constitutes a security risk; if he is deemed insecure (double meaning intended here), he should never be permitted to end up in a situation where anyone's safety depends on him.

Learn and abide by the security expectations of each person you interact with, and respect differences in style. To collaborate with others, you have to make sure they feel at home with you; even if you're not collaborating with them, you don't want to make them uncomfortable or disregard a danger they understand better than you. When it comes to planning direct action, not abiding by the security culture accepted in a given community can blow not only your chances to cooperate

with others on a project, but the possibility of the project happening at all — for example, if you bring up an idea others were planning to try in a setting they deem insecure, they may be forced to abandon the plan as it may now be associated with them. Ask people to outline for you their specific security needs before you even broach the subject of direct action.

Let others know exactly what your needs are when it comes to security. The corollary of abiding by others' expectations is that you must make it easy for others to abide by yours. At the beginning of any relationship in which your private political life may become an issue, emphasize that there are details of your activities that you need to keep to yourself. This can save you a lot of drama in situations that are already stressful enough; the last thing you need on returning from a secret mission gone awry is to end up in a fight with your lover: "But if you trusted me, you would tell me about this! How do I know you're not out there sleeping with…!" It's not a matter of trust — sensitive information isn't a reward to be earned or deserved.

Look out for other people. Make explicit to those around you what risks you may pose to them with your presence* or with actions you have planned, at least as much as you're able to without violating other precepts of security culture. Let them know to the extent you're able what risks you run yourself for example, whether you can afford to be arrested (if there are outstanding warrants for you, if you are an illegal alien, etc.), what responsibilities you have to be free to keep up with, whether you have any allergies. Don't imperil others with your decisions, especially if you're not able to provide concrete support should they somehow get arrested and charged on account of your behavior. If someone else drops a banner in an area immediately adjacent to a fire you set, the police might charge them with arson; even if the charges can't stick, you don't want to risk their ill will, or accidentally block their planned escape route. If you help initiate a breakaway march that leaves the permitted zone, try to make sure you keep your body between the police and others who have come along but aren't necessarily dear on the risks involved; if you escalate a spontaneous parade by engaging in property destruction, make sure others who were unprepared for this are not still standing around in confusion when the police show up. Whatever risky projects you undertake, make sure you're prepared to go about them intelligently, so no one else will have to run unexpected risks to help you out when you make mistakes.

Security culture is a form of etiquette, a way to avoid needless misunderstandings and potentially disastrous conflicts. Security concerns should never be an excuse for making others feel left out or inferior — though it can take some finesse to avoid that! — just as no one should feel they have a "right" to be in on anything others prefer to keep to themselves. Those who violate the security culture of their communities should not be rebuked too harshly the first time — this isn't a question of being hip enough to activist decorum to join the in-group, but of establishing group expectations and gently helping people understand their importance; besides, people are least able to absorb constructive criticism when they're put on the defensive. Nevertheless, such people should always be told immediately how they're putting others at risk, and what the consequences will be should they continue to do so. Those who can't grasp this must be tactfully but effectively shut out of all sensitive situations.

Security culture is not paranoia institutionalized, but a way to avoid unhealthy paranoia ty minimizing risks ahead of time. It is counterproductive to spend more energy worrying about how much surveillance you are under than is useful for decreasing the danger it poses, just as it is debilitating to be constantly second-guessing your precautions and doubting the authenticity of potential comrades. A good security culture should make everyone feel more relaxed and

confident, not less. At the same time, it's equally unproductive to accuse those who adhere to security measures stricter than yours of being paranoid — remember, our enemies are out to get us.

Don't let suspicion be used against you. If your foes can't learn your secrets, they will settle for turning you against each other. Undercover agents can spread rumors or throw around accusations to create dissension, mistrust, and resentment inside of or between groups. In extreme cases, they will falsify letters or take similar steps to frame activists. The mainstream media may participate in this, too, by reporting that there is an informant in a group when there is not one, by misrepresenting the politics or history of an individual or group in order to alienate potential allies, or by emphasizing over and over that there is a conflict between two branches of a movement until they really do mistrust one another. Again, a shrewd security culture that fosters an appropriately high level of trust and confidence should make such provocations nearly impossible on the personal level; when it comes to relations between proponents of different tactics and organizations of different stripes, remember the importance of solidarity and diversity of tactics, and trust that others do, too, even if media accounts suggest otherwise. Don't accept rumors or reports as fact: go to the source for confirmation every time, and be diplomatic about it.

Don't be intimidated by bluffing. Police attention and surveillance is not necessarily an indication that they know anything specific about your plans or activities: often it indicates that they do not and are trying to frighten you out of continuing with them. Develop an instinct with which to sense when your cover has actually been blown and when your enemies are just trying to distress you into doing their work for them.

Always be prepared for the possibility that you are under observation, but don't mistake attracting surveillance for being effective. Even if everything you are doing is perfectly legal, you may still receive attention and harassment from intelligence organizations if they feel you pose an inconvenience to their masters. In some regards, this can be for the best; the more they have to monitor, the more thinly spread their energies are, and the harder it is for them to pinpoint and neutralize subversives. At the same time, don't get caught up in the excitement of being under surveillance and begin to assume that the more the authorities pay attention to you, the more dangerous to them you must be — they're not that smart. They tend to be preoccupied with the resistance organizations whose approaches most resemble their own; take advantage of this. The best tactics are the ones that reach people, make points, and exert leverage while not showing up on the radar of the powers that be, at least not until it is too late. In the best-case scenario, your activities will be well known to everyone except the authorities.

Security culture involves a code of silence, but it is not a code of voicelessness. The stories of our daring exploits in the struggle against capitalism must be told somehow, so everyone will know resistance is a real possibility put into action by real people; open incitements to insurrection must be made, so would-be revolutionaries can find each other and the revolutionary sentiments buried in the hearts of the masses find their way to the surface. A good security culture should preserve as much secrecy as is necessary for individuals to be safe in their underground activities, while still providing as much visibility for radical perspectives as possible. Most of the security tradition in the activist milieu today is derived from the past twenty years of animal rights and earth liberation activities ; as such, it's perfectly suited for the needs of small groups carrying out isolated illegal acts, but isn't always appropriate for more aboveground campaigns aimed at encouraging generalized insubordination/insurrection. In some cases it can make sense to break

the law openly, in order to provoke the participation of a large mass that can then provide safely in numbers.

You should always balance the need to escape detection by your enemies against the need to be accessible to potential friends. In the long run, secrecy alone cannot protect us — sooner or later they are going to find all of us, and if no one else understands what we're doing and what we want, they'll be able to liquidate us with impunity. Only the power of an informed and sympathetic (and hopefully similarly equipped) public can help us then. There should always be entryways into communities in which direct action is practiced, so more and more people can join in. Those doing really serious stuff should keep it to themselves, of course, but every community should also have a person or two who vocally advocates and educates about direct action, and who can discreetly help trustworthy novices link up with others getting started.

When you're planning an action, you should begin by establishing the security level appropriate to it, and act accordingly from there on. Learning to gauge the risks posed by an activity or situation and how to deal with them appropriately is not just a crucial part of staying out of jail; it also helps to know what you're not worried about, so you don't waste energy on unwarranted, cumbersome security measures. Keep in mind that a given action may have different aspects that demand different degrees of security; make sure to keep these distinct. Here's an example of a possible rating system for security levels:

1. Only those who are directly involved in the action know of its existence.
2. Trusted support persons also know about the action, but everyone in the group decides together who these will be.
3. It is acceptable for the group to invite people to participate who might choose not to — that is, some outside the group may know about the action, but are still expected to keep it a secret.
4. The group does not set a strict list of who is invited; participants are free to invite others and encourage them to do the same, while emphasizing that knowledge of the action is to be kept within the circles of those who can be trusted with secrets.
5. "Rumors" of the action can be spread far and wide through the community, but the identities of those at the center of the organizing are to be kept a secret.
6. The action is announced openly, but with at least some degree of discretion, so as not to tip off the sleepier of the authorities.
7. The action is totally announced and aboveground in all ways.

To give examples, security level #1 would be appropriate for a group planning to firebomb an SUV dealership, while level #2 would be acceptable for those planning more minor acts of property destruction, such as spray painting. Level #3 or #4 would be appropriate for calling a spokescouncil preceding a black bloc at a large demonstration or for a group planning to do a newspaper wrap, depending on the ratio of risk versus need for numbers. Level #5 would be perfect for a project such as hijacking a rock show: everyone hears in advance that the Ani DiFranco performance is going to end in a "spontaneous" antiwar march so people can prepare

accordingly, but no one knows whose idea it is, so no one can be targeted as an organizer. Level #6 would be appropriate for announcing a Critical Mass bicycle ride: fliers are wrapped around the handlebars of every civilian bicycle, but no announcements are sent to the papers, so the cops won't be there at the beginning while the mass is still vulnerable. Level #7 is appropriate for a permitted antiwar march or independent media video screening, unless you're so dysfunctionally paranoid you even want to keep community outreach projects a secret.

It also makes sense to choose the means of communication you will use according to the level of security demanded. Here's an example of different levels of communications security, corresponding to the system just outlined above:

1. No communication about the action except in person, outside the homes of those involved, in surveillance-free environments (e.g. the group goes camping to discuss plans); no discussion of the action except when it is absolutely necessary.

2. Outside group meetings, involved individuals are free to discuss the action in surveillance-free spaces.

3. Discussions are permitted in homes not definitely under surveillance. appears.

4. Communication by encrypted email or on neutral telephone lines is acceptable.

5. People can speak about the action over telephones, email, etc. provided they're careful not to give away certain details — who, what, when, where.

6. Telephones, email, etc. are all fair game; email listservs, fliering in public spaces, announcements to newspapers, etc. may or may not be acceptable, on a case-by-case basis.

7. Communication and proclamation by every possible medium are encouraged.

If you keep hazardous information out of circulation and you follow suitable security measures in every project you undertake, you'll be well on your way to fulfilling what early Crimethlnc. agent Abbie Hoffman described as the first duty of the revolutionary: not getting caught. All the best in your adventures and misadventures, and remember — you didn't hear it from us!

Sex

Instructions

Lovemaking should be an uncomplicated matter of people enjoying themselves and each other however they like. Unfortunately, patriarchy and, more recently, capitalism have made this yet another site of domination and exploitation in our society and personal lives; we can still have a wonderful time together, but we all have to be careful on entering into any sexual engagement that we make sure it's good for everyone involved.

The first and most important matter in bed (or the stairwell of the parking deck, or wherever you are) is the question of consent. Most of us were raised by a society that didn't provide us with any skills for communication, one that in fad has constructed us in such a way that honest communication is very difficult for us . If you don't want something, or you're not sure if you do, make it clear immediately, and talk with your partner about what you're feeling. If a person tells you to stop and you don't abide by his or her wishes, that's sexual assault, and if you beg and pressure, that's borderline coercion; but the absence of refusal does not necessarily equal consent, either. For all you know, your partner might not be into it and afraid to tell you, or just plain unsure. At every threshold in a sexual interaction, especially with someone you don't know intimately, you should ask out loud "do you want to — — " or at least "is this OK?" Better yet, also ask what your partner is interested in, what he or she likes, and advice as to how to go about it. Some people may be too shy to speak about their tastes or pleasure, or bring these up; at the least, you can encourage them to let you know when you're doing something enjoyable, as well as make sure that they do indeed want to be engaged sexually with you, shy as they may be. Make sure also to be vocal about what you like in them, what you find beautiful, what they do that feels good and what else you might want or not want!

Remember that many of us in this society, damaged as we are by its mutilations and humiliations, use sex and sexuality as ways to hurt and punish ourselves; unless you don't mind risking enabling someone you presumably care about to do this, it might make sense to hold off on getting into it with them until you feel like you know them well enough to sense where they're coming from. That goes both ways, too — make sure when you pursue sex with someone that you're not just using sexuality as a way to prove something to yourself or others, or get attention that it would be healthier to pursue in other ways, or make yourself feel bad.

Before any kind of sexual activity that could enable disease transmission, you should check in with your partners. You needn't necessarily demand that they lay out their sexual histories for you in their entirety; someone who has been raped or abused may not feel ready to share this. What you need to establish is exactly what levels of risk you are exposing each other to, and what your needs are when it comes to protection. It almost goes without saying that it's a bad idea to be intimate in this way with someone you don't feel you can safely trust to tell you the whole truth.

It's also critical that, if your lovemaking could result in pregnancy, you both be clear in advance about whether you want children, how you feel about abortion, and how certain you are about these feelings. Too many people have failed to have this conversation, and ended up unprepared parents! If a woman becomes pregnant, it is ultimately her choice whether she or not has the child, so men have to be particularly careful that they understand what their female partners' feelings are about parenthood, and that they are ready for surprise fatherhood if a partner changes her mind. Long-term partners should not assume that once this matter has been discussed, it is permanently resolved; checking in from time to time will help to protect you both from the development of assumptions on one side and reticence about bringing up changes on the other.

Many people use intoxicants as a means to get over their inhibitions and into bed with each other; this is a real problem, because intoxication interferes with people's abilities to think clearly, express themselves, and understand others. If you must have drunken, blundering sex, do it with a partner you how well and share a high level of trust with; otherwise, if s more responsible not to at all.

Just as refusing to regard the products of animal exploitation as food can help you rediscover your ability to feel compassion in a desensitized society, it can be a worthwhile experiment to avoid pornography and conventional representations of sex. These generally reinforce the notion of sex as a performance of domination and submission, and lust as a desire for objectified bodies that conform to unhealthy beauty norms — to such an extent that when two people who have spent their lives being conditioned by them come together in bed, it is not an intersection of two individuals, but of the images they put in place of themselves and each other. As my friend who counsels perpetrators of sexual abuse and domestic violence tells them, if all your sexual encounters have taken place under the influence of hierarchical programming, you've never made love-you don't know even how what it is.

Don't regard your desires as fixed imperatives; explore, experiment, challenge yourself. Don't take for granted that sexuality is limited to the bedroom alone; dancing, conversing, exploring rooftops in the rain, all these can be thrilling ways to express erotic energy. Be honest with others — and, at least as important, supportive enough that they will not fear to be honest with you. All this is basically common sense, but it's another thing entirely to put it into practice. Best of luck!

Account

Wouldn't you like to know!

Shoplifting

Ingredients

It's been said that a capitalist will sell you the very rope with which to hang him; that may be so, but he sure won't sell it to you at a price anyone but a fellow capitalist could afford. Don't despair, though: what you can't buy, you can steal.

Shoplifting has some drawbacks. It can be more dangerous in terms of legal repercussions than other alternative means of gathering, and it doesn't discourage mass-production — or, for that matter, mass-consumption. All the same, sometimes what you need can't be found in the dumpsters — and if you're going to shoplift from time to time, it's good to stay in practice.

Zen and the Art of Shoplifting

There is a spiritual side to shoplifting. Being calm is important; it may even help to employ meditation techniques. Try method acting: be the harmless customer you are pretending to be. Be friendly when you interact with employees, ask questions if you need to, smile. Unless you are actually seen secreting items in your clothes, you will only be suspected if employees find you suspicious.

Just the same, there is no standard appearance for shoplifters. Corporate research shows that teens shoplift the most, with middle-class, middle-aged women as a dose second. Who would have thought? Maybe you wouldn't have, but any savvy security person knows this. Dress as yourself if you were a shopper, so you'll feel comfortable, but don't get lazy and assume you will be ignored.

Store detectives and undercover employees don't have a particular look, either. You can be busted by any of a whole cast of totally unexpected characters, some employed by the store, some not. Your best bet is to not let anyone observe your activities.

Confidence is an asset, but be careful not to get cocky. Your ability to shoplift is a limited resource; the more you do so, the higher the probability that you will eventually get caught. When this happens, your captors will probably try to make things difficult for you. If you get caught several times, you may feel compelled to stop shoplifting. Don't let that be the moment you realize it is better to have a long career supplying yourself and your community with necessities than it is to go out in a blaze of hubris trying to acquire more luxury items than the next consumer.

When you work with a partner, make sure to find someone whose style is compatible with yours, so you won't have to deal with any stressful misunderstandings or disagreements in the midst of an already stressful mission.

Surveillance Cameras

When you are in a store, keep track of cameras, but don't get intimidated. It is true that cameras get people busted, but research shows that they work best as deterrents. Keep in mind that

most stores with dozens of cameras don't have dozens of employees studiously watching dozens of video monitors. More likely, it's one person watching one or two monitors, either rotating between cameras or split-screen viewing with nine cameras per monitor. If this dimestore Big Brother gets interested in your activities, he can follow you from camera to camera through the store, but even then the cameras have wide angles and low resolution. Keep your movements subtle and casual. No store is free of blind spots. Find one and do your concealing there.

The cameras covering the registers at the front of the store are called "hold-up cameras." The silly notion of an Old-West-style stick-up at a super-mart provides a feeble excuse for the store to aim surveillance at its own employees, who are inevitably the main cause of what is known in the industry as shrinkage. Shrinkage research shows that half of what stores report as shoplifting loss is actually due to employee theft and damage to merchandise. See, the store doesn't trust its workers any more than it trusts you. Research also shows that when employees are paid well and cared for, theft drops significantly. If you are in a store with massive amounts of cameras on employees, you can be sure that the employees are poorly treated and probably don't give a damn about the company.

Be respectful of employees. Don't be too obvious — this makes them feel like you think they're stupid. They may well not care if you steal, but for civility's sake you should do it subtly.

Decoys, Devices, Distractions

If you're stealing a lot of stuff, it's a good idea to purchase at least one item; the security guards will be less suspicious if you go out through the checkout lane.

Alternatively, after you've pocketed what you need, you can ask an employee up front for an item that is unavailable-for instance, in a grocery store, ask if they have kerosene. This will give you an excuse to walk out without buying anything.

There are several variations on this theme. After you've got what you need, you could bring an item without a tag up to the front and ask its price; when your question is answered, comment that it is too much, and leave. You could also fill your backpack and pockets with what you need, and a shopping basket with random items ; when you have been rung up in the checkout line, explain that you've forgotten your wallet at home and you'll be right back.

If you go shoplifting with a partner, one of you can dress nicely, and the other as a shifty-eyed thief. Walk in separately; the one in hoodlum drag should sneak around looking suspicious, distracting security, while the well-dressed one fills up her bag and exits the store. In a variation on this method, one shopper fakes an epileptic seizure or similar crisis, while the other takes care of business.

If employees or customers are aware of you but not paying dose attention, it is a good idea to take two of an item you need off the shelf, then put one back. This can be a good maneuver to fool surveillance cameras, too; their resolution is usually too low to show the number of items in your hand.

At office supply stores with self-serve copiers, you can steal books, paper, or large flat items. Bring a backpack with some of your own books from home. Nonchalantly bring items you are going to steal over to the copy machines. Spend some time making photocopies from your books. When no one is watching, slide items between the books and into your backpack. Pay for the copies and leave the store.

If you have a cell phone, use it as a prop. Arrange to get a call while you are in line for the register with everything you need in a hand basket. Clamping one ear to the phone and the other hand over your other ear, stomp outside for some peace and quiet, perhaps forgetfully toting your basket along. Outside, finish your conversation, and, if no one has followed you, get into your BMW and drive off. If you are followed, it's cool, you just need to finish this call — Jeeeez!

You can ask prudish employees about specific brands of "embarrassing" commodities; afterwards they may avoid you. Better yet, find an employee and ask for assistance with something perfectly ordinary. With the employee close by, looking at the shelf or leading you to the location, you will be less monitored by security guards and other employees. Use this opportunity to conceal items.

A couple can pose as distracted lovers, giggling, making out, and fondling in a way that makes people embarrassed to watch, and take advantage of this embarrassment to grope products into place inside each other's clothes.

This one's good for stores with two exits, or at busy times: get a few bags from the trash with the store's name on them, and fill them up in the comer of the store somewhere. Have a receipt of some sort in your hand with a few bills and coins. Scrutinize the receipt and count your change while casually walking out.

Concealing

Since women often have handbags, it's easy to walk in a store with a bag in the front of the cart and fill it up with items. Keep in mind, though, that if you are suspected any bag on your person will be the first thing searched.

A clipboard is a scary accessory used by authority figures. People treat me differently when I carry a clipboard, no matter what I'm up to! In a store, a clipboard can be very useful; dip a shopping list to it for a pretext. Security cameras are usually up high; carry the clipboard in a way that allows you to remove packaging and magnetic strips in its shadow. Position the clipboard as if you are scrutinizing your list, while you slip something into your pants or under your arm . Conceal flat items under the clipboard; you can grip both with one hand and either exit the store or go through the line with an inexpensive product.

To open and remove heavy-duty packaging unobtrusively, tape a razor blade or X-acto knife tip to the end of your finger, with the blade just barely out; it should look like you are wearing a bandage over a minor injury.

Take in a stroller with you with a child or two in it — the bigger the stroller, the better. Shop with a store handbasket on your arm while pushing the stroller and quietly filling its compartments.

Install a zippered opening on the side of your backpack that lies against your back; this can be perfect for secreting items. You can steal zippers from craft stores; get a quiet, smooth-moving one.

Cargo pockets can provide good hiding spots, but there are a thousand other options. Tuck in the bottom of your shirt and slide things through your collar; while wearing a baggy hooded sweatshirt, suck in your stomach and slide flat items halfway into your pants, using the elastic of your underwear and the waist of your pants to hold them in place; put stuff in your sock while bending down to tie your shoe; slide items down the sleeves of puffy jackets with tight cuffs; slip small items into an opaque water bottle with a wide mouth; cut a hole in the bottom of a jacket

pocket so you can slip larger items through into the lining; sew extra pockets into your clothes. If you wear a coat or sweat- shirt that zips up in front, you can slip small items inside the coat and press them under your arm with lightning quickness.

You don't have to conceal items to steal them-sometimes it works better to walk right out like you own them. In a grocery store, there may be a side door you can roll your fall cart through and into the parking lot.

To apply the same principle on a smaller scale, carry an expensive item in your left hand or grip it under your left arm while you pay for a cheap item with your right hand. Incredibly, employees will not notice the other item. I had to do this by accident before I could believe that it works, but it does. The best part is that you have not concealed anything — if the cashier notices, it looks like an honest mistake, and you can purchase the item, assuming you have the money to. If not, you had it separate from the other items because you needed to get a price check. Silly you. One tip: when you use this technique, have the correct amount of money ready before you get in line; you don't want to be fumbling for your cash one-handed.

Of course, if you can use or consume the item inside the store, you needn't worry about getting it out in the first place.

Scams and Tricks

If you need cash or an item that is too difficult to shoplift, you can take a stolen item to the returns desk, claiming to have bought it; fewer and fewer stores will give you a refund or exchange unless you present a receipt, but there are ways to get those, too. I've found that with return scams, it is less suspicious to place the item in some sort of bag or in your backpack, get in a normal line, and ask, "Can I make a return here?" They will send you over to the return desk; this looks better than just walking up to the return desk from inside the store. Even better, get the item out of the store altogether and have a friend go in and return it, or come back another day. That way, the most you can get busted for is shoplifting, which is usually less serious than "obtaining property or cash under false pretense."

Women's underwear and accessories are perfect items for men to return. The stereotypical man always screws up when buying stuff for his girlfriend, wife, or mother. When it comes to lingerie, it's easy for a guy with a rueful look to get sympathy and a quick exchange or refund. like most exchanges, this works particularly well around Christmas time.

You can slightly damage or scratch an item you need and sneak it up to the front desk. Attempt to return the item, and let the employee find that it is damaged and refuse to take it back. Act like an irritated customer and leave the store with the item. If the employee doesn't notice and gives you store credit or cash, you can go back and get an unscratched one, if you're so inclined. Alternatively, just damage an item or throw it into the trash inside the store and wait for it to show up in the dumpster.

You can remove an expensive item from its box and place it in a box with a cheaper price on it. Be prepared to play the irritated customer if the cashier notices this. Don't do this with shoes — employees sometimes check inside; instead, you might be able to try them on, leave your old shoes in the box, and just walk right out. It also might be possible to conceal one small, expensive item in another big, cheap one before purchasing the latter.

At many stores, you can go to the stocking areas in the back and ask for boxes for moving. Have a few people ready to cany lots of empty boxes, except for one or two that you will quickly

fill up before walking out the door. Don't make them too heavy — they have to look light as air as you carry them away.

Two people can work together, one gathering items, removing their tags, and stashing them somewhere, the other coming in afterwards and taking the prepared items out swiftly.

Dressing rooms are a great place to cut off security tags. You can sew up the holes later. If a salesperson counted your items on your way in, make sure you still have the item you want in your hand as you walk out.

Finally, if you are a computer hacker or graphic designer, you could print your own barcode stickers. To obtain items at cheaper prices, substitute the barcode for a similar item; to wreck a store's checkout system, distribute the stickers randomly on products throughout the store.

Precautions

Since laws vary from state to state, it's good to know the local laws and penalties. For instance, if you are in an area where it is a felony to shoplift a value of $100 or more, you might choose to steal no more than $99 of merchandise at a time.

Look through the windows of a store for cameras before you enter; make note of alarm sensors, security personnel, and receipt checkers. If you look to the ceiling for cameras while you're inside, move your eyes, not your whole head.

Often, it's wise not to pocket an item until you have moved away from the place you picked it up. Consider which areas of the store will be under special observation — departments with small, expensive items prized by shoplifters, for example. Take your items to aisles stocked with bulky, inexpensive items. For example, throw the toothbrush in your cart while you are in the medicine and beauty product aisle, unwrap and conceal it in the toilet paper aisle.

Always look for security tags inside packages — inside the boxes of CDs, for example. If you see that the store has an alarm system, it is usually safer to take items out of their shoplift^ packaging entirely.

When leaving a store with security tags, time your passage through the sensors to coincide with other shopper traffic. If you set it off, keep walking. False alarms are not uncommon, and the more customers there are, the more confusion there will be to cover your getaway.

Look out for vigilante customers who may turn you in or attempt a citizen's arrest.

Flat mirrors are almost always two-way. To be safe, assume that somebody is indeed watching you. As for the round ones, if you can't see the employee, she can't see you — but be careful, sometimes they have cameras behind them.

Trouble in Paradise

If you set off alarms, keep walking and ignore them; employees are often slow to react, used to false alarms, or too timid to accuse people of stealing unless they act guilty. If necessary, you might be able to walk into a nearby store and ditch the item.

If you are caught and there is any heavy-handedness on the part of the store detective, employee, or rent-a-cop, get indignant and make a racket about a lawsuit. Lawsuits brought by shoplifters whose rights have been violated in apprehension represent a large cost for major retailers, and threats may put them back on the defensive. If you plan to go this route, it's best to know your rights to the letter so you can strike fear into their hearts with chilling accuracy.

You might want to bring enough money with you to purchase the item in the event that you get caught. Sometimes the store will settle on that and leave the authorities out of it.

If employees see you with your hands in your pockets, try pulling out some money to count or a shopping list to look at.

If you are doing a return and they are treating you like a thief, stand your ground. Remember, you are a customer who bought the wrong item and have no thought of swallowing that cost. If the manager is brought in and begins to say no, don't walk away like a whipped dog. Ask to see a copy of the store return policy. Get mad: you are going to complain in writing; you are calling the Better Business Bureau; you are writing a letter to the editor; yon have been a loyal customer for years; you don't want an exchange anymore, you want a refund so you can take your business where it is appreciated. Of course, don't pull any of that nonsense unless you stole the item on a different visit or from another store.

If a store detective is onto you, don't let on that you know. If you have to dump stuff, do it as carefully as you concealed it- you don't want to be caught dumping. If you are caught dumping, never let a store detective know it was because of them. Claim a mistake or a guilty conscience and stick to your story.

Experts advise store detectives and managers to look out for abnormal eye and neck movements. Darting, shifting, jittery eyes give everything away. Experts also warn about shoplifters who run reverse surveillance, looking all over the store, particularly at ceilings where cameras may be. A nervous thief may startle easily even when approached casually. A nerve-racked thief may look back or pause briefly before exiting or passing alarms, or yawn or otherwise fidget in exaggerated composure. Stay conscious of all such behaviors. At the time you leave, you are either suspect or you are not; one way or another, it's a done deal. If you're not under suspicion, don't attract it at the last moment; if you set off an alarm or are chased, one last look before exiting isn't going to do you any good.

Coordinated Strikes

If enough people are ready for war, you could skip the subterfuges and mount a full frontal offensive. Have everyone dress as unremarkably as possible, and filter into the store one by one. When everyone is inside with their baskets full, someone sets off the fire alarm or creates some similar distraction, giving the signal for everyone to charge the gates — Such an aggressive tact is bound to provoke the most aggressive response the corporation can muster, but it does put the issue of access to material goods on the table, and it may inspire others or even enable them to get away without paying, too. As long as you were careful not to give away your plan in advance, you could combine this tactic with an advertising campaign on their behalf: "Thursday, May 1st is free shopping day at Commodity Consumption Incorporated! Come take advantage of our lowest prices ever, and enjoy this show of appreciation to all our customers. Offer limited to one hand basket per shopper, between the hours of one and five p.m. — 100% off, everything must go!"

Smoke Bombs

You can buy professionally made smoke bombs from fireworks vendors; they might even work better than homemade ones. But making them yourself is cheaper, can leave less of a trail, and involves you in the process, so you can manufacture them according to your needs.

Ingredients

- Saltpeter
- Sugar
- Old cooking pot
- Spoon
- Stove
- Bowls or ice cube tray
- Cigarette lighter

Instructions

Mix two parts sugar to three parts saltpeter in the cooking pot. Heat this over a low flame, stirring constantly until it melts; this will take several minutes. Pour the mixture into an ice cube tray, or into bowls, depending on the size you want to make the smoke bombs. Allow them to cool and harden, and remove them from your molds. Once dried, they may get sticky in warm, humid weather — they're partly sugar, after all — but they will still work.

To apply one, light it with a cigarette lighter; this may take up to fifteen seconds. We don't recommend using matches to light them, as it is difficult to keep matches burning this long unless there is no wind. These smoke bombs bum like sparklers, rather than exploding suddenly. Once lit, they can be thrown without going out. A smoke bomb the size of an ice cube will bum for perhaps twenty seconds. We made one the size of a fist, and when we tested it outside we were sure the fire department was going to come. One source recommends embedding matchsticks in them before they have dried, to aid in the lighting process; there are bound to be ways to arrange a delayed ignition, as well.

Solidarity

Instructions

The heart of anarchy is solidarity: people helping each other. While lonely capitalists view their fellow creatures as potential enemies, anarchists see others as potential friends and allies — and these different visions are self-fulfilling prophecies (see Spell Casting, pg. 501). Solidarity actions are a means of ushering potential friendships into existence, and making the world a friendlier place in the process. After all, you can never have too many friends, especially not if you live under the threat of state repression. If you want to break out of the system of competition, in which people only thrive to the extent that they make others suffer, your life will depend on networks of friendship and mutual aid — and nothing makes friends faster than helping others. Every one of us has some kind of resource that can be shared — what do you have that other people need?

Let's say, for example, you are part of a predominantly young and white anarchist community, and a black man has just been shot down in cold blood by the police. You could contact his family and offer to screenprint shirts or posters for them to use for raising money and awareness (see Screenprinting, pg. 455), or you could use your graffiti skills to paint the town with his name, so the media can't sweep the whole thing under the rug (see Graffiti, pg. 258). Or let's say you are a tenured professor at a university, and know of a people that are being displaced from their lands by a petroleum corporation. You could offer to host speaking events for them, organize trips for students and others to visit their lands to witness what is happening, and campaign to force your university to cut any financial ties it has with the corporation. Nobody can do everything, but everybody can do something.

Solidarity Begins at Home

When considering your options for solidarity actions, never underestimate your powers. No life is too mundane, no skillset too limited, no gift too humble for one person to be of assistance to another. The most important forms of solidarity are the daily ones: babysitting, providing emotional support, sharing food and goods. You might not call it an Action to spend an evening babysitting your neighbor's children, but it is such modest deeds that make communities of resistance possible. The everyday affairs of being a reliable friend, a gentle lover, and a courageous ally form the bread and butter of revolution — after all, our friendships form the foundation of our affinity groups.

Many clashes between capital and community do not have glory, fame, or glamor associated with them, but that doesn't make them any less important. If everyone moved to Chiapas to take part in the Zapatistas' struggle while ignoring the struggles taking place in their own backyards, our chances of creating global change would be slim indeed. The Zapatistas probably don't need too many anarchists wandering aimlessly around their villages and getting lost in the jungle,

anyway! As they've said themselves: What is required is that revolutionaries live and fight the system everywhere — and that includes wherever it is that you live. The exotic attraction that faraway struggles exert is a relative matter, after all: for a young white college student, helping translate the demands of Hispanic janitors into English can be a whole different world, just as a jaded Zapatista soldier might find it romantic and adventurous to help defend the century-old homesteads of Appalachian mountain families against coal companies.

There are probably opportunities for solidarity actions right down the street from where you live. You may be the only one knows about them, or the only person who might help; don't miss the chance to do so while fantasizing about aiding revolutionaries on the other side of the planet! If you take a local issue seriously enough, it might even come to be known around the world — and then perhaps others will show up from far away to act in solidarity with you.

Traveling to Solidarity Actions

Local solidarity is important — but that being said, it can also be good to travel to share resources with people in other lands and circumstances. From time to time, you may need to leave home, anyway, and if you're going to visit another locale you might as well make yourself useful there! Traveling to distant places to offer solidarity can give you a wider base of experience to inform your participation in local struggles; it can also provide a welcome breath of fresh air when your struggles at home have become monotonous or seem hopeless.

Great distances and time-consuming voyages often discourage people from going to far-off places to participate in solidarity actions. However, when it comes to travel, many anarchists have options others do not. The secret weapons of unemployment, hitchhiking, and trainhopping can offer the free time and free passage to get almost anywhere. Those who possess the opportunity to use such means should apply them for the good of all. Obtaining overseas plane tickets can be more challenging, but you can look into standby fares, courier fares, and student discounts. If you have access to a car, you can pack it full of people — one of whom should have at least rudimentary knowledge of automobile repair — and take it great distances, sleeping in it when need be.

Many people think that not knowing a foreign language disqualifies them from doing solidarity work in other nations and cultures. For many actions, you don't necessarily need to know the local language yourself, you just need to be part of a group with at least one member who can serve as a translator and doesn't mind doing so. Of course, wherever you go, you should always make an effort to learn everything you can of the language and customs; many people will be happy to help you learn their native tongue, especially if you are willing to return the favor. Immersion is the best way to learn a language, anyway. Still, grounding yourselves in the basics of a language and culture before leaving to do solidarity work in a foreign context will make you more effective and your time much more enjoyable.

Remember that many things you take for granted about yourself may affect the ways people treat you in another culture. For example, white skin often denotes "rich tourist," so if you have it, expect people to attempt to get money from you no matter how long you've been an unemployed full-time revolutionary. In some cultures, sexism may be so deeply ingrained that people will routinely ignore you if you are a woman. Often your own assumptions will be challenged: while there aren't many older revolutionaries in the United States, in indigenous cultures it is often the oldest people who are fighting the hardest while their children embrace the North American way

of life. Openly bribing cops may be unheard of where you come from, but in some societies it is a crucial element of survival. Read up in advance, talk to people who've been where you're going; if you can, go with someone who has already been and made connections. No matter how distant the place or how foreign it seems, don't let the unknown intimidate you out of undertaking worthwhile solidarity actions.

Offering Skills and Resources

Once you feel ready to undertake a solidarity action, think about what you have to share. Having access to computers or vehicles, knowing how to communicate with the media, being from North America or Western Europe — many people take privileges like these for granted, but they can be absolutely vital to helping out other communities. Free time (see Unemployment, pg. 576) is itself a very valuable resource. Having no steady job, or a job with very flexible hours, can give you the opportunity to help people; so can being willing to risk arrest.

Sometimes all that is needed is a group to occupy a liberated space in danger of being evicted or destroyed, such as a squat, tree-sit, land occupation, or community center or garden. You may be called on to obstruct invaders (see Blockades and Lockdowns, pg. 162), hold them at bay (see Blocs, Black and Otherwise, pg. 127), or get the word out (see Soudan^ Wheatpasting, pg. 598; Graffiti, pg. 258; and Distribution, Tabling, and Infoshops, pg. 210).

In other situations, you may just be needed as a helping hand, to cook food, tutor children, or even herd sheep.

In some parts of the world, you can help by being an international observer. This involves no greater technical skill than simply staying at a place under threat and watching what happens. In places like Palestine and Chiapas, the forces of repression will be less likely to murder people or bulldoze their houses if they know international visitors staying in the community might witness these atrocities or, worse, be injured in them. This is not always risk-free — in Palestine, for example, the Israeli occupying forces have begun callously killing even international observers.

The world is full of injustices and liberation struggles that are not receiving the attention they warrant, so knowing how to do basic media work can be really important. This might mean anything from posting information or personal accounts on the internet to writing press releases (see Mainstream Media, pg. 358) or doing video documentation (see Independent Media, pg. 346). Many communities can't afford or obtain video cameras, computers, and other such equipment; delivering them as gifts, or bringing them to share while yon are present, can be of great assistance. Technical skills such as automotive or computer repair can be useful, too, as can a willingness to run errands. Whatever you have or can do, somebody somewhere is in need of it.

Making Contact

Establishing contact with the group you want to support can be a task in itself. You'll probably need a point of connection, if not through someone who is already linked to the community, at least from an existing support group whose goals and tactics mesh with your own. In long-distance or international solidarity work, phone calls or emails usually suffice, but if you are attempting to reach a group that is in a place without reliable email access, you should be prepared to wait quite a long time for a response. Many groups are so overworked and overextended that they may lose track of your contact information, fail to write back to you, or forget you are

coming, despite being in dire need of your support. Dealing with you and your needs may not be their top priority; be patient, and don't make unnecessary demands on their time.

While some action-hungry anarchists might not be inclined to wait around for direction, it's infinitely better to wait for guidance from locals than to rush into a situation you don't fully understand. When you finally manage to get in touch, be as open and honest as possible, and ask what they would most like to see done. Often, groups will not give you the hardest or most needed work right away; they need to see what you're capable of, and build up trust with you. Remember, many people have had bad experiences with incompetent, easily distracted, or self-serving radicals. Be patient, reliable, and respectful, and do good work; over time, you'll earn the respect and trust necessary to become a true friend and ally.

Arriving

If you've traveled a long distance to get to the site of your planned solidarity action, you might be exhausted when you arrive. Sometimes you will find your self in the thick of things immediately, and there won't be a moment to lose before you are climbing ardent redwoods or chaining yourself to a gate. However, if time permits, take some time out to ground yourself and get acclimated.

If you are working with a "respectable" group, you might want to clean up your appearance, but this is not always the case. Your social status as a rough-and-ready dropout revolutionary may actually be part of what you have to offer. Whatever the situation, there's no sense posing as something you're not — you're trying to build relationships based on honesty and mutual respect, right?

For better or worse, anarchists are occasionally in the news attacking police lines or breaking windows. While this sort of coverage is intended to scare people out of associating with us, many people know better than to trust the corporate media, and some respect anarchists for taking a stand against this bankrupt system, even if by means of tactics they may not endorse themselves. Don't attempt to disguise yourself or downplay your beliefs, don't pressure yourself to make a particular impression. Be open about your passions, background, and skills. The people you are working with will let you know what they need from you.

Working Out the Context

In one of the most common contexts for solidarity actions, some nefarious corporation or government is in the process of isolating and maltreating a community. Divide and conquer is their specialty; the last thing they want is for someone else to show up to expose or oppose their misdeeds. Often, throwing a few outsiders into the mix can change everything, bringing injustices to the attention of the outside world and providing crucial backup for the community.

Sometimes things are as simple as they appear, but don't count on it. Never assume that the community to which you are trying to offer solidarity is one homogenous whole. Just like all communities, it is a diverse assortment of individuals with differing viewpoints about the situation and, for that matter, about you. Resist idolizing communities, and resist writing them off. Take the time to get to know the individuals with whom you hope to show solidarity; this is the best way to learn about their situation. If you can, go to the area where the struggle is taking place, and investigate everything for yourself.

It may happen that whatever forces you are fighting have bought the allegiance of some of the people suffering on their account. This can lead to confusing situations in which a once-united community is divided and fighting within itself. If it's obvious which side is in the right, ally yourself with them, but in some situations it will be confusing. If you don't understand the internal dynamics of a community, don't pretend you do, and never assume anyone to be a sellout without good reason. If you feel that you are making the situation worse, or that most of the people you would like to help want you to leave, it's time to go.

Remember, while you can go back to your home, the locals will have to live with the effects of your decisions. Always imagine yourself in their shoes before making choices, and think through the long-term results of your actions. At the same time, never underestimate how radical people can be. Many a liberal activist secretly dreams of storming the White House; an elderly indigenous man may have fought hand-to-hand with the Canadian army — and may be ready to do it again, or at least support you doing so in his stead.

Being Consistent

We need to build networks of mutual aid that can last through years of government repression. Occasionally stopping by for a solidarity action will not suffice to accomplish this: it demands staying in touch, building up long-term relationships, and providing consistent support.

A great part of this can be achieved by spreading awareness of faraway struggles to your own town, not to mention bringing together local struggles that are not yet connected. Educate people about the issues, and about what they can do. Sometimes it is actually easier to get people involved in local struggles by awakening their interest in faraway ones, and then proposing the possibility of local solidarity actions.

When you're not engaged in solidarity actions far from home, there are countless ways you can show solidarity locally. You can set up video showings and other educational events to raise awareness, and host speakers and other travelers from distant places. You can hold benefit dinners and parties to raise money for groups that need funding. You can organize demonstrations at or otherwise attack the embassies of nations involved in unacceptable activities; it can happen that unstable foreign governments will take these warnings seriously, and decrease the heat on the community you are supporting. Even if there is no embassy, consulate, or other obvious target in your town, there's bound to be solidarity some corporate outpost implicated in injustice. By means of picketing, boycotts, property destruction, and sabotage, let them know there are consequences to their misdeeds.

Regardless of the details of your activity, keep your eyes on the prize of establishing long-term, reliable, global networks of solidarity. We're all in this together. Solidarity work is not charity work: our own undertakings, and with them our very lives, depend on the mutual success of our combined efforts against capitalism. While no one whose life is on the line respects liberal do-gooders, people will respect you if they can tell you are as invested in their struggles as they are. Whatever aid we offer other communities with our solidarity work, we take home experiences and friendships that are worth far more.

Account

We received a spectral smoke signal of nybbles and bytes requesting our presence in the cold plains of Oneida, New York Not knowing what to expect, our hearty band of improbable and impermissible white wanderers from the flatlands of the South journeyed to the snowy plains of Oneida. Following directions hastily and poorly translated over an obscure payphone, we came onto a stone longhouse, the home of the Onyota'a:ka, the traditional Oneida of the Standing Stone. We pried open the heavy wooden doors and peered inside.

A mighty elder, Clanmother Maisie Shenandoah of the Oneida, greeted us with open arms and a broad smile. A powerful woman, she had seen generations come and go, and she feared that this would be the last to live in freedom. She explained that these thirty acres of land we were now on — and the homes upon it — were the last of the sovereign nation of the Oneida people, subject to no law except their own. This proud people and their land were under assault from without and within. One of their own had gone to Harvard, gotten himself a business degree, and incorporated the tribe as a corporation, building a financial empire spanning mid-state New York. This was Oneida Nation, Inc. — an independent fiefdom with its own laws, its own taxes, its own courts, its own (mostly white) police, with Judge, Jury, Executioner, God, and State wrapped up in one man: Ray Halbritter.

Known among the locals as "No-Face Ray" for cursing the ways of the Oneida and declaring himself against all sanity and tradition "Chief for Life," Ray was attempting to develop this pocket of land, the thirty acres of the traditional Oneida, the last remaining sovereign Oneida land. Women had been evicted by Ray's private "Housing Inspectors," and seen their houses bulldozed before their children's very eyes. Shopping malls were to rise up, following the pattern of twisted and terrible progress familiar to any denizen of Western capitalism and civilization. If you stood on the edge of the thirty acres, you could already see the future: a giant casino, sprawling across the land like a bloated carcass.

Ray's private army was patrolling the thirty acres, and we were told that the official explanation for our presence was that we had been invited to a tribal dance. Dancing it was. One by one, all the Oneida families of the thirty acres crowded into the little longhouse, and with them they brought a never-ending procession of all sorts of food and drink. After a rousing meal, during which Ray Halbritter's name was cursed into the highest heavens and the deepest hell, one of the older men stood in the middle of the room and began chanting in a tongue my ears could not comprehend, a sound rich with dignity beyond compare. Children lined up behind his booming bass voice, providing a brilliant treble. Soon the entire room, except for us white folk, was dancing up a storm. They absolutely refused to allow us to remain mere spectators, grabbing us hand in hand until we were all dancing side by side, some of us with considerably less skill than others.

When the dance came to an end, an old man with white hair pulled two of our band off to the side. "Did you bring baseball bats!" he asked. We weren't sure what he meant, so we said that we were "ready for whatever it took," an equally coded answer. He then started telling us stories about bingo parlors burning and Mohawk revolts, about the first winter snow and Ray's mother's facelifts. After considerable mystery, he left us with a simple message: "Gringo Windshield."

Ray Halbritter was going to enter the thirty acres to hold a meeting of his cronies in an ancient longhouse that he had closed to the community long ago. His private army of goons was to be there to strike fear into the locals' hearts. In the morning the old man's words rang true . A small

line of u s in full black bloc regalia surrounded the larger crowd of traditional Oneida, who were for the first time in years going to contest Ray openly. We prayed that our threadbare patches of anarchy and punk would protect us from bullets. Ray scurried into the longhouse at our approach, and his goons tried to arrest one of our burly black-masked friends. 1 screamed, "Let him go!"

Magic.

Ray's police did let him go. We were shocked. Since we weren't Oneida, Ray's police had no legal right to arrest or even touch us. Bristling with badges, guns, and clubs, they just told us to leave. We began laughing in their faces and mocking them. "Police? You aren't even real police! Come on, just touch me!" "So how does it feel to beat up women in front of their children for a living?" "Don't feel so high and mighty now, do you!"

The traditional Oneida were delighted, and began joining in the taunts. Under cover of the commotion outside, they sent their children through the back door of the longhouse. Inside, Ray and the world he represented found themselves emperors without clothes, as little children ran around in the meeting openly defying him and giggling at his self- important madness. Soon, the commotion got so out of hand that the local city police showed up, along with reporters — an unheard of event in Ray's territory. The traditional Oneida took the police and reporters aside, showing them their home videos of Ray's police beating women and destroying their homes. Smiles broke out on all our faces when Ray turned tail and fled. The ice that separated us from the Oneida began to break.

There we stood, two tribes — one ancient and the other new — united against a common enemy. The ancient tribe was fighting for survival, and, unlike our ancestors at Wounded Knee, we turned our backs on allegiance to race, nation, and other fictions

to join them in arms. This alchemy released magic — police unable to police, children ridiculing kings. The Oneida's struggle against extinction goes on, as does ours. Let us hope it goes on together, as we realize the possibilities of tribal alliances that can overcome our loneliest moments and the most impossible of odds. Let us struggle — and dance — together.

Spell Casting

Ingredients

- Desire
- Faith
- A personal mythology
- A process that nurtures the developments thereof

Instructions

When it comes to really making things happen, you'll probably find it's more effective to come up with crazy schemes with a couple of friends and believe in them so intensely that everyone else begins to as well ("Hey, did you hear what's going to happen … ?") than it is to meet in big groups and struggle to hit on some plan that somehow satisfies everybody. The scale of the latter kind of plan is usually limited to the lowest common denominator of what everyone considers possible, and such approaches rarely lead beyond the narrow confines of the status quo.

To pull off a revolution on any scale, you have to be able to believe outside the box. Reality, both present and future, is created by mass consensus: consensus about what is worthwhile (a house, a husband and kids, a retirement plan), about the meaning of the surrounding world ("Downtown is for shopping, highways are for driving, Friday night is for drinking…"}, about what can and will take place ("If we all simultaneously stopped paying rent and docking in, it could work, but that will never happen…") Even a small group of people who believe against the grain can call an entire world-system into question, not to mention liberate themselves from its supposed inevitabilities. If the alternate world they consider themselves to inhabit is convincing, and more appealing than the one everyone else accepts, the future itself can be hijacked by the desires this minority trusts and thus unleashes.

To speak on a smaller scale, perception and reality influence one another, and believing that something is possible is generally a prerequisite for being capable of bringing it about. In this sense, whether a desire for revolution or anything else is "realistic" is a moot point: for the individual who does not wish to cripple herself, the question is not what to believe in as "the" truth but what beliefs render which truths possible. Being pragmatic is often the least pragmatic way to approach life.

But how does one go about believing in one's crazy schemes in a psychotically sane society? That's where the science of spell casting comes in.

The simplest way to cast a spell is to begin to act "as if: as if there are others who feel as you do, as if you are possessed of great powers, as if you are the protagonist of a story with a happy

ending. Do what it takes to position yourself far enough from the madding crowd that you can establish contact with other realities — stop watching television and reading newspapers, travel far from home and outside the circuits set out for your social class, do the unthinkable in your own life so you can think the undoable in social life. Practice believing, as the queen in Alice in Wonderland recommended, at least six impossible things every day before breakfast. When you truly believe something and act accordingly, your conviction takes the form of a self-fulfilling prophecy?

Typically, for better or for worse, people use this power accidentally: the self-destruction of a relationship, an instance of good luck, a project undertaken with no initial resources except determination — for which all the essentials appear, one by one. These are all great and wondrous occurrences, though no greater than we should expect from this world! But a person spell-casting unconsciously is a baby with a machine gun — look out. To make spell casting into a conscious process is not to be superstitious, but to do deliberately what one would otherwise do haphazardly.

Speaking of making spell casting into a conscious process, it can be helpful to externalize the process in ritual. In rituals, faith and desire are projected into the external world, where they become tangible; in the process, they inevitably become more real. Similarly, it is empowering to develop a personal mythology based on one's own experiences. If the dominant mythos paralyzes us by making us believe ourselves to be trapped in the chains of certain causes and effects, then a necessary part of liberation is investing oneself in a dissident causality. Again, this does not mean replacing action with superstition, as in applying pins to dolls of politicians instead of throwing pies in their faces; rather, it means recognizing and respecting what so-called superstitions have to offer to action. The would-be pie assailant who has spent months visualizing and enacting her victory, and whose personal mythology gives her assurance that she is destined to succeed, has a better chance of doing what it takes to strike her target than the one who eschews all such frivolities, hands down.

The Genius's Guide to Spell Casting

Step 1: Spells can only be cast in a magic world, but take heart: we live in a magic world. In day-to-day life, we are bombarded with magic — to be more precise, with the surprise intersections of people, feelings, and events sometimes called coincidences. We do not even notice the great majority of these, but life is absolutely overflowing with them. Life is also full of patterns, symmetry, foreshadowing, symbolism, irony, dramatic lighting, indispensable props, crucial characters, and moments of truth. One can shrug all these off as accidents, but in so doing one loses all the benefits to be gained from investing them with meaning. Deciding to view the world through a frame that accounts for magical developments makes aspects of life visible that would otherwise "not exist," and prepares one to work in the medium they provide.

Step 2: Begin to take notice of magic occurrences. Here are a some small-scale but common examples to get you started: synesthesia, the crossing of the senses; feeling people in a house without seeing or hearing them; feeling that someone is watching you and turning to meet their gaze; spontaneous perceptions of distant events; sensing the location of lost objects; opening books to the exact passage sought; perceiving in a person undisclosed feelings, traits, or possibilities for development; sensing a numinous presence; seeing something familiar as if for the first time; feeling the presence of someone distant or dead; experiencing images of internal body

structures; correctly intuiting someone's feelings or thoughts about you; saying something in unison with someone else; writing a friend with whom you have not communicated in years to find that they have just written you; sensing who is calling you on the phone; thinking of someone and then having them call; feeling united with your lover during sex; feeling the pains of a distant friend, then discovering they are injured; feeling what someone else is thinking; sensing the mood and intention of an animal; having the same dream a friend has; feeling great warmth on cold days; experiencing immense energy; remaining free of infection despite the presence of contagious diseases; experiencing a transfer of energy when touching another person; feeling energized from contact with the Earth; sensing danger; anticipating events before they happen; apprehending a situation or place as if you had been there before; apprehending a complex and original set of ideas spontaneously; remembering complex material perfectly; waking from sleep at a designated moment without use of an alarm; spontaneously healing an injury or sickness; access to abnormal or unexpected strength or endurance; spontaneously adapting to great heat, cold, or other adverse conditions; rising above thirst or hunger with no loss of strength; spontaneously causing harmony or discord in communities; experiencing oneness with another being; realizing profound self-confidence; experiencing a oneness width surroundings; going without sleep for extended periods with no loss of vitality; executing movements beyond your normal abilities; feelings of lightness or heaviness; out-of-body experiences; extraordinary pleasure in movement; correcting a machine's malfunction by mental intention; leaving a strong mood in a room; promoting or inhibiting plant growth in an extraordinary fashion; drawing a person into or out of your life without obvious communication; the conscious mind yielding control to the instincts in a dangerous situation.

Step 3: Chronicle and share stories of magic. Create stories that enshrine within your personal mythology events in which hidden power was evoked and awe was experienced. Recognizing and recording these moments will sensitize you to them and enable you to derive strength from them. One must be constantly sowing life with language that allows magic to be recognized and named. If such language is not developed, potentially powerful events are exiled to the realm of silly or, worse, normal experiences; with language that provides for them, such events can not only be discerned but also deciphered and even precipitated.

Step 4: Mix your expanded sense of what is possible with a particular desire. Express those together in a process that you have invented.

Account: A true story about spell casting (not to mention the sheer profligacy of our society)

Universe had become such a home for us that we felt free and faithful. Faithful that tomorrow and tomorrow's tomorrow would supply as much nourishment and adventure to our clan of gatherers as yesterday and yesterday's yesterday. And it did.

On that day we reclined in the grass near the garbage can that played our host, and felt fear slipping away. It was the age-old fear that if we didn't work we would starve to death or go insane, and it seeped out of us into the warm grass beneath. And that lead- heavy effluvia was silently replaced by the serene notion that Universe meant to take care of us.

Universe made good on this promise that very afternoon when we noticed an art gallery reception with cake and wine. We stayed and stayed and found that we could have the uneaten

vegetable tray and the picked-over plate of cheese. Feeling bold and beloved, we imagined that Universe might like to give us a refrigerator that we could use to store our bounty. We discussed the idea and decided to make a formal request. We would use the same magical language of symbols and signs that Universe used to speak to us.

So humbly, and at first tentatively, we began a practice of visualization. Every day, each of us took time to imagine the refrigerator of our dreams. We agreed that it was a white refrigerator with two doors: one a freezer, the other a refrigerator proper with shelves and drawers. We envisioned our refrigerator as smallish and nicely styled with a chrome handle and perhaps an insignia on its enameled metal face.

But soon we began to worry that our visions might not be enough. After all, Universe was rarely subtle in its giving. So we began to draw our little refrigerator on our skin. We invented refrigerator movements and our movements became refrigerator dances: we danced our refrigerator. We made up refrigerator sounds and our sounds became refrigerator songs: we sang our refrigerator. Feeling proud of our game we made graffiti like cave paintings. In our paintings, little people, successful in their hunt, dragged home refrigerators by their cords: we laughed our refrigerator.

And so our senses would not become dull, so our festivities would not drown out the very Universe to which we were appealing, we walked the mazes of the town, we kept our eyes sharp and our noses to the wind.

It was on the third day that our festivities were interrupted by our object. It was a white refrigerator with two doors: one a freezer, the other a refrigerator proper with shelves and drawers. Our refrigerator was smallish and nicely styled with a chrome handle and a little insignia upon the enameled metal of its face. After an hour of scrubbing, a shine appeared on its surface.

That was long ago. Today our refrigerator is comfortable in the comer of our room, its shelves piled high with subsequent offerings, its doors covered with drawings and pictures.

Squatting

Squatting covers a wide range of actions, from two people maintaining a garden in the grassy area behind the strip mall to fifty facially-tattooed warriors locking down to platforms in the branches of a national forest, but the idea behind it is all the same: land should belong to those who use it, and we all have the basic right to food, shelter, and safety. Of course, there's no hard and fast recipe for how to squat: it all depends on your circumstances, and what you want to accomplish. This is the barest of outlines for squatters, urban and otherwise.

Ingredients

- Abandoned building, lot, attic, boat, unused room in a university, treehouse etc.
- At least one reliable cohort (optional, but very helpful)
- Means of entry — e.g., an unlocked or broken window, lock picks, bolt-cutters, or a crowbar
- Miscellaneous tools: flashlight, claw hammer, screwdrivers, hacksaws, any kind of tool for home improvement … pliers and an adjustable wrench can be handy for turning on water, screwdrivers for installing new locks
- Cleaning supplies
- Access to food and water

Instructions

Squatting Buildings for Residential Purposes

Think about your goals and needs before you even look for a location. Are you hoping to stay in the building for a week, a month, the next ten years? If you're desperate for shelter and your first priority is to avoid getting kicked out, you'll probably want a secluded place with low-visibility access. If you want to set yourself up in a homey situation, maybe you should checkout residential neighborhoods where you can pass yourself off as a renter or somebody who bought the place cheap. If you're planning an overtly political, public action for which you want high visibility, you'll want a public, visible location, not to mention a plan for how to deal with the cops. Of course, you can never know exactly what will happen, but knowing what you're after is the first step to getting it.

Think carefully about who you want your companions to be in a squatting action; you'll be dealing with high-stress situations with them as well as living with them, a really demanding combination. Make sure the group dynamics are healthy and the relationships durable, and that

your goals are complementary if not identical. Consider the demographics of the area in which you will be squatting; your group will not only have to relate internally, but also to the community around your squat. This will certainly be easier if you share a common background with the neighbors — and remember, there is such a thing as gentrification. Also, you may want to establish a set of house rules in advance — e.g., no hard drugs, violence, bigotry, or theft — and a sense of how these will be enforced. As you will be living outside the law with people who are still damaged by growing up under its heel, you will have to work out conflicts internally.

Scope out the building or land, preferably over a period of at least a few weeks. It's good to get a sense of who's coming and going, if the owners or neighbors are checking up on the place, and what else is going on in the neighborhood-especially if you're new to the area. Talk to locals: you'll need friends, especially among the people who hang out regularly on the block, if any do. Check to see if the power meter is running, and if there is mail in the mailbox. If you can't hang around to watch if whether anyone enters or leaves the building, leave a toothpick or twig wedged between the door and the frame, and check on it periodically. You can call the county assessor's office to find out whether the building is owned by an individual, bank, or development corporation, and whether or not the taxes are paid up. The city takes possession of a building when its owner fails to pay taxes on it, and it can be much harder to be evicted from a city-owned building than from a privately-owned one. On the other hand, an owner who pays the taxes but has otherwise totally abandoned a property might make the perfect landlord.

It's a good idea to go inside and inspect the building before you occupy it, to know what you're getting into: whether the water and electricity work, how trashed the place is on the inside, if other people are or were staying there. When exploring a building, calmly announce your presence as you go, in case others have already squatted it. Look out for holes in the masonry too big to fix, signs of bulging or sagging in the walls, significant water damage to floors and ceilings, wood rot in structural elements — these are all potential signs that you've picked the wrong place, if you're hoping to make a home there. To test wood rot, push a sharp knife into the wood; it shouldn't go in more than an inch.

Again, consider your goals when deciding how to move in. If you're going to pose as legal occupants, you might want to go in at night and unlock the doors from the inside, then just roll up in the morning in a van with your stuff and take some cookies to the neighbors when you go introduce yourselves. If you're doing anything that could be construed as breaking and entering, go in at night and cover your tracks immediately — if you break a window, dean up the glass. Be well-apprised of local laws; in some states, just being caught trespassing in possession of burgling tools such as crowbars can get you arrested for intent to perform burglary, which is a felony. Often there's no need to go down that road: windows are frequently left unlocked, especially above the ground floor, and one small person can squeeze in and open up a door from the inside. Try getting up to the roof if there seem to be no easy entrances at the ground floor. Long before the testing and development for this cookbook began, this author and a friend once found our way in states in which carrying lock into a vast abandoned building by entering the sub-basement coal shaft through a grate down an alley. If you're going to be loud, choose a rainy night. If you're working with a grinder, cover it and the person using it with a large piece of dark cloth, to hide sparks.

Once inside, it's wise to clean up immediately — nothing makes a place feel like home as much as making it clean and comfortable. Change the locks as soon as you can; if that's impossible, install your own front door and frame, or, failing that, at least punch a hole in the door and on

the other side of the doorframe and run a chain secured by a padlock through the holes. Making the place homey before the police arrive can mean the difference between getting thrown out without a hearing and forcing the city to go through the whole eviction process- or avoiding it entirely. Likewise, you need your neighbors to trust you and feel that you are a positive influence in the neighborhood.

The toilets may be smashed, but if the pipes are still in good condition, you can get running water. You may be able to access the water pipes in the basement, if not on the back of the building. If these are in the basement, there will probably be two sets of pipes coming in and out from the street; the larger pipe is probably for sewage. You might be able to open these pipes with a wrench; if you succeed, look for leaks in the rest of the building, and leave the water on at a trickle in the winter so the pipes won't freeze and break. Even if you can't get the inflow pipes open, the sewage outflow pipe may still work. If you can't get any of the pipes working, you'll have to use five gallon buckets filled with sawdust for toilets, and dump your waste waters in storm sewage grates or on the limousines in the corporate business district. If you can't find sawdust for the composting toilets, you can use any other organic matter — e.g., ash, shredded newspapers, hay, or grass clippings. Wetted newspaper can also stand in for toilet paper in a pinch.

Fix all holes in the roof as soon as possible, and make sure the roof drains are not clogged; if need be, spread thick plastic over the roof until you can get around to fixing it. Watch out for asbestos and other dangerous dust particles; call around to see if a local organization can test materials for them. You can keep such dust out of the air temporarily by keeping the materials in question wet. Lead paint is also dangerous, especially for children; keep it wet, as well, when sanding it off. If you can't get trash pickups at your place, and there's a lot of rubble or garbage in the house, designate a room for it until you can move it out.

You can check to see if you have electricity by switching the breakers off and on; if you have a power meter on the back of your building, you may be able to activate it yourself (see Utilities, pg. 585). but this should only be attempted with extreme caution. Pirating electricity may be as simple as running an extension cord out to an outlet at the foot of a streetlight, but if it's not, don't attempt it unless you are a trained expert; the same goes for messing with damaged wiring. If you have no heat or electricity, insulate the walls with carpet or similar material, and use thick plastic to make tents for sleeping. You can use candles and kerosene heaters and lanterns, but don't store kerosene near them or leave them burning while you are asleep or absent. Steal a fire extinguisher or two, or leave around buckets of sand or water, and put up smoke detectors. You can make a wood stove out of a discarded steel drum, if you can attach a safe chimney for the smoke. To discourage vermin, hang your food and trash off the floor by wires. As for getting a phone connection, you may find that telephone companies are more willing than other utility providers to activate or install lines in unusual contexts, though it's just easier to use a cell phone.

If you're in a district where you face the risk of break-ins or violent eviction and you're not trying to pretend you bought the place with your arts association, keep the windows barred or covered with plywood, anchor broken glass in cement atop walls, secure the place. Don't leave the building unattended, especially not soon after moving in. Make sure no one you don't trust knows the location of your squat; the last thing you need is a lot of disrespectful uninvited guests showing up. Don't let police or city officials in without a warrant; don't identify yourself to them unnecessarily, either. The only officials you are required by law to admit without a warrant are the fire department and child services.

Legally, police aren't supposed to regulate trespassing on private property without express direction from the legal owner, nor are they to adjudicate on property disputes; so, assuming you're not obviously breaking any other laws and you say you have the legal right to be in the building, the cops are supposed to leave it up to the courts. But since when do police abide by their own laws? In all likelihood, the more legitimate your presence appears to be, the less harassment you will face. All the more reason to fix up the place! To that end, it's worth checking out books on do-it-yourself home remodeling and repair from the library, and talking to folks at the local reuse and salvage center, if there's one in your town — these are invaluable resources, and will give you much more practical information than could fit here.

Take before and after photos to show off the improvements you've made to the building. Scavenge at construction sites for materials. Although, as described, you can get utility services without paying for them, obtaining them through the official channels can bolster your case as residents . The same goes for receiving mail at your squatted address. To facilitate this, make an effort to befriend your mail carrier; failing that, you can have your mail held for you at the local post office. As well as utility bills and received mail, voter registration, shipping receipts, library cards, and state IDs will all bolster your case that you are a legal resident. You might want to begin gathering these before you move in, so if the police show up you will be able to persuasively argue that you are the legal resident.

On the other hand, it might be wise to attempt to avoid interacting with authorities all together. You could create a hidden entrance to your squat, through which you come and go quickly and quietly: for example, a window that appears to be boarded up but actually swings open on hinges. If you're going to go this route, barricade any entrances through which police and city workers might try to enter. Electrical cables can be hidden in empty pipes, across ceilings, and under piles of junk, just as rooms can be hidden behind false walls or covers.

Eviction notices come in the mail, so be careful not to sign for any registered or certified mail until you are sure it's not from the city government. If an eviction notice does come, make sure there is at least one person with proof of residence whose name isn't on it — that way the police will not be able to seal the building after those of you named on the notice are evicted, and eventually you can move back in. If an eviction or other trouble looms, use a phone tree or email list to invite as many supporters or witnesses as possible. Take the names and badge numbers of police and videotape them. Never admit to having leaders.

Other Applications

There are countless other variants on the squatting theme. You can plant secret or public community gardens; in the latter case, a well-publicized day of guerrilla gardening might be the perfect way to get started. You can squat openly as a way to attract attention to the absurdity of homelessness when so many buildings stand empty; prepare a lot of legal support and a media blitz, and be warned that if you do hold the building, the police may try to starve you out, so get in there with a lot of resources and have a plan for how to smuggle more in. You can covertly squat a building for one night to hold a party, dance, or show (see Guerrilla Performance pg. 269) — invitations should direct people to a starting point, from which the crowd will be led to the target building or location. You can squat a rooftop: block the doorway or hatch behind you, drop banners for all the city to see, have a liaison ready to explain to the owner, police, and media that you are non- violent but will not be leaving until your week-long occupation is concluded.

A squat, secret or public, could provide housing and an additional point of militant confrontation during a mass mobilization for a demonstration. Treehouse squats can go unnoticed on the margins of suburbia for long periods of time; they've also been used militantly as an obstacle to logging in forests. You can establish a residential squat for a short time, just to demonstrate the tactic to a circle of learners without risking any serious costs in the process- seethe account following the Festivals recipe (pg. 241).

Account

I'd spent a few months living in wild, crowded squats in Barcelona before I moved on to London and hunted down an old friend at the squatted funeral parlor at which she'd been staying. Tired of constant travel, short on cash and solid plans, we decided to open up our own place. Lisa knew a few people living in flats in an empty housing project fact, one of the three buildings was already being demolished, and the crash of wrecking ball into brick and mortar became the backdrop to the next few months of our lives.

Lisa had checked out the place a few times before I got into town; she'd kept her eye on a flat with months-old mail cascading out from under the front door, and after looking around a bit we decided that was our best bet. By that point, the buildings had stood mostly empty for months, and the council wasn't paying a bit of attention to them; a few of the original tenants had hung on past their eviction dates and just stopped paying rent, but the complex had been left to go derelict until the demolition crews got around to it. All the main entry locks were destroyed or missing, so actually cracking the squat was shockingly easy: we borrowed a crowbar and a chair from our new friend Duncan in the next building over, popped the transom window above our front door, then crawled through and unlocked the door from the inside.

Over the next few days an experienced neighbor helped us rewire the electricity to bypass the meter, and we dumpstered some furniture and made ourselves at home. This was a particularly — and peculiarly — low-key situation, as far as my experience with squatting goes. In Barcelona, early-morning full-scale police raids were common, and the threat of potentially violent eviction was constant. Here, none of the authorities were likely to bother with any of the two dozen squatters in the neighborhood; all the workers on the demolition site waved hello as we came and went with armloads of trash from the local market. But we were short-termers, in town for a few months at the most; when the wrecking ball swung over to our building, Lisa and I knew we'd probably pack up our luck and move on to another building in another town — while the family of East African immigrants living downstairs would quite likely be homeless.

Stenciling

Instructions

Stenciling is the poor person's printmaking. It is the easiest and cheapest way to print the same image over and over on different surfaces and in different places.

First, you need a design. You shouldn't feel like you have to be an artist to make one. One of the great things about stencils is that since each print looks the same and consists of only a positive and negative, it makes almost all designs look really sharp and good. If you are looking to turn an image that is not already in solid blacks and whites into a stencil design, you could trace the basic forms and lines and blacken them in, or photocopy it over and over on a high-contrast setting; there are also graphic design computer programs that can do this for you. Remember, you can't have any floating negative space inside your printing area, unless you want to try to suspend the pieces of stencil there with tight string or something.

Next, you need a material to cut into a stencil, one thin enough to cut and carry but durable enough to last. Photocopying shops and other places that do lamination often have large quantities of surplus laminate on hand that you can obtain for free. Laminate is easy to cut into stencils: put it on top of an image and start cutting immediately. Cardboard works, too, though most experienced stencil artists abandon it for materials that are less bulky and more durable. Manila file folders, posterboard, and vinyl sheet flooring are all options. For larger stencils, you can use wallpaper, adding contact paper on the back for more durability. You can also use the plastic boarding on which some photocopying stores print their larger in-store advertisements, or the advertisement boards slipped into the frames inside subway cars in some cities. If you are going to be making a really large stencil and desire a high degree of precision, you can use an overhead projector to project the image onto your material while cutting.

When it comes to cutting out your stencil, the sharper and more precise your tool, the better. X-acto knives are the most common tools, though even scissors can suffice. If you are using transparency sheets or some similar plastic, you can cut them quickly with a soldering iron; using the same iron, you can melt them together at the edges to form a larger stencil.

The most usual medium for stenciling is spray paint. Different nozzles provide different paint flows and speeds, which enable you to achieve different effects. Many recommend using matte paint instead of glossy paint. You can also apply paint with a paint roller. When doing so, be careful to apply the roller in the same direction that any little pieces or strips on the stencil extend, so it won't bend them the wrong way. You can design multicolor stencil artwork, in which two or more stencils are applied to the same area; beware, light colors may be lost if spray painted onto dark colors. For precision, it can help to have registration marks built into your image, so you know where to hold subsequent stencils after the first layer. If you are doing multi-stencil artwork in an area that the powers that be would keep art-free, you can lay down several prints of each layer at a time, starting over with the next layer of paint when they have dried, or do the same thing with a partner.

You can use a spray adhesive to stick your stencil to a wall — this will decrease paint leaking around the edges, and enable you to apply it with your hands free- or just use strips of tape to do the same thing. For detailed stencils that tend to be too flexible, you can build little "bones" onto the side from which you spray, to make the stencil more rigid and keep all the parts against the surface you are decorating. When stenciling in the field, wear disposable latex gloves, and get rid of them before you are stopped, so there is no telltale paint on your hands.

For transporting and applying your stencil, it can help to have it built into the bottom of a shopping bag, backpack, or pizza box: you set the item down on the ground, use the spraycan inside it to apply the paint, and appear from a distance to simply be rummaging around in it. If your stencil has two different color regions, you can build a divider into the bottom of the bag or box, and cany two cans of spray paint in it. Failing that, a small stencil can be kept in a notebook, or plastic bag. A larger stencil can be carried i n an artist's portfolio, if you look like the type who might be in art school. Large stencils tend to bend more; it is important that they be kept stiff so they will work.

Chalk Stenciling

In many contexts, it is legal or semi-legal to write on the walls and sidewalk with chalk, but not with paint. If you want to avoid immediate legal trouble while still putting up a design, try stenciling in chalk.

Crush up chalk, adding charcoal powder to make the color darker if you want. Spray adhesive across the site, then put your stencil on it. Roll a paint roller in the chalk dust, and then across your stencil. This works best for large designs without much detail; it creates a temporary image that will wash off easily.

Other Applications

Once you've gotten familiar with the little ones, you can make a stencil one hundred feet long! Get a roll of painters' drop paper of that length, and cut letters and designs into it. Get a can or three of "mis-mixed" paint at any local hardware store (these are cheaper than other paint, or free), and a broad paint roller. Late one night, with three people for maximum speed, deploy the stencil on a concrete surface: one person unrolling it, one person rolling the paint over it, and the third person rolling up the paper behind them. Engage lookouts if you have a couple more people interested. Provided the fire department isn't called in to wash the paint away before it dries (as happened to the feminists who tried this in Boston a number of years ago),there will be an exciting new message to the world downtown — and another message inside of it: public space can be reclaimed.

You can also use stencils to print designs on paper or fabric, where screenprinting would be too involved: use a sponge to apply the appropriate paint through a stencil onto your material. You can mix a textile medium in equal parts with acrylic paint to print on clothing.

Stickering

Ingredients

You can make short-lived paper stickers out of address labels with a computer printer, or save money on the upscale version by screenprinting vinyl sticker sheets yourself, but there are craftier options. Stickers can be obtained for free from a number of sources-try the post office, for starters — and if you don't want your design to integrate the original content, just cover them in a coat of white paint. Designs can be stenciled or screenprinted on such stickers, or just scrawled if you're lazy. If you want to get really fancy, form a long piece of stiff wire into an image or word in script, cut open a shoelace on one end and pull it over the wire, and dip it in paint — the shoelace will absorb paint, enabling you to use the wire as a stamper. Clear packing tape can be put on any paper stickers to make them more waterproof and durable.

Vinyl stickers look fancy, but can be easy to remove. To make removal more difficult, make a grid of slices across each sticker once it is applied, so it can only come off in tiny pieces.

Clear adhesive envelopes can be obtained free at unmanned Federal Express stations; you can put them up on the walls of city streets, corporate elevators, or gas station bathrooms with secret instructions or maps to buried treasure inside.

Locations

Stickers can go anywhere graffiti would, and have the advantages of looking more official and taking less time to deploy. Utilize stop signs (to call for opposition to the outrage of your choice), dead end signs (to do the same), telephones ("this phone is tapped"), vending machines and the like ("out of order"), newspaper dispensers ("lies"), gas pumps ("certified 100% Iraqi blood"), trash cans ("ballot box," with an arrow), advertisements at bus stops (add speech bubbles), automobile bumpers ("ask me why I'm destroying the environment 11), food in grocery stores ("WARNING: this package contains the slowly rotting corpse of a tortured, deformed bird"), automatic teller machines ("can you buy freedom?"), over gas tank caps on cars (a sticker of the earth, which must be torn to access the tank), elevators (duplicate the emergency warning: "don't wait for emergency, take steps!" with an image of a figure running up the stairs with fire), anywhere people might forget they live in panopticon ("you are under surveillance").

For maximum impact, pick a certain theme and target and get a few friends together to cover an entire area in a matter of hours; immediately following a certain election, a team in a large city changed all the street signs on Bush Street to read Puppet Street, to name one example.

An Advanced Technique: Aluminum Stickers

This is a technique for making beautiful aluminum foil posters for public surfaces. They can be easier to install at the site than wheatpasted posters, and are extremely difficult to remove.

Ingredients

- Cheap aluminum foil — *The heavy-duty stuff is easier to handle, but also easier for art haters to remove.*
- Wax paper or Teflon sheet
- Scissors
- Foam rubber craft brush
- Floor tile glue — *This is a heavy-duty dry-mount adhesive that is made for gluing down vinyl and linoleum floors. It comes in one-gallon plastic buckets. It is available at most hardware stores for under $15. A gallon seems to be a near-bottomless supply. The stuff cleans with water when it is still wet; when dry it's hell to remove.*
- Materials for printing a design on the aluminum — *see Stenciling (pg. 516) and Screenprinting (pg. 455) recipes — you can use either If you use spray paint, we've found the slow-drying Rustoleum-style stuff is the most robust, but anything will do. If you screenprint your design, use an oil-based ink.*

Instructions

Decorate your foil (see Stenciling, pg. 516, and Screenprinting, pg. 455 recipes — you can use either). Aluminum foil has a shiny side and a matte side. We have settled on putting the design on the matte side, because it has a texture that seems to hang on to paint and ink a little better. Still, the shiny side is pretty, and may suit you better. Experiment with both.

Be very careful with the aluminum foil! As you apply your design to the aluminum, it is crucial to handle the foil as gently as possible. Even moving it through the air has a tendency to make it bend, crease, and bunch up. It is imperative that this not happen. Small creases become weak spots, and can cause big problems when you go to install your masterpiece. If any tear or nick develops, you must discard that sheet.

Leave a margin around your artwork, a 1.5-inch space between the edges of your design and the edges of the foil. Most foil comes in 12-inch- wide rolls; given that, you should limit your design to around 7 inches wide and probably not more than 10 inches high. This is especially true for your first try.

Apply floor glue to the back. After much experimentation, we've found that cheap foam-rubber-on-a-stick craft brushes work best. Use one to apply a thin, even layer of glue to the back surface (figure 18.1). Be especially neat with the glue, as thick spots, ridges, and errant drips will make your life miserable later. Keep the glue at least half an inch away from the edges of the aluminum foil.

Allow the glue to dry. Depending on the usual factors of temperature, humidity, and how thickly you applied it, glue will take about one hour to dry. Wet glue is opaque, dry glue is translucent.

Once the glue has dried thoroughly, you can apply wax paper to the back of your sticker. This protective backing can enable you to transport the poster to its new home. Do not press the backing down, as it is quite hard to remove even wax paper, especially since aluminum foil is

so prone to tearing. In developing this recipe, our main challenge has been figuring out how to cover the glued side of the stickers during transportation without ruining them when it's time to remove the backing. If you encounter great difficulties removing wax paper backings, you could try using Teflon sheets. See the "Hints" section below for ideas on how to avoid this step.

Trim the excess foil. Use scissors to cut around your design so that glue covers everything up to the edge of the aluminum sticker. If you are using a wax paper backing, leave one comer untrimmed so you can easily separate the layers when it is time to apply the poster.

Deploy your work of genius. The adhesive packaging says you have a twenty-four-hour window of optimal stickiness, but it's more like twelve hours. Take the piece out with you in a book (if you're using a backing) or a pizza box (if you're not), making sure not to wrinkle it too much. Peel the aluminum off the wax paper or Teflon, if applicable. Use a shirtsleeve or bandanna to clean dust or dirt off your selected surface — if time and secrecy are of the essence for your target, you may want to do this on a separate, earlier trip. Place the poster, then thoroughly burnish it into place with your bandanna-covered palm. Make sure all edges are sealed tightly to the surface. You're done!

Hints

The aluminum sticker is tried and true for postering on certain surfaces: painted metal, Hints plastic, painted wood, polished concrete, aluminum, glass. It will not be as reliable on raw wood surfaces like phone poles or siding. You can experiment with rough concrete surfaces, so long as they are fairly dry.

The most difficult aspect of using these stickers is transporting them to installation sites. The wax paper method described above leaves much to be desired, as it can be quite difficult to separate the aluminum from the wax paper. If you can avoid this step, things will be much easier. If you have a vehicle available, build a shelf like a drying rack where glue-coated posters can rest without sliding into other posters. If you are going on foot, use a pizza box or other flat box. Perhaps there are materials more freely available than Teflon that have slicker surfaces than wax paper. Brainstorm, experiment, and let us know what you find!

If you're really coordinated and you want to avoid the difficulties of transporting stickers with glue on them, involve two teams for a long night of decorating. Plot routes that pass by a few dozen deserving installation sites. Have one team set out cleaning each site, then coating it with the appropriately sized area of glue. A few hours later, the second team heads out with foil posters to apply to the dry glue.

Supporting Survivors of Domestic Violence

Helping Womyn and Society Escape Violent Relationships

Womyn exist in a "domesticated" combat zone. On any given day in the United States, an average of 480 womyn will be raped, 5,760 womyn will be assaulted, and 4 will be murdered by a male partner. Domestic violence is an assault on womyn's bodies and minds by those who claim to love them and love to claim them. The success of this violence depends on the complicity of community. If we intend to bring about true liberation, we must foster explicitly antiauthoritarian behavior in both personal and political life. No hierarchy is acceptable and no domination is justifiable—not even "behind closed doors." Because one in four womyn will be assaulted (likely including someone you love), we must wage war on domestic violence. We serve to empower our communities best by fighting the violence and hierarchy closest to home … or in the home.

Ingredients

- Outreach materials
- Shelter
- Childcare
- Basic safety materials — pepper spray, whistles, deadbolts, phone
- Knowledge of local resources
- A network of safe communities/spaces for womyn
- Personal dedication to the complete annihilation of authority

Instructions

Stage One: Helping Her

Educate yourself. Domestic violence (DV) is rarely a single instance of battery, but instead a pattern of power and control. It may involve sexual or physical violence, or it may be a complex web of threats, property destruction, isolation, and emotional, financial, and mental abuse. Understanding this will help you recognize abuse if it comes without physical bruises.

If you are truly ready to have your mother, friend, or daughter tell you what is happening in her private life, invite her to come to you. If you are speaking against violence and rape, she will know you are ready. Wheatpaste neighborhoods with posters about domestic violence, hold street fairs against violence in residential neighborhoods, plaster infoshops and collective

homes with signs that invite womyn into a safe space. If she, her children, or her animals are in immediate danger, however, you may need to approach her. Never approach the abuser: most abusers are paranoid and will quickly assume their victims have exposed them, and may retaliate against them.

Follow her lead. The most important thing you will do is be there for her, even if you feel useless. Trying to be a hero can only undermine her autonomy. Let her make her own decisions, even bad ones, and never tell her what to do. Give her back control: refuse to dominate her and recreate the abuse.

Give her a phone number or a way to contact you or someone in the community. Best is a cell phone that will always be on, or a collective house's number where someone is usually awake.

Let her talk. Don't wince or gasp: tales of sodomy and strangulation are not easy to listen to, but they are harder to tell. Survivors are often terrified of either tainting someone else's world with their trauma or not being believed. Tell her you believe her. You will be changed by what you hear; thank her for that. Confirm what may seem obvious.

An abuser spends a lot of time telling her she is crazy, and that no one would believe her. Tell her that you are listening, and offer eye contact and physical closeness if she is comfortable with it. Assure her that the way she feels is okay. There is no "normal" way to respond to abnormal acts of violence. Understand that the shield of invulnerability has been shattered (41% of rape victims and 89% of domestic violence victims expect to be assaulted again). She may be hyper-vigilant; the best way to help is to make her feel safe and legitimize/recognize her fears.

Focus on practical and immediate concerns. Where can one buy mace? What organizations work with DV issues? Ask her what she needs in order to leave: shelter? transportation? a job? childcare? money? Help her find these resources. Then ask what she needs to stay out of the relationship. For most womyn, it takes seven to fourteen attempts to leave their abusers. If she doesn't have the resources to stay gone, she may return because he can support her. Many abusers manipulate these needs. This is what makes DV such a pernicious crime: the perpetrator is the person who knows her best.

Address her immediate safety. If she is living with the abuser, make sure she has a plan to get out during a violent episode (contact your local coalition against DV for safety plans). Offer to keep personal papers and a packed suitcase for her and some extra money. Make sure she has a phone. An old cell phone without service can still dial 911 if charged. Consider establishing code words for her to use if she needs help, or other signals — a porch light off, for example, could let the neighbors know they should contact the police. If she doesn't live with her abuser, offer to find someone to stay with her or nearby. Do a safety check: make sure phone lines can't be cut, doors have deadbolts, and windows are nailed shut. If she wants to stay in hiding, help her cover her tracks by getting all mail sent to another address or post office box; offer to put your name on utilities. If she rides a bus or bike, find a car for her to borrow. Find community members who can do errands with her, pick her up from work, watch the children, etc. 90% of stalking cases are former intimate partners, not strangers.

The anti-DV movement started as an underground railroad of homes. Consider where she stays carefully. If the abuser knows where she is staying, she can feel like a sitting duck, especially if she stays with a male — an abuser's insecurity and suspicions can easily turn to rage. The majority of extreme violence and murder occur when the womyn tries to leave, because the abuser feels he is losing control of her. Taking a survivor into your home is a serious commitment;

unless you are prepared to internalize her constant vigilance and your home is very secure, she may be safer with someone else.

If she wants, help her use the legal system to file charges, obtain a protective order, file for custody, or get a divorce. Discuss the pros and cons of this in relation to safety, not politics. Until we develop an alternative, we cannot criticize a womyn for using "the system." It is imperative, however, that she doesn't invest her safety or emotional wellbeing in the criminal justice system, as it often fails.

The community might want to deal with or "out" the abuser. Some communities have ostracized abusers, boycotted their businesses, refused to speak to them. You could make posters of his face, or spray paint his house. You can run abusers out of town, though understand this has the potential of resulting in his abusing someone somewhere else. You can threaten him with violence. No matter what is done, it must be acceptable to the survivor, because her well-being is at stake.

Stage Two: Helping Us

There are many steps we must take as communities and collectives to be welcoming and radicalizing spaces for survivors. At the same time, we must each take personal responsibility for shifting the public conscience toward abhorrence for violence. In a patriarchal state, violence toward and the rape of womyn prop up sexist oppression and exploitation. We cannot transform "rape culture" without committing ourselves to resisting and eradicating all patriarchy.

We must redefine sex and relationships away from terms of violence, power, domination and status. In our relationships we can try to create a new vocabulary that eroticizes consent and equality.

Men in particular need to organize. DV is a man's problem — womyn just suffer the consequences. A radical heterosexual male must give up the privileges of his gender — only then can he be approachable, only then will he be capable of offering meaningful help to a survivor. You cannot aid a survivor while allowing for other forms of sexism to prevail. Do not consume womyn's bodies in pornography if you hope to assist a rape survivor. Men can unlearn their gender construction and undermine patriarchy; imagine if every boy grew up around men who were struggling against patriarchy and violence.

Account

Taheera called the police after Mark had threatened to take their five-month-old baby, Juan. There were bruises on her neck from a previous incident, and Mark was arrested. It had been Mark's idea to move to the city when Taheera was 3 months pregnant. Taheera started to go to a low-cost clinic for prenatal care, but stopped going when Mark accused her of sleeping with the doctor. The first time Mark hit her was after she made a list of baby names. He was jealous of the attention the baby was getting.

I am a social worker, and an agency referred her to me. When we first talked, Taheera kept looking behind her. I suggested she push her chair against the wall, and promised her that I would keep checking down the hallway for Mark (even though Mark was in jail and wasn't going to be coming).

She was scared of Mark and of what he might do to her and the baby, especially now that he had been arrested. Mark's job was their only source of income, and he might be fired if he didn't get out of jail soon. She had a lot of questions about the legal system and was curious to know if I had talked to other womyn who felt like she did. We talked about local groups and shelters that could help, but mostly I just listened. I gave her my number and a 24-hour crisis number. Taheera chose to bail Mark out, using all their savings, but not to speak with him. The state had Mark sign a "no contact order" telling him he couldn't contact her or move back home, so he got an apartment upstairs from Taheera and made a point of bringing lots of "bitches" home so Taheera would see. Taheera didn't show up to court and the case was dropped.

Two weeks later, Taheera called and said that Mark was upstairs, Juan was asking for him, and that she was trying to resist going up to him. She missed him. I simply listened, and told her, as best I could, that her feelings were normal. She kept asking, "What's wrong with me?" I tried to refocus on Mark's problems. Taheera finally agreed to walk downtown and sign up for a support group that had childcare. But she never did, and instead went upstairs to Mark.

Eight months later, Taheera called from a payphone. Mark had held a gun to her head because he was angry that they now lived together in the upstairs apartment but he still had to pay for the downstairs apartment. He cut the phone cord so she couldn't call out. Things had been okay for a while: Mark had let her get a job and was being a "good daddy." Taheera told me that she had left several times, but each time he had found her or threatened her family Taheera felt too tired to leave, and just wanted things to "stay sane."

Taheera decided to save up money. We met for lunch one afternoon and made a list of what to do, which I kept so Mark wouldn't see it. I also gave her an old cell phone to call 911, which she hid in a cabinet. She got a separate bank account and started funneling part of her paycheck into it. She told a neighbor what was happening and gave the neighbor a packed suitcase to keep for her. I researched Section 8 housing in her hometown, and had the papers sent to my office. Taheera asked me to look up domestic violence resources in her hometown on my computer, because Mark made a point of checking out which websites she had visited when he got home from work. Mark grew suspicious, probably because Taheera seemed to be happier. Mark started calling her work and hanging up, and kept this up until she was fired. He bought her a cell phone so he could call her repeatedly any time she was out. He started not letting her leave the house with Juan, so that she would have to come back. He took her car keys. Eight months before, Taheera might have given up, because Mark seemed to be catching on.

I don't know all the details, but one night Taheera got someone from her church to park outside the apartments and start shouting. Mark, easily annoyed, went out to shut them up, and she and Juan got their suitcases from the neighbors and left through a back door, where the church friend picked them up.

I don't know if Taheera's story is a success story, but it is a real story. Since then, Mark has found out where she lives and has gained visitation rights to Juan through a court. Mark has also assaulted her twice since she left, once running her and Juan off the road. Taheera, however, has broken her connection to Mark and broken the cycle of abuse. Sometimes I think about her friend from church and the neighbor, and wonder what would have happened without them.

Recently, she read an article about my being arrested for protesting and asked what I was doing. I told her that I fight violence and hierarchy on all levels and she muttered, "Oh." But yesterday she left a message saying she was reading a lot and did I have any favorite authors? I'm thinking Emma Goldman or a little Naomi Wolfe.

Surviving a Felony Trial

Instructions

This piece is for anyone who is facing prison time as a result of involvement in the struggle for a socially and ecologically sustainable future for the planet we live on and the beings that inhabit it. It may also be relevant to anyone engaged in that struggle whose activity is likely to lead to a collision at some point with the massive edifice of inertia that is the legal system. I speak from experience, but I am not a lawyer or any sort of legal expert. Take everything I say with a grain of salt. My thoughts are with you, whoever you are.

Know What You're Getting Into

Uh-oh. Somehow something went wrong, and you are in deep shit. All signs are pointing to the inescapable conclusion that this is going to go badly. You are absolutely terrified. You sure didn't expect this to happen today. Who's going to feed your cat? You've got to pay rent next Friday You can't go to jail right now. What the hell is going to happen to you? OK. Stay calm. Let's take a few deep breaths, and a few steps backward, before we address the situation at hand.

First off, understand one thing. Repression, both legal and extralegal, is an inevitable result of revolutionary activity. The only way you can hope to avoid it entirely is if you hang up your spurs and cease your efforts to contest this insane world order. You know 532 you couldn't look yourself in the mirror in the morning if you did that. Besides, for some people — maybe you- of some backgrounds and histories and skin colors, even total acquiescence with the status quo is not enough to ensure immunity from its wrath. The rationale behind all of this, from the perspective of the people in power, is extremely straightforward. They want to make an example of somebody. They want to parade someone around and say, "See? See what happens when you step out of line? You don't want this to happen to you, do you? Do you?" Inconveniently, that someone is you.

This sort of negative reinforcement is a sensible and effective strategy. It has been perfected since the dawn of time, and it works well in a limited way. Sometimes people do give up and yield to the crushing embrace of defeatism and bitterness. Under certain circumstances people will crack under pressure and turn on each other. Some spirits are broken. When subjected to torture almost anyone will say or do almost anything. I know a little bit about that. But the corollary here is that repression drives us together out of necessity, and I truly believe that its net effect is generally to create more resistance than it destroys.

All of that said, common sense dictates that there are some basic guidelines that it will behoove you to understand when making your plans. The more active you are, the more likely it is that you will eventually encounter the legal apparatus. The more effective, aggressive, inspiring, or illegal your efforts are, the more likely it is that this encounter will be particularly unpleasant. A serious criminal trial is no fun. It is terrifying, time- consuming, expensive, and dangerous.

Being arrested and tried in a court of law is a potential consequence of whatever it is that you are doing, but one to be avoided when possible, not any sort of desirable end in and of itself. It pays to plan actions that maximize effect while minimizing lawbreaking. I am absolutely not saying that you should not break the law. I am saying that a deed's worth is measured by its effectiveness, not its illegality. Don't connate the two.

If and when you do decide to do something illegal, sit down beforehand at a library and figure out exactly what statutes you are likely to be violating. Figure out what the maximum penalty for violating those statutes is likely to be. You can also research past news stories and see the outcomes of those cases. Ask yourself dispassionately if you can deal with what it will mean to you if everything goes as badly as it possibly can. If the answer is no, please, save yourself a hell of a lot of trouble and don't get in over your head. Do something else. There is no shame in that whatsoever. I hate to use such a trite aphorism, but don't do the crime if you can't do the time.

If the answer is yes, then here are a few more tips. It is extremely wise to have some sort of contingency plan in place rather than just charging blindly into a situation that may lead to your arrest. Cultivate relationships with lawyers beforehand. Know to whom you are going to make your one phone call, and what you are going to tell them to do. Memorize a prepaid calling card number so you can use a payphone if necessary. If possible, have bail money set aside. Godspeed, and good luck.

Under Arrest

Anyway, all of that is in the past for you now. I have no idea at what point in the process this essay will reach you, so I'll pick back up where I left off, at the beginning. You are sitting in the back of the cruiser, and you are scared. The single most important thing you can do right now is not talk to the police. Not one word. It does not matter what you did or didn't do. It does not matter if you have been caught red-handed doing something unbelievably sketchy, or if you are being targeted in a frame-up job that extends to the loftiest chambers of international power. You must not talk. This is what you can say: "I'm going to remain silent. I would like to speak with my attorney." Nothing else. I can't possibly stress this enough. If they try to chat you up about sports, that is all that you can say. If they bang your bead against the wall, that is all that you can say. If the good cop tries to tell you that he is trying to help you out here and then the bad cop gets all up in your grill, if they tell you that they are going to put you in a cell with Big Bad Bob the serial rapist and that he's going to turn you out, and that your friend snitched on you and they know everything already anyway, if they kick you and punch you and grope you and drag you around and deny you food and water and sleep and medical treatment, if they take your clothes from you and soak you down with ice water, or dose all the windows and turn the heat up, or handcuff you to a chair and leave you there until you piss and shit yourself, that is still all that you can say. No matter what they say or do, you have to say, "I'm going to remain silent. I would like to speak with my attorney," and nothing else. If you slip up and start to talk, you absolutely will see every word you speak used against you in court. If you don't, eventually they will give up.

You will be in some sort of local or municipal police precinct or substation. Within about forty-eight hours of your arrest you will be given an arraignment This is your initial appearance before a judge in a criminal case. Specific charges will be lodged against you, a lawyer will be appointed to you if you have not yet secured one, you will enter a plea of guilty or not guilty, and

bail will either be set or denied to you, depending on the severity of your charges and a variety of other factors. Regardless of your eventual legal strategy, you almost certainly want to enter a plea of not guilty at this point. Contact your people as soon as you can and tell them to start working on getting you a lawyer and getting you bailed out.

In Jail

After your arraignment you will probably be moved to the county lockup. This place in Jail usually houses people who are awaiting trial, serving relatively short terms, or finishing off the ass end of a sentence from the state penitentiary. You will be given some food, a hot shower, and eventually put into general population. As much as you will hate to admit it, the shower will feel really, really good.

This is where you will have to begin to acclimate yourself to the two types of people that your world will be comprised of for the time being: inmates and guards. You will quickly learn that the guards are absolutely the most offensive, foul-mouthed, verbally abusive people on the face of the planet. You will be expected to "LIFT YA NUTS! SPREAD YA ASS!" at the drop of a hat, you will be given notice that if you "PLAY THE PUSSY YA GET FUCKED!" and you will have to listen to all sorts of talk about "COCK- SUCKER" this and "FAGGOT" that. Most of this is just to get a rise out of you. If you seem thin-skinned, they will never let up. Don't act outright hostile or give them a good excuse to kick your ass — they will do it. Do not cower, grovel, or act too submissive, either — this will not set a good tone at all. Stay polite and do not show any sign of weak- ness. Once their interest in you wears off, it will be easier.

Prisoners and guards have an extremely complex and bizarre relationship. Watch and learn from the subtle and not-so-subtle ways that inmates have of undermining a guard's authority just enough to get what they want or need, but not quite enough to get their heads kicked in. Be extremely cautious and judicious about doing so yourself, though, especially when you are new and especially if you are not perceived as being a part of the incarcerated class, which is given some leeway to mouth off. Just because the guy next to you can get away with banging a cup on the floor outside his cell and going, "TURNKEY! HOW 'BOUT YOU GET ME SOME FUCKIN WATER! DAMN!" doesn't necessarily mean that you can.

Jail is Catch-22 in all sorts of ways. For one thing, the richer and whiter you are, the more lenient the court system is with you, but the harder the other prisoners are on you. Where you fit in will depend on the color of your skin, how you carry yourself, and how you talk. Regardless, you have got to come correct. You need to be able to explain yourself, simply and succinctly, in a way that your listener can relate to. Being able to do this well will do more to enhance your quality of life in jail than just about anything else. Do not act all indignant or incessantly proclaim your innocence. Do not gripe and complain. Somebody has got it worse than you, everyone has gotten a raw deal, and nobody wants to hear your sob story.

You will be amazed at the utter lack of security culture among many inmates . You will hear all about the armed robberies that your cellmate got away with, how he's got this big plan to get a shit-ton of crank from his man in Chicago, and how there are bodies on the gun in the shoebox under the bed at his grandma's house and he sure hopes the DA doesn't put the pieces together before his boy Carlos can swing by there to scoop it up. Most of this is pure gas, of course, but some of it is probably true. For god's sake, do not take part in this sort of foolishness. If the state wants you badly enough, they can always lean on somebody around you to see if you have been

talking. If you have been, you have done their job for them, and you will hear about it in court. You can say what you are being charged with — that's already on the record — but at this point not much else. You can talk about your politics if you want, but not your case.

It varies somewhat from state to state, but within about ten days of your arrest you should be given a preliminary hearing. This is a test of the charges against you. The prosecutor must present evidence and witnesses that prove that a crime has been committed and that there is probable cause to believe that you committed it. This is a much lower legal threshold than the one they have to cross to get a conviction, which is proof "beyond a reasonable doubt." This is a very important hearing, because it will probably be your only chance to see and hear some portion of the testimony and evidence that the state intends to use against you at trial. You do not have to testify or present any witnesses or evidence at this hearing, and generally you will not want to, because to do so would simply give the prosecutor the opportunity to hear your side of the story and prepare to refute it. If the judge finds the existence of probable cause — and they usually do — then you will be formally indicted on the charge or charges, and a trial date will be set.

Do your time; don't let it do you. Read, write, exercise, meditate, do whatever you need to do to stay focused and positive. Try not to watch TV, The world you are in is totally fucked up, but it's not like all of the natural impulses toward mutual aid have been completely smothered out of all of its inhabitants, either. You will start to see some of the really intense ways that inmates do have of looking out for each other. Your cellmate Rico will be sticking a paper dip into the wall socket to get a spark to light a blunt, and you will see that bastard CO. Parker coming just in time to warn him so that he can slip it under his mattress right before the pig comes barging in, and after Parker has left Rico will say "good looking out, good looking out," which basically means "you and I are in a bad position here and we've got to do what we can to help each other make it through; you just did your part and I appreciate it." You can even learn something from the guys with their arms around each other on Sunday talking about the valley of the shadow of death, or from the Muslims bowing to Mecca and reciting the morning prayers. I am no fan of organized religion, but I know what they are talking about, and why.

If we ecologically-minded antiauthoritarians ever do manage to start putting the brakes on our civilization's death march, then we will see large numbers of us imprisoned. Every revolutionary movement anywhere ever has had to deal with this. It is outside the realm of my experience, but we will have to find ways to continue the struggle from inside the penal system, so that incarceration is not the end of the road politically for an individual, but is simply one undesirable, but acceptable, stage of development. There are all sorts of precedents for this historically and globally, from Long Kesh to Kurdistan, Attica, Colombia, and Seattle. Even the gangs are somewhat instructive in this regard, since they have enough power in many prisons to ensure that their members are treated relatively well. This sort of welcoming committee on the inside would take a lot of the terror out of imprisonment, and those of us on the outside would have much less reason to hold back. Do what you can toward this end, but make no mistake, we are a very long way from being there now.

Someone who has spent more time locked up than I have could write far better than I about the minutiae of surviving it, but suffice it to say that, yes, prison is a terrible place, especially when nobody knows you and nobody has your back. People do get beaten and stabbed and raped and killed. I know a little bit about that, as well. I dealt with it by convincing myself that if it came down to the comedown a motherfucker was going to have to literally kill me before I was going

to get raped. I felt that I could accept death, and because of this I could avert the one thing that I could not accept. I can't really say, though, because I never had to prove it to myself.

So it won't hurt you to be as physically imposing as possible, or to know how to fight, but don't get it twisted: what is going to help you survive the most will not be your body, but your mouth and your mind. this I certainly do not mean strutting around talking shit and trying to prove that you are hard. I mean that you will have to earn some respect by carrying yourself honorably, by embodying the struggle for the people and the land like the humble and courageous warrior that you are.

Once you have spent a little bit of rime behind bars you will come to a number of pretty visceral realizations. First, that holding a wild animal in captivity is an abominable violation of the spirit of both the captor and the captive, a deadly sin if the term has any meaning at all. You will have time to reflect on how utterly cynical the system that you are trapped in is, how it nurtures all that is most virulent and violent in a person — how it creates, destroys, produces, consumes, and unleashes the monsters that give it everlasting life. Prison makes killers, and killers make prisons, and the rich bastards that are making a killing from the whole sick farce are laughing all the way to the bank.

If you are a man, and if you are wise, you will think about how it feels to be in imminent danger of sexual violence every minute of every day, and about how it must feel to the women who have to deal with that all the time. If you are white, you will be given a glimpse of what it is to be a member of a disempowered and endangered racial minority, and of what it must be like for the people of color who have to cope with that predicament all the time.

You will notice that in some respects the whole situation is a lot more honest with the veneer of consent stripped away. It's all about unadulterated force, and nobody pretends that it is not. You do what you are told, whether you like it or not, or else you get hurt.

It will occur to you that there is so much that one can do with a day, an hour, a minute, a week, a month, a year, a life. You will be in awe of how amazingly awesome it would be to walk around your shitty town, hang out with your friends, talk to your mom, play guitar, sleep in someone's arms, masturbate, have sex, cry, pet your cat, cook, hike, drive, sleep in; see the sun, moon, stars, sky, trees, birds, and squirrels; or feel fire, rain, and wind. You will not be able to understand how you could have ever taken any of this for granted. On some level that you will not be very comfortable with or proud of, you will feel like a fool for gambling with your freedom: no matter how urgent, vital, courageous, and noble whatever you did was, it will seem trifling in comparison to all that you have lost. You will swear that if you ever do get out, you will never again let a day pass without squeezing every last drop from it, without being "thankful at what a blessing it is to be able to live it — that you will never again lose sight of this heartbreaking wish that you now have to live.

If you do ever get out, you will lose it, but you will always come back to it, or it to you. If you don't get out, then you will have to learn the hard way that what makes life worth living runs so deep in you that nothing can take it away, that you keep it with you wherever you go. Either way, you will never be quite the same again. You will be stronger, or broken.

At some point, hopefully, you will get bailed out, although if your charges are serious enough or your bail is high enough you may not. If at all possible, regardless of who puts up the money or how it is raised, get the bond posted in your name only, so if you bounce they can't come after your people. If that big old square-headed guard does come by to tell you that you're going home, then you will witness the amusing spectacle of every hard-ass on your block divvying up

your paper, pencils, toothpaste, pillows, towels, blankets, Ramen noodles, toenail clippers, and anything else of value, smiling like kids at Christmas, thrilled to see you leave. Rico will make you promise to smoke a fat-ass blunt for him, kid, and will want you to call his boy Carlos for him. Nothing will ever have been finer than the moment when you finally step outside into the sun, but in some ways getting out is harder than being in, because once you get out you are afraid of going back.

Preparing for Trial

I suppose that this is as good a time as any to bring up a most irksome and vexatious subject — your lawyer. Under the best of circumstances your relationship with this person will be more infuriating and frustrating than just about anything else. You may go through more than one before you settle on the one that will go to trial with you. You don't really need anything more than the public defender for your arraignment, but you need to be getting down to business by the time your preliminary hearing rolls around.

Well-meaning activists — who, incidentally, are not facing prison terms — will be quick to point you to all sorts of sympathetic movement lawyers that your judge will probably hate. Now I'm not saying that it's a bad thing for your lawyer to sympathize with you to at least some degree politically, but that is absolutely not your top concern. All lawyers, even activist lawyers, are mercenaries. You have plenty of friends. You don't need a friend; yon need a gunslinger. Your top concern is not your lawyer's politics — although you certainly don't want one who is actively opposed to your om — but his or her trial record, past performance, relationship with judges and prosecutors, and so on. It's a horrible little world to find yourself involved with, but you are, so act accordingly. This is not the time to fuck around. You and your people need to do all of the research you possibly can, and you need to hire yourself the best bastard that you can afford. Obviously, the poorer you are the more thoroughly fucked over you are going to get here. Borrow surviving a money from everyone you have ever known if you have to. It completely blows, but it's how the system works. If you are facing serious felony charges, you want the cat who knows where bodies are buried and who has gotten people off death row.

Other well-meaning activists will tell you all about how you should put the system on trial, represent yourself, use the trial as a forum, denounce capitalism and Western civilization before the court, act wild, and so on. All of that pacifist talk about speaking truth to power has its time and place, but I suggest that you think long and hard before you decide to speechify for the benefit of the district attorney, the judge, and the court reporter. Strange courtroom antics are usually only wise for someone who is not facing particularly serious charges and thus has less to lose, or for someone who is either so obviously getting railroaded or is so inarguably guilty by legal standards that something out of left field is the most viable option. Now, there have been times where this sort of thing has worked, but they have been the exceptions to the rule. The MOVE organization's fearless, uncompromising, and often victorious battles with the law are one extremely inspiring example. If you are going to go down that road, you have got to go all the way, and you had better do it well.

The whole game is extremely cynical. The state's goal is to do everything they can to put you away for as long as possible, and your job is to beat your charges without betraying anyone else. If you have a co-defendant or co-defendants, you must create and maintain a bond with them that is so powerful that literally nothing can break it. At every step of the way, the state will

do everything it can to play you against one another. You have got to hang together or you will hang alone. This should go without saying, but the one thing that you cannot do is to try to save your ass at someone else's expense. If you have already done this then stop reading my fucking essay this minute, and kill yourself. Seriously.

If you do have co-defendants, it is good policy to agree that none of you will accept any plea bargains without the approval of the others. If there is an extreme disparity between the amounts of time that you are looking at, then the person in the deepest should have the final say. Make sure that your lawyer understands that this is your position. Have no illusions about what having a gunslinger in your comer means. Your lawyer will have absolutely no reservations about acting against the best interests of your co-defendants, your associates, the movement, or anyone else who is not paying him or her. Lawyers work for unscrupulous characters all the time that cut each other's throats on the regular. This is normal procedure in their world. Make it clear that this is unacceptable and your lawyer should respect you on some level for it, unless he or she is just a total scumbag.

As your case progresses, you will discover the maddening truth that your troubles are much, much, much more important to you than they are to your lawyer. You will be urgently trying to glean a vital piece of news about the hearing that is coming up in ten days, and he or she will be off in another county all week dickslapping around at the trial of some dude that knocked over a liquor store two years ago. Your lawyer will have a whole host of poor bastards on his or her hands that are each individually every bit as desperate as you are. This, however, is his or her problem, not yours. The squeaky wheel gets the grease, and you've got to do everything you can to make sure that your needs are met. If you let them sweep you under the rag, they will sweep you under the rag. This will all be substantially more problematic if you are still locked up. Call, call, call, and visit the office as necessary. Be extremely courteous and respectful to the secretaries: they hold the keys to the castle. Learn how the various personalities in the office interact, and how to approach who when in order to get what. Make sure that you don't have a communication breakdown and miss a court date, and get a bench warrant issued for you, and have your bail revoked.

In the name of all that is holy: do not talk to the press about your case, and do not let anyone else do so in your name. Anything you say will come back to haunt you in court. Believe me. Keep yourself out of trouble until your trial if you are out on bail.

While you are awaiting trial, your friends and family and supporters will want to know what they can do to help you. This can be somewhat overwhelming, but you will need all the help that you can get. Some help helps, though, and some help hurts. Make sure that anyone acting on your behalf is accountable to you and to what you believe to be your best interests. Be wary of anyone who is using you in the service of his own agenda, whatever it might be. This may be even harder, but be very, very firm with your family if they flip out and try to get you to cooperate with the authorities because they think that is going to get you out of trouble. It won't. Don't let anybody push you around, even if it is someone who loves you.

Don't go it alone. Close ranks with the people that you trust with your life, and let them help you. Folks can help you raise bail and legal money, find and research and deal with lawyers, do outreach to put the word out about the case if you decide that is to your advantage, find and locate witnesses and evidence and expert witnesses if that is appropriate, turn people out to the courtroom at your trial and other appearances if that is what you want, secure endorsements from reputable community members, deal with the press in some way if necessary, keep you mentally,

emotionally, and spiritually together, and about a thousand and one other things. Listen, always, to those that you trust — but it is your ass in the hot seat, so you had better be calling the shots. Again, this will all be much harder if you cannot get out on bail. If that is the case then your closest supporters will be even more important to you.

Every felony case is a minor legal saga, and every one is different, but one way or another you are going to have some period of time between your preliminary hearing and your trial, with various other hearings, appeals, motions, and grand jury appearances thrown in the mix. The state, depending on how they want to treat you, can take you to trial incredibly quickly, or they can take an extraordinarily long time. Either way, it's not too damn pleasant. Study your transcripts and the relevant case law until you know everything forward and backward. If you are still locked up you should use the law library every second that you can. There is also an amazing amount of aggregate legal knowledge out there among prisoners and jailhouse lawyers that you can draw from. Take everything you hear with a grain of salt, but listen and learn nonetheless. This will all make it easier to deal with your lawyer. Again, though, when talking about your case to any inmate, never, ever, discuss what you "did" or "didn't do, "only what is relevant to what is on the record from your preliminary hearing about what you "allegedly" did.

This will be a very difficult period of time. Remember who is there for you and who isn't, and never forget it. Do everything you can to improve your situation, but don't dwell on the fact that you're in it. Find something else to work on, not to the detriment of your case, but enough to keep the abyss from eating you alive.

You will be, by turns, extremely depressed and angry and in denial. You will, in fact, if you are lucky, pass roughly through the classic stages of grief between your arrest and your trial, with all of the madness that entails. You will be absolutely fucking terrified of going back to jail, or of going to prison if you are awaiting trial in county. You will contemplate being raped often. You will have nightmares. You will be an unholy pain in the ass to deal with for the people that love you most, and occasionally you will be completely off your rocker. You will resent everyone who has the privilege of forgetting, even for a second, that you have to think about it every minute of every day. You will feel like you have a terminal illness. You will meet people and talk to them and you won't know if they know. You will feel like a drain and a burden on everyone around you. You will find yourself trying to tie up every loose end in your life, and you will catch yourself wondering if this is the last time you will see your grandma, or this lake, or that tree. You will hate people that try to put a sunny face on and tell you that you everything will be all right.

If you are out on bail you will have two other options that will look at least somewhat attractive-going into hiding and killing yourself. I will address them separately. I am not going to say that it never makes sense to run. Sometimes it does. If you are facing nasty felonies, and you know you are going to get convicted, and it's obvious that it's going to go badly, sometimes it is best to get the hell out of Dodge. If you go that route, then my prayers are with you. There's no turning back, ever. Staying free won't be easy, or romantic, or safe, or fun. They will look for you, and if you slip up they will find you. Please, only consider this in the direst of circumstances, and don't even think about it unless you have a specific, viable, concrete plan as to how exactly you are going to live on the lam for the rest of your life. I'd rather do five to ten years than have to hide forever. When you start talking ten to twenty and more is when I might start making other plans.

Concerning suicide, all I can say is that there were times when the one thought that sustained me was that the bastards who were doing this to me were trying to kill me, and that I would be

damned if I would do the job for them. It's fucked up, but if you have to keep yourself alive out of sheer spite then that's what you've got to do.

Use the time before your trial to live so that you will have no regrets if you do go to jail. Be as good as you can to the ones you love. Find a way to stare down the barrel of the worst that can happen to you, and accept it. That way you can only be surprised for the better. Call on the spirits and give thanks before you go, if you can. I'm not too proud to admit that I did.

Going to Trial

The day will come when you will have to go to the big dance. Get yourself a haircut and some dress clothes and look presentable. Needless to say, one person who is going to have a marked effect on your prospects at this point will be the judge. Your lawyer and the district attorney will both try to monkey with the process to get as favorable a judge as possible onto the case. You will have a choice between a bench trial and a jury trial. In a jury trial, the jury determines innocence or guilt, and the judge imposes the sentence, if any. In a bench trial, the judge determines innocence or guilt, as well as the sentence.

You cannot be forced to have a bench trial. You can have a jury trial if you want one. There are situations where either one is preferable. I am no legal expert, but I think it's fair to say that judges are more predictable than juries, which could be good or bad. If the judge has an extremely nasty reputation you definitely don't want a bench trial. If the judge has a good reputation, and the state's case is not very strong, you might do better at the bench. If the accusations against you are such that a random jury pool is likely to be sympathetic, with you might do better with a jury. If you are accused of something toward which a random jury pool is likely to be antagonistic, you might do better with the judge. One disadvantage of a bench trial is that it eliminates the possibility of a hung jury. Listen to the advice of your lawyer, listen to your gut instinct, and pray that you make the right choice.

I don't think it ever hurts to pack the courtroom; just make sure that everyone is accountable to you, and does or doesn't do whatever it is that you want them to. Generally the order of events will be as follows: jury selection, followed by defense and then prosecution opening statements; prosecution evidence and witnesses, and defense cross-examination; defense evidence and witnesses, and prosecution cross- examination; defense and then prosecution dosing statements; deliberation; and the rendering of the verdict. How long all this will take depends wholly on how complicated your case is. There are far too many variables to detail in depth here, but suffice it to say this is zero hour and it's time to throw down. If you are going to testify then eat some food beforehand so you don't get lightheaded. Speak dearly and don't let the DA get you flustered.

And then it will be over. You will either take the short walk around the banister into the arms of someone who loves you, or the long walk with the bailiff, through the back door, down the hall, and back into the system. If you take the short walk, then nothing will ever have been so sublime, and you will swear that you will never take anything for granted ever again, and that you will never forget Rico and everyone else that you left inside, and that you will do everything you can every day for the rest of your life to leave the world a little better. If you take the long walk, you will keep your head up, and you will stay strong, and you will do your time like a warrior, because that is what you are and what you will have to do. You will continue to navigate the byzantine process of appeals, and of Appellate and Superior and Supreme Courts, and you will exhaust every possible avenue to overturn or reduce your sentence. Maybe it will work and

maybe it will not. Someday your time will be up and they will let you out, and then FOR REAL nothing will ever have been so sublime. Unless, of course, you are REALLY in hot water and you are not ever going to get out, in which case you will still remain unbroken. You will continue the struggle, even when everything has been taken from you, and your spirit will still be free.

Either way, the frogs will still croak and the buds will still blossom, and people will still love each other, and you. And this cancerous prison that mankind has erected for itself will continue to teeter toward its increasingly imminent collapse, and the sooner the better, 1 say. We will continue to wage war on that system, and to learn and relearn how to live in harmony with each other and with the earth, because if we do not then we will all surely die. If we do all die then we will return to the earth, and the ashes of our species will decompose in its bosom, and eventually something will grow up out of the compost. One time, in total despair, I looked down and saw two hornets fucking in the dust, and I saw that it was good. In the long run everything really will be all right, and I mean that. Hell, there are folks out there doing bids longer than I really expect to see civilization as we know it last. That's something to think about when you're getting down in the mouth!

Remember: your body will always be a part of the magnificent web of life, of plants and animals inhaling oxygen and carbon dioxide, of birth and death and decomposition.

You are in the embrace of an unbroken body of ghosts that reaches back through every place since the dawn of time. We have done everything that we could to combat all that is abusive and cruel. We have endured every manner of suffering and tribulation, and we have never given up the ghost. No matter what, you must know that we love you, that we give thanks to you for what you have done, and that your efforts — whatever they have been — have not been in vain.

Thinktank

Instructions: A Method for Intensive Collaboration

A thinktank is a period of self-imposed isolation and concentration for creative purposes; it enables the participants to live within the creative process, centering their attention and liberating their imaginations.

The thinktank method focuses on exploring formats of production and interaction. A thinktank is not simply a way to produce results: it is also a way to experiment with process. A thinktank can produce science, performance, stories, music, healing, art, a machine, a philosophy; the composition of the thinktank determines the conditions, rules, materials, facilities, and individuals with which these products are hewn. The exact goals of a thinktank might not even be established in advance; the development of goals may itself be a goal.

A thinktank is a free university: inside, we get smarter and more capable. Accordingly, the objects, insights, and lifeways that arise out of it are to be shared. In that spirit, we have assembled this guide. It is a framework of ideas, not a list of rules. Italicized texts are anecdotes or examples from specific projects. If you carry out a thinktank, or whatever else you call it, be sure to pass on your findings, as well.

Premise 1

In a thinktank, a set amount of time — two weeks, for example — is devoted to a specific goal. Examples of such goals could include designing and building a mechanism or a piece of art, producing a performance or intervention, occupying an unusual space, creating a publication, building a whey-powered airplane, or all of these at once.

The stated goal of a thinktank is not the ultimate end, but rather a means to it: the ultimate end is to conduct and enjoy an experiment in collaboration. For this reason, it may be enough in some cases to set the conditions of the thinktank and let its goals develop in the process of exploring those conditions — see Premise 5, below.

Premise 2

A thinktank is intense and focused. Because of this, it can generate in participants the same excitement, urgency, and supernatural powers that otherwise appear only dining natural disasters, popular uprisings, thesis defenses, and similar emergencies, without any of the nasty side effects.

<quote> *"Day 11 midday: I was sewing a six-foot inflatable Arnold Schwarzenegger prop, Drew was in the subbasement troubleshooting beats on the sequencer, Erik was hunting down projection equipment, Jason was screening the last of the t-shirts and posters, and Chris, while out on his trailer bike picking up an electric motor, managed to dumpster dive two pizzas and a head of cabbage, which we ate for lunch."* </quote>

Premise 3

A thinktank is holistic. Every part of 'life during the thinktank belongs to the project. There are no lunch breaks or business hours. For the given period, the thinktank is in effect twenty -four hours a day. Activities like eating and sleeping are part of, not breaks from, the project; they are integrated into it as experiments or adventures in themselves.

<quote> *Dearest ...*

Believe it or not, I am writing you from Wal-Mart. I am now well into my thirty-seventh hour of occupation. My plan is to stay for seventy-two hours, but I have had absolutely no luck finding a suitable place to sleep- go figure! In fact, I just got busted trying to nap. I was settling down under a rack of orange camouflage cover-alls, when I saw a pair of feet approaching. "What are you doing under there?" the employee asked. I assumed that I'd be escorted out the front door (or worse), so I didn't bother with an elaborate excuse — "Hiding" I said, as I climbed out and waited, like a good criminal, for the firing squad. But the strangest thing happened! She just stood there looking at me. (She wanted to open the application but she didn't have the right program.) After a few seconds, I just walked away. I took off my wig and spent next few hours hiding in the magazine section. Now the "Radio Diner" is open again, and I'm back in the booth where my refill cup hides ... I think the whole thing's blown over.

Always Wal-Mart,

Always ... </quote>

Premise 4

Design your thinktank like you would design a machine. In support of your specific goal, assemble a group of people, facilities, materials, and tools. Each part should be integral to the project.

For a long while, I had a project in mind that required serious bike mechanic skills and an inventor's tenacity. I had a friend in Boston with both. He came to McLeansville for two weeks so we could give it a shot. Taking turns doing what we each did best, we ended up succeeding moments before the bell. In the process we learned a lot from one another.

At the same time, forget about recruiting the perfect mix of specialists; a thinktank is neither a machine nor a management team. There are experts in small things, but no experts in big things, and a thinktank is strictly a big thing. Instead, focus on designing an environment that is perfect for the people who ought to be involved.

<quote> *"Two weeks prior to lock-in we still had a spot to fill. A friend of a friend of a friend recommended Tera. She couldn't claim any of the mechanical skills we thought we were looking for, hut she was excited about the project. The project ended up revolving around her energy and ideas. My subsequent projects have gotten a million times better, thanks to that experience. Three years later she invited me to be part d a thinktank she designed. I humbly accepted!"* </quote>

Premise 5

The thinktank is first the tool by which the work is made, and thereafter the lens through which the results are to be understood.

<quote> *"We could not have set out for our results; before the project, they didn't yet exist. All we did was create a situation that seemed fertile and let ourselves loose in it. We built up our Galapagos*

island, and let the beaks of its birds evolve as they would. Now, for our performance to be relevant to the outside world, we will have to go some distance toward recreating, in each performance, the world that brought it into being." - journal entry upon exiting Thinktank Eight </quote>

Premise 6

A thinktank is not just temporary, it is necessarily temporary. Like a fifty-yard dash or a temper tantrum, a thinktank is, by definition, unsustainable.

<quote> *"A modern day vision quest, [thinktank] does violence to the borders between self and group. We begin like steel, but the process energy is a heat and things begin to bend. At moments the line between individual and group becomes fluid; inertia evaporates and change is all there is. It can't be sustained. It's not about being sustained. It's about building up an uncommon intensity, then pouring it, at the right moment, onto the other world." - Manifesto for Concentration [thinktank] Jamaica Plain, MA 1999* </quote>

Premise 7

The rules for a thinktank can seem confining from the outside. If being locked into certain rules seems harsh, consider what is being locked out. Carefully chosen rules can liberate spaces and individuals from the implicit rules that had dominated them. Finding freedom doesn't necessarily mean abandoning all rules: it can also mean choosing rules that have potential to reveal new possibilities.

<quote> *"Running off to the store or even the dumpster is against our stated rules. This felt ridiculous at first. I was always thinking something like "We're out of staples, really, what's the problem if I run to the hardware store?' But it feels good, actually, to switch from a consumer mode in which solutions are selected to an inventor mode in which solutions are imagined based on what is available. In this mode every 'possible' resource is right under our noses. It invests us with a feeling of real presence."* </quote>

Premise 8

The methods for documenting a thinktank should be carefully considered. Doing "that funny thing" again for the camera really screws things up.

<quote> *"In our first thinktank, we overextended. We spent the first week doing everything twice so we could get good pictures. Finally, we realized we were missing out on the experience so we could have photos to look at. For the second week, we scrapped the burdensome documentation in hopes that memory would serve. It does." - unpublished reflections on Safety Bike Thinktank, 1998* </quote>

Premise 9

A thinktank both produces works of art and is itself a work of art rendered as movement through and alteration of every kind of space.

<quote> *"It's hard to locate the borders of this project. Fuller and I have been tied together with an invisible rope for eight days now. He tastes the Food Not Bombs spaghetti and I say "needs salt. " We are desperate to get this show functioning; our intensity leaves traces on carpets and sidewalks. Perched on a park bench outside the third venue, we grapple with last minute decisions. I see my*

anxiety expressed on the faces of innocent passersby. Everywhere we go there is a vortex. Everywhere^ go it rains.“ - Symposium of Very New Music tour, 2000 </quote>

Premise 10

A thinktank is the ache of a new world; as powerful as it may become on the inside, it is vulnerable to things outside. like the most epic dream, it can be chased beyond memory by a single crack of light from under the door. Take steps to isolate your group: go somewhere else, find a neutral territory, bar the door, rip the phone off the wall. Checking email is out of the question.

<quote> *“After two weeks, we five were almost one thing. I didn‘t even notice it, actually, until we got out. It felt awful to travel in separate vehicles. That connection was deep. There were these incredible synchronicities, especially on stage ... I’m thinking of one amazing moment where we had built up to a huge, loud, messy percussion climax and without any warning we all stopped on a razor’s edge.. I remember opening my eyes in this round silence before people remembered to clap, “ -from Auto Revision interview, 2001, in Cho Family ‘zine* </quote>

Premise 11

A thinktank is a visitor, a simultaneous but separate occurrence. When a thinktank is over, it is impossible to go back. As for your pre-thinktank life, leave a forwarding address — you’ll never get back home.

<quote> *”It was like I got used to a zero gravity situation; when I got out of that building, all of a sudden I weighed a hundred and thirty pounds again. For a few days I could hardly move. Plus my eyes ached so bad from the light...” - excerpted from a letter from Kelly, St. Petersburg.* </quote>

Kelly and three others stocked up food and water, entered an abandoned building, and agreed only that they would stay for ten days. By day three they had decided to blindfold themselves for the remaining period and build a shrine. As I understand it, there is now a giant deer head sculpture in some unoccupied building in St. Pete.

Account: Automobile Re-Vision Project, Thinktank Number Eight

From May 26 to June 8, 2001, five collaborators confined themselves in a 26’ by 20’ squatted room with food, water, fasteners, adhesives, tools, makeshift sanitation and documentation equipment, and a decrepit 1985 Saab 900. While in the room, the group dismantled the car and made its parts into musical instruments . The participants wrote music and rehearsed it on the new instruments, shot video footage that they later edited into a documentary video, and collected words and images for a ‘zine that they assembled afterwards. During that period the only interchange between the room and the outside world was the heat, light, and air flowing in and out, the electricity flowing in, and the webcam data flowing out.

Compiled from journal entries:

We all met at my place at 7:00 that morning, packed up the car and (thank god it started!) shoved off for a two-week road trip. B/ 7:30 am we had traveled eight and a half miles, more than

enough driving for two weeks. We idled briefly in front of the small brick building before driving through its double doors. With a turn of the key, the car's engine went quiet for the last time, and our travels began.

The steel door slammed and was barred shut; there was a moment of silence as each of us stared at the four other strangers with whom we would live for two weeks. An instant later, a rush of excitement spread over the room: there was spontaneous clapping, laughing, and shouting — then another silence, ^looked around the room, and then at the car -and saw that it had been a musical instrument all along. We had driven there in that car, but in this room, by an act of declaration, it had become nothing less than a limitless material.

We began by locking ourselves in, but it was just as much a lockout. We locked out as much of the world as we could, in an attempt to find modes of collaboration and production that had been inconceivable in our day-to-day experience. We locked-out in order to make new instruments and new music. These would be the exclusive products of the new world we had claimed. They would be inconceivable in the terms of the outside world!

Yet, inevitably, we made drums, basses, didgeridoos, thumb pianos, slide whistles, and little percussion tools. Even the mechanical drum machine was derivative of instruments we had seen. But didn't we use these instruments to make music that was a pure expression of a hermetic society? As it turns out, no: the music we made could only be a strange hybrid between the circumstances we chose and the music we had heard and made all our lives.

Our building never stood still. In it, we roamed through the rain of one region into the cold of another. Through the open roof and our one window we met a world increasingly foreign as we became a world of our own.

One would think our open roof showed us the same sky through the leaves of the same six trees. But as we traveled, we left Pittsburgh's black-orange midnight for the ultraviolet glow of a late morning that promised to soak us al I day. And it did. The next day we drifted under a sunny gap in the clouds. We climbed up to the old I-beam structure to be closer to the sun.

On the west side of the building was our only point of contact with other humans, a plate door with an expanded steel window. Through this window, we saw blazing hot streets, pedestrians sweating in shorts, motorists with their windows rolled down for dogs with their noses to the wind. All of this, while our massive brick walls kept us cold and our flywheel trees made the long-gone rain coast on for hours. The disjunction between out and in proved our suspicions and confirmed the gap between worlds. Nevertheless, we dragged the whole scene with us as we went: windowless corrugated steel architecture, pavement, telephone poles, and litter all followed. A huge hospital building with an emergency room dock was inertia-free and hot on our tail. Ambulances screamed and ran hot just to catch up and deliver their goods.

Even the inside of our building transformed: one moment it was a living room with stories in the air, the next it became a deafening garage, a dining room, a studio … seconds later we stumbled into a house of worship with high walls and a ceiling fresco of living green.

Visitors sometimes misunderstood our circumstances as hard or painful. They found the fact that we didn't "get to" take showers for two weeks troubling, and often betrayed the assumption that it is human nature not to get along with one another. Folks would ask through our window, "Aren't you all going crazy in there!"

We had put out word that on the morning of the 8th, people were invited to come help us celebrate our exodus. But after falling in love with our circumstances, leaving didn't seem like such a cause for celebrating. Moments before we were to emerge, we changed our minds. We

began to play our instruments, building from a whisper up to out and out chaos, then threw open our doors and let our friends come in because — “Aren’t you all going crazy out there?”

Torches

Ingredients

- Dowels, at least 1" thick (wooden table or chair legs work fine)
- Tin cans — *small (15-OUNCE), medium (26-OUNCE)*
- Kerosene or lamp oil
- Old cotton t-shirts or cloth
- Hammer and nails or screws and screwdriver
- Ventilated working space

Instructions

Nothing livens up a night march or gives that "peasant revolt" look like bright, flaming torches (and pitchforks).A festive, safe torch is easy to make. Begin by removing any paper from the outside of your tin can. Lay the can on its side and, with a hammer and nail, punch some holes along the top and middle of the can. This will allow more air to reach the center of the torch, making for bigger flames.

The wooden dowel serves as a handle for the torch, so it should be long enough that the flames will not be too close to your face or head. Nail or screw the tin can to the top of the dowel, mouth upward. You may want to use a drill to make a pilot hole in the dowel. The nail can be difficult to reach within the confined interior of the can; use the bottom of the hammer if need be. You may want to use a washer, too. The can should be securely — attached to the dowel. You do not want that connection to fail out on the mean streets.

Take an old 100% cotton shirt or rag and wet it with kerosene or lamp oil. Place rags in a plastic bag or margarine container when you wet them, so you don't spill or waste any fuel. Do this in a well- ventilated space, away from any open flames. Store the rags in a sealable container. Rags can be stuffed into the cans and lit when ready.

Torches will last for roughly twenty minutes before they need to be relit or replaced. They can be extinguished by turning them upside down on the ground for several minutes. You can also extinguish them by coveting the can entirely with a wet towel. If you are concerned about the rags falling out, or if you may be running while carrying the torch, string metal wire through the holes you punched in the can and across its mouth.

Warning: Using fire always involves risk, and not just of arson charges. Being organized helps create a safe, romantically-lit environment, and keeps the chaos where you want it. Bring along fire extinguishers and designate people who are responsible for them. Make sure you keep torches

away from heads and faces. Never add kerosene or flammables to a lit torch. Do not light a torch after handling soaked rags.

Undermining Oppression

Instructions

Ask an urban bird what a polluted sky is. You'll get no answer. Even if birds could tell their tale so you could understand it, they would likely have no explanation for the pollutants they breathe and fly through every moment of their lives. Polluted air simply is. Birds take it for granted.

The first 'step in combating oppression is learning to recognize it. Many people in North America seem to think racism, for example, is a thing of the past, banished now by affirmative action programs and Black History Month. Radicals often have a stronger awareness of how prevalent radsm still is, and may even develop an analysis of how it is only one manifestation of systematic white supremacy, but many go no further than this. To undermine and ultimately abolish oppression, it is necessary to take the step of confronting and undoing it in ourselves and others.

There are almost as many kinds of oppression as there are facets of our complex identities; some strains are based on visible traits like race or sex, others are not. Fortunately, there are also tools that can be used for identifying, resisting, and dismantling all of them.

Throughout this recipe, we focus on white supremacy so as to offer concrete examples, though it is not necessarily more widespread or pernicious than patriarchy or any other form of oppression. Oppression and privilege intertwine in extremely complex ways; racism, classism, heterosexism, ableism, ageism, and others overlap and extend into all spheres of our lives. Traditional single-issue activism focuses on contesting one manifestation of these at a time: fighting the prison-industrial complex, opposing corporate exploitation of low- wage workers, challenging specific foreign policies. Such activism can benefit greatly from a holistic understanding of oppression and how it operates — in these examples, how state repression, capitalism, and imperialism all rest on oppression and privilege. Whatever one's chosen focus, it is important to be aware of diverse forms of oppression and to challenge them on every level.

Anger, Silence, and Guilt

Working against both institutional and personal manifestations of oppression can be emotionally intense and challenging. In the course of learning to recognize and struggle against oppression, one is likely to encounter and experience deep resentment, regret, and heartache.

Many people have been deeply hurt and angered in the course of their experiences of oppression, and these feelings of hurt and anger can be hard for others to hear. Even when the ways they choose to express these feelings seem unproductive or antagonizing to those who have not shared their experience, it is important that they be supported in doing so — otherwise, how are people to learn from one another and gain perspective on themselves? If rage and pain are hard to hear about, imagine how much harder they are to live with and give voice to!

Likewise, fighting racism and white supremacy isn't a matter of simply learning not to say the wrong thing. At worst, would-be radicals can approach these issues in a self- serving manner, focusing on how to avoid being accused of racism and privilege instead Undermining Oppression

of concentrating on actually combating them. If we are to effect real change in our society, we will do better to deal with everything openly, however clumsily, than to keep silent in fear of ourselves and each other.

Those who set out to contest their own privileges will inevitably struggle with feelings of guilt. Such feelings can be powerful resources; they can also paralyze and incapacitate. Guilt can motivate one to act in accordance with one's conscience, fostering self-awareness and courage; it can also trap one in a closed circle of self-recrimination. When those with privilege make their own guilt the focus of their thinking about oppression, it can be a way of re-centralizing their own experiences, turning away from the experiences of those who bear the brunt of injustices and from the question of what can be done.

When dealing with guilt, begin by analyzing what it is that makes you feel guilty, and move swiftly on to the matter of what concrete steps you can take to redress the situation. Focus on this, rather than on shame and self-flagellation. However complicit you may be in oppressive systems, however much more you may benefit from the status quo than others do, you too are deserving, you too are unique, you too suffer, just like everyone else — that is never in question. The question is what you can do to stop being complicit, to stop benefiting at others' expense.

Understanding What Oppression Is

Oppression is a network of forces and barriers that are not accidental or occasional and hence avoidable, but systematically related in such a way as to catch one between and among them, restricting or penalizing motion in any direction. The experience of being oppressed is similar to the experience of being caged — all avenues, in every direction, are blocked.

Imagine a birdcage. If you look very closely at just one wire of the cage, you cannot see the other wires. You could examine that wire, up and down the length of it, and be

unable to see why a bird would not just fly around it any time it desired to. There is no physical property of any one wire, nothing that the closest scrutiny could discover, that would reveal how a bird could be inhibited or harmed by it. It is only when you step back to view the whole cage that you can see why the bird does not go anywhere. Then it becomes obvious that the bird is surrounded by a network of systematically related barriers, no one of which would be the least hindrance to its flight, but which, in conjunction, are as confining as the solid walls of a dungeon.

Oppression can indeed be hard to see and recognize: one can study the elements of an oppressive structure with great care without seeing the structure as a whole, and hence without recognizing that one is looking at a cage.

With this understanding of oppression, one can distinguish between the terms oppression and domination. Domination occurs when an individual or group coerces, controls, or intimidates others. Domination is noxious in all its forms, but not all domination is oppression. Domination is being blocked by a single wire of a birdcage. For example, when the one white boy at an all-black school is taunted and even physically assaulted, these are acts of domination, not oppression. Some would call this reverse racism, but that expression is misleading: it suggests that the boy is experiencing the same thing the black students are by growing up in a white-dominated society, which is not the case. Oppression is not merely individual instances of domination, prejudice,

or ignorance; it is the systematic privileging of one group over another. It is not possible for a more privileged group to be oppressed by a less privileged group: therefore reverse racism is a contradiction in terms.

In some ways, terms like racism and sexism are also misleading: they fail to bring to light the fact that in every instance of oppression, there is a privileged group as well as a targeted one. In using such language, we can overlook the role we play in these systems of oppression. Racism sounds like a mere matter of prejudice and ignorance, but the problem is deeper than this: it is the centrality of whiteness in our culture, which is better described by a term such as white supremacy. Modem white supremacy is a long-standing, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations, and peoples of color. White people and nations tyrannize others in order to maintain and defend a system of wealth, power, and privilege. By using language that indicates this, we can identify clearly where privilege resides and what is actually at stake.

Identity

Western culture relies upon binary logic to classify things and people. From childhood, we learn oppositions like day /night, good/bad, boy/girl, and understand each word to have meaning only in relation to its opposite. Good means the complete absence of bad things, boy means the complete absence of girl things: boys are taught to be boys in large part by being discouraged from all behaviors deemed girlish. As we grow, we learn the many dualisms that frame the ways we see ourselves: feminine/masculine, homosexual/heterosexual, immigrant/native, children/adults, elderly/youthful, transgender/gender normative, color/white.

These dualisms contribute to a conception of the world that is oversimplified, even outright false. Not one of us embodies the extremes they define. All the same, we attempt to fit into the rigid boxes these words outline, so we can find words to describe who we are and live up to the words that describe what is worth being. In the process, we construct our individual identities, our sense of self, the defining of which then creates another binary: the I/other dichotomy. In rigidly defining who we are, we cast everything else as not like us, as other.

Just as each of us has an individual I, our society has a cultural I. The cultural I purports to represent the most prevalent social experience, even though the perspective it presents is actually that of a small minority, if of anyone at all. The cultural I is white, male, able-bodied, heterosexual, and every other characteristic defined as “normal,” and is coded into our society through a variety of visual and linguistic cues: the faces we see overwhelmingly in mass media, the implicit meanings in words like history and mankind. The cultural I can be recognized in what is not said, but assumed: philosophy means Western philosophy, history means US history. The assumptions that some people don’t have accents, that only non- white communities are ethnic groups, these are both evidence of the cultural I at work; the same goes for the habit of referring to non- whites, women, and other demographics as “minorities,” despite the obvious fact that they comprise the majority of the population. The halves of the binaries which are normalized in this way come to be taken for granted as standard — even if, like the blonde actresses in Mexican soap operas, they are extremely uncommon — and we only specify aspects of people’s identities when they deviate from the norm.

Privilege

Whether they wish it or not, members of dominant social groups possess unfair advantages over members of less privileged groups. Privilege depends on the existence of hierarchy: an imbalance of power extending throughout society, providing some demographics with more resources, leverage, and comfort than others. The workings of hierarchy are justified by supremacist thinking, such as the idea that some groups are harder working, better equipped, or more deserving than others; they also are obscured by the obliviousness that comes of identifying with the cultural I. Privilege can be practically invisible to those who have it; it is often painfully obvious to those who do not.

Social dynamics are never so simple that people can be divided easily into oppressors and oppressed, however. Any individual may partake of privilege in one situation, and suffer its absence in another. It makes more sense to focus on the ways some benefit and others suffer in regard to specific criteria, with an eye to following how these shift in different contexts. A group of people who all identify as women of color may be composed of different religions, genders, class backgrounds, native tongues, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and conditions of mental health, and experience subtle power imbalances within their ranks accordingly. Similarly, it is a mistake to think of different forms of oppression as existing in a hierarchy of grievousness, or to argue that some manifestations of oppression are mere subsets of others; to do so trivializes the unique experiences of human beings, which cannot be measured or reduced to abstractions.

Many privileged people think of themselves as self-sufficient, assuming that they live in a meritocracy and that all that they have in life is the result of their own hard work or that of their families . In doing so, they overlook the institutional and cultural advantages from which they benefit. To take stock of what advantages you might have in terms of raaal privileges, consider how many of these statements reflect your experience:

<quote> I can, if I wish, arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.

I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.

I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials in school that testify to the existence of their race and to the history and accomplishments of others of their raaal background.

I can go into a music shop and expect to find music made by others of my race, into a supermarket and find the staple foods that fit with my cultural traditions, into a hairdresser's shop and find someone who can.

Whether I use checks, credit cards, or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.

I can swear, dress in second-hand clothes, or not answer letters without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, poverty, or illiteracy of my race.

I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.

I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.

I can criticize the US government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being immediately seen as a cultural outsider.

I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to the "person in charge" I will be facing a person of my race.

If my day, week, or year is going badly, I need not wonder of each negative episode or situation whether it has racial overtones. </quote>

For more perspective, go over this list again, replacing "race" with ethnicity, sex, gender, age, shape, and so on. Of course, no two white people experience white privilege in exactly the same way, just as not every man feels safer walking alone at night than every woman. Some people have made life decisions that result in them not experiencing many of the daily privileges enjoyed by others of their demographic: a taxi driver may be as likely to refuse to pick up a white man with facial tattoos as a black man without them. But privilege, on a deeper level, is not easily shaken off. The white man, in an extreme, can have his tattoos removed, while the blackman knows that the challenges he faces in a racist society are inescapable. A woman from a middle class family may choose a life of poverty and even homelessness,but the fact that she is connected to people who might be able to help her in an emergency makes her experience undermining very different from that of a homeless person of a poor background. Similarly, the advantages that come from having been raised in a privileged setting remain throughout one's life, whatever else happens. Those of privileged backgrounds who choose a path of exile upon which they experience alienation and persecution can draw on these experiences to imagine what life is like for those who never had their advantages in the first place.

Rather than denying the privileges one possesses or imagining one could somehow wash one's hands of them and thus of complicity in oppression, it makes more sense to use one's privileges, whatever they may be, to undermine privilege in general. One way to do so is to find ways to put these at the disposal of others who can benefit from them (see Solidarity, pg. 489, and Coalition Building, pg. 183). If nothing else, one should always attempt to stay aware of the unfair advantages one has, and to take these into account in interactions with others; but simply learning to recognize and decry one's privileges while still cashing in on them does not constitute an effective struggle against oppression.

Reclaiming Identity: Identity Politics

A classic step in self-empowerment has been to reclaim the boxes we're forced into, reinterpreting them as politicized identities. B/ linking up with others like us, we find validation of our experiences and perspectives, and companions with whom to struggle against the forces that oppress us and others.

The matter of identity is indeed complex. A person's identity is not a set of fixed essences, but a fluid intersection of social, political, and psychological processes. Yet though the constructed identities foisted upon us by this society may not reflect what we consider to be our true selves, we must engage with them in order to subvert them. Whether or not we want it to be the case, our experiences are shaped by the ways we are perceived, so it can be useful to organize with those who share our experiences.

For instance, even in gatherings of radicals or others thought to be conscious about racism and white supremacy, people of color can feel alienated, for example when there is a great disparity in numbers between those who have white privilege in common and those who do not. In such situations, one option is to call for a "caucus" or establish a "safer space" wherein people of color invite others who identify similarly to gather and interact in an exclusive space, or at least taking a break from the potentially taxing experience of being in a minority that must deal with uneven power dynamics. The purpose of this is not to exclude those who do not identify as people of color. It is, rather, a way for those who can feel alienated, marginalized, or victimized i n environments in which the tone is set by more privileged groups to come together, support one

another, and organize as they desire. It can be a relief to take some time off from the challenges of interacting with others who do not share one's frame of reference for oppression, and from feeling the pressure of others' observation and expectations. Ultimately, it is in the best interest of everyone in a group that all individuals within it feel comfortable and empowered.

Caucuses and safer spaces need not be limited to people of color, of course: all who feel they might benefit from this format can employ it. They need not happen only at short-term gatherings of radicals, either: it can make sense to have weekly caucuses in a community, or monthly ones within a collective, or to call for one in the midst of an organizing effort. Women-only houses can offer round-the-clock safer space, youth-only radio stations can provide opportunities for individuals to develop their unique voices, queer-only magazines and action groups can carry out long-term campaigns. In this way, the identities that mark targeted groups for oppression can be turned into sites for organizing resistance to it.

Self-Empowerment

Covering the surface of this society is a complex network of minute rules and norms through which the most original minds and energetic characters can barely penetrate. People's wills are not shattered, but softened, bent, and guided. We are seldom forced to act, but are constantly restrained from acting. Such repression does not destroy, but rather prevents existence; it does not tyrannize, but instead compresses, stifles, and stupefies, so that each individual grows up into a dutiful lamb that needs no shepherding to stay within the fence-line. This is not political repression, which necessitates secret police and prison camps, but cultural repression, in which people police and imprison themselves.

It is too simplistic to imagine individual social controllers in the upper echelons of power as the source of all oppression. White supremacy, for example, is not just the billy clubs of white policemen, nor the country clubs of white executives. White power is not just the power of white people: it is a system of dynamics extending throughout every level of a society, present in every interaction and within every individual. This is why there can be white privilege even in nations where — according to conventional North American standards — no one is, technically speaking, white. Likewise, there is no external enemy we can march against to overthrow patriarchy; we are within enemy territory, and the enemy is within us. At the same time as we fight against external manifestations of oppression, we must also struggle against those we have internalized, putting an end to our own oppressive actions and empowering ourselves to cast off the shackles we have received.

Learning to take criticism constructively-even when it's hard to feel that it is intended constructively — is an important part of this. If one is too defensive to receive perspective on one's own attitudes and conduct, one will miss out on countless opportunities to better oneself . At the same time, one must learn to recognize the voice of the oppressor in one's own head, telling one what one can and cannot do, what one deserves and does not deserve. An encouraging, inspiring circle of peers can help to counteract this internalized oppression.

Being an Ally

To be allies to others in the struggle against racism — to name one example of oppression — is to recognize that racism exists within us without resigning ourselves to that fact, and to engage

in real resistance that goes beyond the confession of our personal complicity. It is to accept that we who have internalized racial dominance will never fully understand the plight of those who suffer the injustices of white supremacy more than we do, and yet to do all we can to learn from their experiences. It is to take an active role in fighting against racist institutions, without compromising the autonomy of those who have even more at stake in this struggle than we do.

People sometimes assume that the means for learning about racism are in scarce supply. This is an absurd, perhaps even subtly racist, assumption, as it ignores the abundance of experience around us. To gain an understanding of the workings of white supremacy, one need not attend endless workshops or become involved in an obscure subculture; indeed, there are reasons to be suspicious of anti-racist organizing in which white experts take the lead in educating and organizing. There are no experts on oppression — or rather, all who experience oppression are experts. Even if you have been so privileged as not to have experienced it yourself, there are people all around you who how firsthand what it is to bear the brunt of racist injustice and inequality. You simply must learn to listen to them, and to conduct yourself such that they will be willing to share their experiences with you.

At the same time, no person more targeted by the racist system than you are owes it to you to take the time to educate you about racism. They have enough to deal with already, without your feeling entitled to make assumptions about or demands of them. Many people of color are exhausted from being asked to speak for all members of their race throughout their lives, or for that matter for all members of all non-white races. Whenever people less privileged than you are willing to take the time to share their perspectives, they are giving a generous gift, one greater than anyone could possibly ask of them and not to be taken for granted. In the meantime, whenever you need to learn about radsm and white supremacy and don't know who to approach, you can always consult the vast bodies of literature, film, music, and history made by those of less privileged backgrounds than your own. Aspiring anti-racists of all races, accustomed to listening to popular white views on nearly everything, would benefit from taking in knowledge of all sorts from multiple sources. As programmed as we all have been by this racist society, we owe it to ourselves and each other to begin learning the rest of our history and culture.

Educating oneself is a critical starting place, but this is not sufficient to make one a good ally: one must make use of this education in practice. Learning the ways that privileged groups dominate others, one must then take steps to cease all such activities. This can be as simple as a man learning not to interrupt women in conversation, or as complex as a household of white tenants joining in a struggle against the gentrification of their predominantly black neighborhood.

To be an ally, one ultimately must provide concrete support to those on the front lines of the struggle against oppression (again, see Coalition Building, pg. 183^ and Solidarity, pg. 489). In doing so, a person from a privileged background should be careful not to attempt to assume control, as he or she has been conditioned to feel entitled to do, but rather endeavor to provide support to others according to their express wishes. Above all, would-be allies must stay sensitive, both to the needs of others and to the tragedies in the world around them, and put their outrage at the disposal of those who suffer these tragedies.

Group Dynamics

Oppression is not an individual problem, but a social phenomenon; accordingly, while individuals can work on deconstructing it within themselves and supporting others who are struggling against it, the most important work against oppressive dynamics takes place in social groups.

Hierarchical power dynamics are common even in affinity groups, collectives, and other groups that aspire to radical activity. Many communities include aggressive or dominating individuals who, in speaking or acting, hinder others from doing so. They offer their opinions on every topic, take over the organizing of every project, seize every opportunity to speak on behalf of others. Such dominating individuals may believe that they are doing the majority of the work because no one else would do it if they did not; but it can also be the case that they are creating an environment in which others become unwilling to fight for space in which to act. Taken by itself, this behavior is only domination; but when one factors in the privileges many domineering individuals abuse and perpetuate, it can be recognized as yet another manifestation of oppression.

Individuals must develop the self-awareness to resist dominating social situations and prevent others from dominating them. There are tools groups can use collectively to this end, as well. Simple matters, such as how accessible gathering times and locations are to different demographics and whether childcare is available, can determine who is and is not able to participate in specific projects and social circles. In meetings (see "Facilitating Discussions" in Affinity Groups, pg. 28), a group can give speaking priority to those who have been speaking less, or to those who are more directly affected by the issue in question. Discussions can be set up in a format that encourages the equal participation of different groups: for example, women and men can alternate speaking, so there will be equal proportions of male and female voices heard. No structure can be counted on to be better than the people who make use of it — there's no substitute for self-awareness and sensitivity — but such conventions can be a stepping stone to more naturally egalitarian dynamics.

Another format useful for resolving conflicts or giving a group perspective on its inner dynamics is sometimes called a "fishbowl." This exercise is like safer spaces and caucuses in that a space and time is set aside for one demographic within the group to speak, but in this case the rest of the group is present, listening to but not participating in the discussion. This can be a tremendously instructive opportunity for those with privilege to learn about others' experiences, and for those who experience challenges in working with privileged individuals to address them; at the same time, this practice must be applied with care, as it can make people feel singled out.

No one appreciates feeling used or put on display because of the color of their skin or any other such characteristic. This is sometimes called tokenization, and it is a blunder many commit in attempts to make their communities more welcoming to "others." Recruiting people of color, women, or other less privileged demographics to prove one's dedication to anti-oppression work, or asking them to speak as "the minority" in meetings or conversations, can itself be oppressive behavior.

Nurturing Relationships

Developing relationships with those who experience less privilege is no guarantee that we will deal openly and consistently with race or any other such issue. Too often, people claim to

understand the experiences of another group because of a high degree of exposure to them: “But my best friend is black!” “But my stepdad wasn’t born here!” A white person’s relationship with a person of color can never be a proof or a credential of anti-racist consciousness.

All the same, working to dismantle the institutional, cultural, and personal barriers that keep us alienated from one another is a fundamental part of undermining white supremacy and other forms of oppression. We may have to accept that there will always be more barriers to remove, but in removing those we are able to, we learn and grow in revolutionary ways. Meaningful relationships that transcend boundaries and constructs can offer a taste of the world that oppression otherwise denies us. Building friendships and alliances with people whose experience of oppression is different from our own is much more than a strategy for working toward specific political ends; it is also a way to live life more fully and do our part to make it possible for others to do the same.

Unemployment

Instructions

There are plenty of good reasons not to sell your labor on the market. Perhaps you don't like what that labor is being used to do: transform forests into landfills, perpetuate meaningless busywork as a way of life, centralize wealth in the hands of a rapacious few. Perhaps you have a better idea of how that energy should be employed, and no corporation or organization is offering you a salary to do what you think needs doing. Perhaps you're one of those dangerous hedonists who have somehow gotten it into their heads that life is supposed to be fan and exciting. Unfortunately, knowing why you want to be unemployed is the easy part. There are also reasons most people who hate their jobs keep going to them: they have bills to pay, they don't know any other way to get what they need, they can't imagine what else to do with their lives, they don't want to be social outcasts.

To some extent, these are valid concerns, and the more everyone accepts them as inexorable facts of life, the more they become so. At the same time, to the inverse extent, varying for each person according to his or her individual circumstances, they are empty threats. Only rigorous field testing can determine where necessity stops and superstition begins.

Dropping out of the exchange economy doesn't have to be all or nothing: there are many degrees to which one can do so, and many ways to go about it. You can work part-time, or at a full-time job that affords you the opportunity while on the clock to do some of the things you would do anyway. You can get a job that provides you access to a resource that you or others in your community need, and take advantage of the situation to redistribute a little wealth. You can work in blitzes, financing long periods of unemployment by means of short periods of intensive wage slavery. You can barter your labor directly for the goods you need, instead of working for wages. You can try being self-employed, gambling that the market will be a less exploitative master than a boss would be.

Or, if no others depend on you to provide for them, you can quit working entirely and declare yourself openly at war with capitalism on every front. Whichever approach you choose, the same basic principles will apply.

What You Don't Need

Few people would go to work if they didn't need a paycheck to buy the things they need — so when you consider how to emancipate yourself from wage slavery, the first thing to work out is what you can do without.

When you think about your purchases, you may be astonished by how many of them are things that have nothing to do with survival or even with making you happy. What don't you need? You don't need those dumb trinkets you buy when you go on vacations, and you might not need those expensive vacations as much if your daily life were more fulfilling. You don't need

that soda you drink every afternoon, and if you stop drinking it you might not need to go to a dentist as frequently, either. You don't need a wardrobe with a different outfit for every day of the month, and if you're not going to your job at the office or the mall every day, you might not need to keep buying the latest fashions before your older clothes even start to show wear.

Limit the amount of advertising you expose yourself to — that's the propaganda of senseless consumption, and it can influence your tastes and tendencies even if you're wise to it. Be suspicious of socialized fashion and beauty and hygiene standards, especially the ones that demand you invest money in cosmetics, diets, and deodorants. In fact, be suspicious of all cultural conventions that necessitate some kind of consumption: expensive sports tickets instead of games at the park, Prozac prescriptions or costly therapy instead of networks of emotional support, keeping up to date with pop culture instead of setting out on your own adventures. Minimize your addictions: cigarettes, alcohol, and cocaine will keep you locked into the cycle of employment and consumption if you can't break yourself of dependency on them. Take heart: as you work less, all the indulgences you once needed to make life bearable will probably feel less necessary. Try to center the ways you find happiness and the ways you evaluate your worth around what you do with your day-to-day life, rather than what you own.

Transportation can be a big challenge, unless you live in a small town or self-contained neighborhood. Bicycling is the cheapest and best means, and relying on public transportation can also save money, though in some areas these methods of getting around are difficult or unavailable. It may be, though, that the main reason you need a car is to get to work every day, and if you can restructure your employment situation, the car you had in order to get to the job that paid for it will become unnecessary. The same goes for your life ambitions-if you want to grow up to be a high-powered executive, you'll have to spend seven years and seventy thousand dollars getting degrees, but if it's a life of freedom and adventure you want, you'll do better to start investing in those right away instead. The pressure to go to college is part of the protection racket, anyway — they say you need to go to college to get a job, but once you're saddled with tens of thousands of dollars of debt, you have to get a job just because you went to college. You can use the libraries and talk to the professors for free, and if you do have it to spend, couldn't all that money be used for something more worthwhile?

If you've already amassed a debilitating debt to credit card companies or from student loans, and you're afraid you'll have to spend the rest of your life slaving to pay it off, fear not. With every kind of debt but student loans, you can declare bankruptcy, or just refuse to pay until the collection agency is willing to settle for a fraction of the original debt. If you're fed up with a collection agency hassling you, ask for their address, as if to send a payment, and then send them a letter barring them from contacting you again; keep a copy, as this can stand up in court as sufficient grounds for them to be forced to leave you be. Student loans remain binding even when you declare bankruptcy, but you might be able to pay them off with credit cards and then default on the credit card payments. If that's not an option, there's still hope. You cannot be imprisoned for not paying debts, except in the case of tax evasion. As long as you have no assets that can be seized or income that can be tapped, no bill collector can touch you. Join a collective or an intentional community, in which none of your assets are in your own name and your income is too little or too obscure for them to requisition. Your credit might be ruined as far as corporate America goes, but as long as your credibility with your community is sound, you won't need to qualify for any new loans. This might sound scary, but you have to draw the line somewhere, and the more of us keep paying, the more money our enemies have to make it hard for us not to.

How to Get What You Need

As much as you limit your consumption, there will always be things you need. Never fear — you live in the most profligate society on earth. There are countless ways to obtain and share the resources you require.

First, consider collective living. This could mean joining an intentional community, or just sharing things with your friends. The more you share, the less each individual needs to invest in being self-sufficient. The more you pool your resources, the greater the investments you can make together — perhaps you can even buy land.

Get things used from thrift stores and yard sales rather than buying them new. Learn how to repair the belongings you already have, so you won't have to replace unemployment them as often.

Seek out and pass on family hand-me-downs. Borrow from your friends and neighbors, and encourage them to borrow from you — this helps build relationships: as well as saving money and discouraging over-production. Not everyone needs to have a set of carpentry tools, a fondue pot, or a weight-training bench — one per neighborhood should be enough. Make use of or set up a neighborhood lending library of tools, cooking supplies, books, records, and everything else you can think of. Take up a collection and buy resources for everyone to share. Set up a cooperative program, so people can buy food and other goods in bulk at wholesale prices. Deal direct with the producers, as in community-supported agriculture programs in which households buy directly from farmers. Barter goods and labor instead of trading in cash.

Take advantage of existing public resources: go to the library for books and videos instead of purchasing or renting them, go to art galleries instead of movie theaters. Investigate what free programs are offered locally — the state of Pennsylvania, to name one unlikely example, provides free classes in motorcycle riding.

Build local infrastructures for distributing things people need (see Food Not Bombs, pg. 248 and Bicycle Collectives, pg. 92). Hold regular potlatch events — e.g. a monthly "Really Really Free Market" (see Festivals, pg. 241) — or establish a permanent space as a free store (see Distribution, Tabling, and Infoshops, pg. 210), so materials can flow to the people who need them. Host free movie showings. Setup social and cultural events that charge a sliding scale of admission according to each person's financial means.

Make use of services corporations offer for customers, like paper cutters in photo- copying franchises. Take advantage of computers, public access phones, and everything else like them at universities, businesses, and local community centers. Infiltrate college cafeterias, smuggle massive quantities of food out of corporate buffets. Keep an eye out for needed resources that come free with other services, like the hot showers you can take during your free trial membership at the health spa, or the fancy dinner you can get cheap at the casino even if you're not gambling. Sign up for guided tours of production plants Just for the free samples . Piggyback along on activities that would be taking place anyway: stow away on freight trains, sit in on college classes.

Don't be afraid to ask for things (see Hitchhiking, pg. 296). You can place want ads for things people might have and not need in the classified pages of local papers — paint, pianos, bicycles, scrap metal. You can call companies and ask if they have leftovers, or if they want to support a community organization with a donation of materials. Make use of the waste of your society (see

Dumpster Diving, pg. 219). Get familiar with all the junkyards, scrapyards, and salvage programs in your area. Take ova* unused spaces (see Squatting, pg. 507).

Anything you can, make yourself (see Musical Instruments, pg. 383 and How to Build a Rocketstove, pg. 431). Start a garden, build shelving from discarded timber at construction sites, forge yourself a bus pass. If you have medical needs, there are free and low-cost clinics that may provide for you, and there are ways to obtain free treatment from the medical establishment (see Health Care, pg. 275); you can also learn do-it-yourself forms of medicine and therapy.

Pilfer: pens, markers, matches, toilet paper, tape, envelopes, plates and silverware, everything that isn't chained down in corporate America. Con your enemies out of things: show up to posh restaurants with forged paperwork, explaining that you are there from some glamorous magazine to do research for a story on their cuisine. Write to corporations asking for free coupons for their products — you purchased a defective item, or you want them to give as gifts — and counterfeit them in massive numbers. Steal from corporations (see Shoplifting, pg. 477) — that goes double if you work for one.

You can apply for grants, but don't get lost in the world of bureaucracy. There are social welfare programs, but don't rely on them unless you are very much in need — they have too few resources for too many needy people as it is . If you do have to buy anything, buy it from local, independent merchants that you respect, if possible.

How to Spend Your Permanent Vacation

Not working is only half the battle, and not the important half ,at that. The real question is what you do instead.

Living in a society in which the market determines most of what we do with our time, few of us have been equipped to apply ourselves without direction. Without school, work, or shopping to order our hours, we can easily slip into listless inertia. Often it's easier to identify the things you would love to be doing when you're too busy to do them than it is when you have no commitments at all. You only discover what interests you by engaging with the world, and in capitalist society, employment and consumption can seem like the only ways to engage. As you cut down on these, replace them immediately with new projects, with the things you dreamed of doing when you didn't have a moment free.

Perhaps you don't know what you'd like to be doing, you only know what you don't want to do. Don't panic if you search yourself for your heart's desires and come up empty-handed; these desires develop in action, not in rumination. Volunteer with community groups, or invent your own; teach classes, serve food, counsel survivors, plant gardens, baby-sit children, care for animals, build houses, organize festivals, gather berries and bake pies for unsung heroes and heroines, recruit fellow warriors for the anticapitalist struggle. Take on projects, both immediate and long-term — any of the practices described in this manual might be worth trying. Make a project out of enjoying yourself, too: develop your cooking skills, sneak into hot tubs and saunas, spend hours arranging elaborate games and scavenger hunts for your loved ones. Learn new subjects and skills and languages. Set out to explore areas — spatial, social, and intellectual — that you've never entered before. Follow through on every idea you have, even the most ridiculous ones. Stay busy, set deadlines, keep your time management skills honed so you don't slump into torpor. Undertake tasks, however challenging, that will give you a sense of accomplishment and

build up your personal momentum; by the same token, don't set yourself up for failure -start with goals within your grasp, and get more ambitious as you proceed.

Don't go it alone — make a point of being around people that keep you active. Just as it is far easier to meet your practical needs collectively, it is infinitely more rewarding to disport yourself outside the market with friends. In a best-case scenario, you will be part of an entire community of people liberating themselves from the work paradigm, all supporting each other's efforts. At the same time, don't abandon your old community for a more ostensibly radical one — figure out what you can do to help radicalize the community you come from. Set up structures that nurture activity: don't just try to educate yourself in isolation, establish a reading group so you'll have a reason to read and discuss a text every week.

Life in Exile

Full-time unemployment is not for the faint of heart: according to the standards of this society, joblessness is equivalent to idleness, and both are maligned and reviled. Everywhere you go, everything you do, there will be implications that you are worth less than others because you don't make as much money or occupy a place in the hierarchy But you're not the one polluting the water and air, exploiting the disadvantaged, or flaunting unjust privileges — in a world working its way toward annihilation, shiftlessness itself can be a service to humanity and all living things. Don't be ashamed of what you're doing with your life: proclaim it to the hills, urge people to join or support you in it, emphasize that gainful unemployment is one of the cutting edges of a new way of life. Make sure you're in constant contact with people who understand what you're doing and what is beautiful about it, and make a point of encouraging one another.

Seek out ways to stay connected to the rest of society, so you aren't isolated in a dropout ghetto. Don't let the ties you have to people still in the economy atrophy; you need them to give you perspective on what life is like for everybody else, and they need you for perspective on what else is possible. Find projects and social roles that put you in touch with working people. If you're ready for the responsibility, organize a labor union of the unemployed, so you can join your efforts to those of the millions that are out of work by no choice of their own; put the resources and knowledge you have developed at their disposal, learn from their stories and wisdom, and compose a strategy by which the ones at the bottom of this society can turn it upside down.

Utilities

Instructions

Lifelines

No building is an island. Anywhere big business sets up shop there are pipes, wires, roads, sidewalks, and electromagnetic signals connecting it to the things it needs. These are the lifelines of the target, the legs it stands on. Lifelines include electricity, telephone, fuel, ventilation, perimeter security, water/plumbing, and data lines such as DSL, cable, and satellite. If any of these lifelines is disrupted, the business will not run properly, and it may lose money. If several of them are disrupted, a dear message will be sent and damage to business-as-usual will be more than merely annoying. Though the examples below are based on common lifelines, each target will have its own particulars. Do your own research, locate essential components. Think through their daily operations, walk around the perimeter, get inside, join the staff.

A note on timing: when planning multiple strikes on one target, think hard about the best order in which to execute actions. For instance, security cameras should be disabled first, and phone lines last, since disabling the phone lines may trigger an alarm system if one has not been triggered already. Save any action that may generate noise for last, while carrying out your most effective plans as early as possible, in case you're interrupted.

Gas

Ingredients

- Adjustable wrench or large pair of pliers
- Padlock of the sort you're likely to find unlocked on gates and dumpsters

Instructions

The meat and fried food served at fast food establishments are cooked by means of natural gas — lots of it! The gas meter and shut-off valve are located outside the restaurant to facilitate easy shut-off in an emergency situation. Emergency situations can range from a grease fire in the kitchen to the exploitation of workers who are economically coerced into serving poisonous, factory-farmed, commodified flesh and genetically-engineered vegetable matter to their fellow civilians for the profit of a corporation that doesn't give a fuck about anyone. Sorry if we oversimplify. Did you want fries and a shake with that?

Gas goes into the restaurant through an easy-to-recognize meter located around back. The meter is a bulbous object about the size of a small wastebasket, mounted at about knee height. It is generally painted blue or gray and has a little window for gauges. It will bear the name of

the local gas provider. Conveniently, these are often obscured by shrubbery or otherwise out of public view, as they are thought to be unsightly; this will make your job all the easier.

There are at least two pipes connected to the meter. One pipe comes from the ground and goes into the meter. Another goes from the meter into the building. On either or both of these pipes there will be a valve. The valve will be in the middle of a straight length of pipe. It will look like a fitting that joins two pipes. In the middle of the fitting there will be a rectangular tab, basically the only protruding object readily accessible for turning. If the gas is on, the tab will be oriented parallel to the pipe. To turn the gas off. use your wrench to reposition the tab go degrees counterclockwise so that the tab is perpendicular to the pipe (figure- 20.1). A parallel tab means gas is flowing, a tab perpendicular to the pipe means the gas is off.

If there is more than one valve connected to the meter, one of them may already be turned off. Never turn on a valve that is already off.

For best results, do this during business hours; it really is easy to get away with. The fry vats and flat-top grills start cooling off immediately, but it will take up to fifteen minutes for employees to notice. Unless this is the establishment's fourth or fifth "emergency shut-off," they won't know what the hell is happening until you are long gone. The repair truck will be called in. An hour later, long after the lunch rush, the gas technician will charge them a hundred bucks for turning a valve back on and relighting the pilots. By making his services indispensable, you're "creating jobs," as the politicians say — now that's trickle-down economics!

To supersize that shut-off, bring a padlock of your own. When you turn the valve off, two metal holes, one on the pipe and one on the tab, will line up. Pass a padlock through the holes and snap it shut. This is how the gas company prevents you from turning it back on if you miss a few bills.

Telephone

Another lifeline is the telephone. If a business does not have a telephone line, it cannot make or receive calls -to the gas repair company, for instance. Many business systems utilize telecommunications for fax as well as internet services including credit card transactions.

To disable telephone lines, you must find the telephone network interface box (TNI). The TNI is attached to the wall around back, near other utilities. The TNI is usually about the size of a shoebox; it probably bears the name of the local telephone company. The boxes open easily to allow technicians quick access. TNIs vary from area to area, but most can be opened with a screwdriver, needle-nose pliers, or a socket wrench. If the box has a screw keeping it dosed, use a screwdriver. If the box has a hexagonal nut, use the correct socket wrench (often 9mm or 22mm), or simply turn the nut with pliers or an adjustable wrench. Once inside the box, you may see a few things:

— Sets of threaded terminals with thin colored wires connected to them

— Standard-looking telephone jacks, identical to the wall jacks inside your house

— Both: terminals on one side, jacks on the other. This is the most common setup in boxes found on residences. The two sections are usually divided. In this case, the terminals are accessible by removing a screw, but you must remove a hexagonal pin to access the jack section.

No matter what you find, your job is easy. Simply pull, cut, smash, or otherwise dis- able the telephone lines, terminals, and jacks.

If you want to disable the lines but spare telephone technicians some hassle, simply disconnect the wires without damaging them. If they have terminals, you may have to use a screwdriver or pliers to loosen the wires. If they have telephone jacks, you can simply unplug them.

You can slow the repair process by doing damage to the components. If this suits your goals, try to remove as much wire as possible — if you simply cut the wires, the telephone company will be able to splice them in a matter of minutes, but if you pull a whole section of the line out, they will have to dig to run a new line. To do this, locate the wires that come into the box from the ground. Wrap these wires around your gloved hand and yank good and hard until they break. Leave a small padlock on the box when you finish as an extra barrier to their getting things running again.

A few things of note

Sometimes the phone company locks the boxes with padlocks to prevent tampering. Use bolt cutters on these locks. The boxes are generally made of plastic, so if you are without cutters, use a lever to pry the box open.

Telephone lines carry a very small amount of electrical current, and are relatively safe to touch. Their current increases when the phone is ringing, but if you do your deed during off hours, this shouldn't be an issue. If you are concerned, wear gloves and rubber boots. Use wire cutters with plastic grips on the handles. Don't fret, though: our secret agents have played with TNIs for years and have yet to receive a shock.

It has been rumored that some alarm systems are set to trigger if their telephone connection is cut. There is very little that can be done about this. In most cases, security will not be this sophisticated, but just to be sure, you may want to open the TNI box, do anything else you were planning to do, and pull the lines as you are leaving. According to our research, these types of alarm systems are not found on restaurants.

Once inside a TNI box, you can monitor and/or hijack your target's phone lines. To monitor through a TNI with jacks, all you need is a standard telephone and a line-splitting adapter. Unplug the line you want to tap, plug in your adapter in its place, and plug their line and your line into the adapter. Once you have done this, you can use the line as if you were inside using an extension. You can make calls and monitor conversations by simply picking up the line. If you need to gain information from your target, this is a risky but effective way to do so. Make sure your ringer is turned off so an incoming call will not draw attention to your activities.

To build what is known as a "beige box," first find a normal home phone. Use one of the simple ones that have a base and a headset connected by a curled wire. Find the plug that runs from the phone to the wall jack. Cut the cord approximately four inches from where it plugs into the phone. Expose the wire in the cord and find the red and green wires. Solder alligator clips to these two wires. You can now attach the alligator clips to the terminals on the box to monitor or hijack the phone line. To connect the box, simply match the red and green wires to the red and green terminals. For further information on beige boxes, search hacking websites.

Security

Another lifeline of a standard corporate business location is its simple security. Don't look at this security as a hindrance to sabotage, but as another opportunity for it. The security designed

to keep you out can also be used to keep the doors shut. You can glue their locks, and strategically place your own. If a lock is properly glued, a locksmith will have to be called — there you are again, creating jobs — and the lock will have to be drilled. This takes a lot of time and money. If you are striking multiple lifelines of the same target, start with gluing the locks and then move on.

In order to glue a lock, you need an appropriate glue and a method of getting it into the lock. Appropriate glues will indicate that they can be used to fasten metal to metal. Superglue and other brands of cyanoacrylate work well and come with tips for easy application. If your glue has a blunt applicator, you can construct a syringe by fastening one of those hollow coffee-stirring sticks to the tip. You can also fill a syringe, minus needle, with epoxy glue — get the slow-setting, high-strength kind and you'll have an hour of working time once you've mixed it. Whatever glue you use, get as much in as you can, as deep as possible; you can also add wire, toothpicks, paperclips, or random shards of metal, glass, or plastic. Use a small screwdriver to wedge stuff in. Even if you have no glue, enough dirt and grit can disable a lock if introduced deep enough into it. You can also use a metal-to-metal glue to fasten a coin — obtained from a vending machine and never handled without gloves, of course — over the keyhole of the lock, which will keep the glue in the lock and make things that much more difficult for the locksmith. This method also works for car doors, keyholes on vending machines, and coin slots. Don't forget to wear gloves.

Once you have glued existing locks, you can search around the building for places to add your own locks. When you find a padlock, cut it off and replace it with your own. If the locks are similar, confusion will increase and your action will be less obvious. There are many places that can be locked. The trash area is often gated, and can be locked shut.

If you can dose fences in loading areas, access to necessary supplies and services will be restricted. If there is an area with double doors, you may be able to run a bicycle U-lock through both handles, thus locking the doors together. If your target has metal shutters that are pulled down at night, keep the shutters dosed all day by girting the locks or by adding your own.

You can also find and destroy security cameras — in fact, you might want to do this before doing anything else. This will cost the business money, as well as cripple their surveillance. In addition to security cameras, you may be able to locate and smash the drive-through camera, thus disabling their drive-through facilities. To disable cameras, you can paint over their lenses (see "Distance Painting and Projectiles," Graffiti, pg. 258), or sticker over or simply smash them; you could also cut their wires, wearing thick rubber gloves and insulated electrician's tools to protect yourself from electric shock, or drop concrete blocks on them from above.

Equipment of Information

If you are fortunate enough to have access inside your target, there are numerous life-lines available. Walk around inside under the pretext of asking for directions- or get a of Information

job there. Observe people utilizing the services, and determine which components are necessary for the operation. If it is an office, you need not smash all the computers; you could be subtler and make small cuts in keyboard and mouse wires. Misplace the small, curly wire that connects the telephone handset to the receiver. Hide staples, pens and batteries, business forms. Throw away correspondence, especially bills and customer inquiries. Slip backup data and important-

looking files into the trash. Place a rare earth magnet (big ones are available in old computer hard drives with 5" disks) next to the magnetically stored data. You get the idea.

Air

Don't forget, air is an important lifeline, perhaps the most important. A good stink bomb or two can empty a building without causing any damage; it can be especially effective to introduce them into the ventilation system. And what else travels through the air, besides scent? Sound! Hide one of those battery-powered personal alarms on the premises, or just toss it into the bushes as you drive by. This is especially effective if you're targeting the home of a business executive or investor at, say, four in the morning.

Water

Another pressure point of any target is its restroom facilities. No one wants to do business in or work at a facility that has no toilets. Here are two methods for toilet clogging. The first is temporary and can be undone by a plumber with no harm to the toilet or pipes. The second is permanent and will necessitate costly replacement of the toilet.

Temporary Solution

1. Acquire a large sponge and some string. Get a large sponge, one designed to wash cars, not dishes.
2. Wet the sponge.
3. After the sponge is wet, wrap it tightly in string, so it will remain compressed. It must be small enough to fit down a toilet.
4. Let the string- wrapped sponge dry completely.
5. Remove the string, allowing the sponge to retain its compact shape.
6. Introduce the small, stringless sponge into the pipes by flushing it down the toilet. You may also want to give it a little pushing with the handle of a plunger or some other simple tool.
7. Once the sponge absorbs the water, it will expand to its original size and block the pipes.

Permanent Solution

Ingredients

- Hydraulic cement — Hydraulic cement is made for patching concrete in pools that are full of water. It is available in plastic buckets at hardware stores. Read the indications on the container — it should say that it can harden while submerged, and it should be a quick set formula. The colors are made: standard concrete gray and white. Choose white if possible.

- Pantyhose
- Cable or "zip" ties
- Sandwich-size baggies
- Plastic cup
- X-acto knife
- Scissors

To Make Stoppers

Cut the bottom off a plastic cup. This is your funnel; it will hold the pantyhose open so you can fill it with cement. Do your filling work over the bucket. Filling is messy because the powder leaks through the panty hose.

Put an amount of cement roughly the size of a baseball into the foot of the pantyhose (figure 20.2). Twist the pantyhose and zip-tie it tightly just above the ball of cement. Apply another zip tie to the hose about one inch higher. When you cut between the two ties, you will have a leaky little bag of cement, and the pantyhose will already be sealed off so it can be filled again. Place the bag of cement in a sandwich bag. You can get ten or more stoppers out of one pair of thigh-highs.

To Apply Stoppers

Go into the bathroom. If it won't draw attention, grab a few paper towels and put them in your pocket. Go into a stall. Drop your pants and sit down on the toilet. Remove the stopper from where you have concealed it and take it out of the zip-lock bag. Reach between your legs and into the water. Squeeze the bag a few times to allow water to saturate the powder. Now work the ball into the pipe exiting the bowl of the toilet. The pipe snakes up higher than the level of the water, then turns and goes straight down. If your hand will fit, work the bag up into the bend so it is tight with the inner walls of the pipe {figure 20.3). Remove your hand and use the paper towels to dry off. Leave the stall without flushing.

Tips

Dust from the cement will get on you, so wear light colored clothes that won't show it too much.

This is a great recipe to deploy in hetero-looking couples. A nice boy-girl pair is perceived as harmless, and can hit both bathrooms without a fuss. If you do your work well, you might even help undermine the privilege experienced by nice boy-girl couples!

After a little experience, you may need to adjust the amount of cement in each stopper.

Avoid tossing out the bags on premises, particularly if you are doing a lot of guerrilla plumbing in a short time.

If you want to claim your action, tape up a note: "this commode is out of order! (by order of…)" This will also prevent someone from shitting in it, which will otherwise be a nightmare for the poor wage slave who has to clean up such messes. On the other hand, such a note can be one more piece of evidence linking you to the crime.

Electricity

Since electrical lines have the potential to kill, saboteurs must be well trained and equipped. There are simply too many different kinds of commercial power to cover here, and such skills must be taught in person for safety's sake; when it comes to major power outages, you're on your own. It is less dangerous to shut off domestic-scale electricity; this can be fairly easy, and may be useful for disabling houses hosting fascist events and other scourges that must be stopped. This same technique can work for illumination or displays on some billboards.

First, wear shoes with thick insulating soles and use rubber gloves. You will not actually be touching any live conductors, but it is a smart precaution. Don't pull a meter if it is raining or if the ground or surrounding vegetation is wet.

The meter is mounted somewhere near the lines that run from the power poles to the point of use. It is a painted metal box with a dear glass dome sticking out. The glass part is about the shape of a dog food bowl. Inside the glass you can see a disk spinning and several small dials. If it is a newer meter, you will see a digital readout. The glass cover is a sealed part of the meter itself. The whole assembly plugs into the box. Like a big fuse, this assembly conducts power from the power line through the meter and into the building's electrical panel.

Before unplugging the meter, you must open the box that secures it to its base. Usually the box will have a hasp at the bottom that could hold a lock. Instead of a lock, however, the hasp holds a small tamper indicator. The tamper indicator looks like a skinny padlock with a loop of wire that runs through the hasp. You are tampering, so indicate this by clipping this wire with pliers. Now you can open the box. Use both hands to tug the meter out of its socket {figure 20.4). When tugging, you should only touch the glass cover. Never reach around behind the glass — that's where all the power is. If it's stubborn, wiggle it up and down while pulling. If it still won't come out, give up so you will live to fight another day.

The moment the meter comes free, the power will be off. In the empty socket behind it, there will be thick copper tabs. These contain 220 volts of live power direct from the nearest transformer. Death is likely for anyone who becomes a conductor for that amount of electricity — "be careful" is an understatement. Depending on the location of the meter, you may want to be prepared with a roll of duct tape to cover the hole and prevent someone from sticking his fingers inside. Whatever you must do to make the job professional, remember that the power will go out the moment the meter is free. You need to be ready to get out of there as quickly as possible. Put the meter in your backpack and carry it away so it cannot simply be plugged back in.

Seize Power!

Speaking of electricity meters — if the power company cuts your power off, you might be able to turn it back on yourself. Find your own meter. Cut open the little wire lock right below it open and keep it. Now pull the meter out, as described above.

When you get it out, look at the four big prongs on the back where it plugs into the box. In all likelihood, you will see little plastic slips covering some of them up. When the power company cuts you off, they generally don't want to do anything too complicated, because they intend to cut the power back on when you or somebody else gives them money to do so. Sometimes all they will do is put plastic slips on, which stops the current from flowing through the meter. Wearing

thick rubber gloves, use insulated electrician's tools to take the plastic covers off. Plug the meter back in, and see if the power comes back on.

If it does, your new problem is that the dial is still spinning. When the meter reader comes to check up on you, he or she will take note of this. The power company will not be pleased if they realize you have been hijacking power — like any corporation, they want all the power to themselves. There is something on the back of the meter that you can remove to make the dial stop. I don't know exactly how to do it, but I got free power for six months once because somebody did. If you want, you can pull a meter off an abandoned building (or a burning bank) and experiment with that so you don't fuck yours up. You could also probably switch out between two meters, letting the dial spin on the bunk meter when you're using power, and replacing it with the real one when you're not — -you just don't ever want the meter reader to see that there is power on and that the dial is not spinning. Make sure to put the lock back on, so it doesn't look like the box has been tampered with. They'll probably catch on eventually, so don't plan on making this a permanent solution. It's less risky to do this if you are living in a sketchy situation where your name isn't on the bills than if you are in a place at which you intend to stay for some time. More power to you if you want to try it.

Account

On one informal outing, some secret agents removed the LCD screen used at the drive-through menu site. When they had finished, they carefully reassembled the drive-through menu and attempted to mask their work. Afterwards, they gleefully smashed the expensive piece of electronics on the walk back to their vegan hideout. In this example, the agents left the majority of the system in place, removed necessary components, and fooled the business into thinking that nothing was wrong. When the cars began to pile up, and the drive-through would not work, a slew of customers were left without their flesh burgers. Because the saboteurs hid their tracks, the business opened as usual and was as confused as its customers about why they couldn't be served.

Wheatpasting

Instructions

Wheatpasting, like graffiti, is a direct action technique for communicating with your neighbors and redecorating your environment. Some demographics take posters more seriously than spray paint, and since it is possible to mass-produce them, wheatpasting enables you to deploy a nuanced, complex message at a number of locations with minimal effort and risk. Such repetition makes your message familiar to everyone and increases the chances that others will think it over.

Making Paste

To make wheatpaste, mix two parts white or whole-grain wheat flour with three parts water, stir out any lumps, and heat the mixture to a boil. When it thickens, add more water; continue cooking it on low heat for at least half an hour, stirring constantly so as not to bum it. Some people add a little sugar or cornstarch for extra stickiness; don't be afraid to experiment. Wheatpaste, once made, will last for a while if kept in sealed containers, though eventually it will dry up or become rotten — and sealed containers of it have been known to burst, to unfortunate effect. Keep them in a refrigerator if you can.

You can also obtain wallpaper adhesive at any home improvement store; this comes in premixed buckets or boxes of powder. Wallpaper adhesive is much quicker and easier to mix than wheatpaste, and not much more expensive even if you are paying for it. Do not get the brands that are advertised as "easy to remove," for obvious reasons — get the most heavy-duty adhesive available.

Posters

If you're wheatpasting to express information or ideas, good design is key to getting your message across. Remember, most people will see these from a distance, so make the headline huge and legible and use images that are simple, high-contrast, and equally large. Be sure the headline communicates the basic idea on its own. You can also include a paragraph or so in smaller print for the casually interested, and it's always a good idea to add a webpage address or similar link for those who want to pursue things further.

Don't limit yourself to pasting up standard-size photocopies; many photocopying franchises offer much bigger options. You can make huge posters to put up; if such printing technology is unavailable, you can paste up big images comprised of smaller copies. You can also paste up pages of newsprint out of radical publications, or for that matter those police target-practice sheets with photos of masked men on them, or bus schedules screenprinted with artistic designs, or income tax forms stenciled with the appropriate messages about taxation, representation, and exploitation. This may seem counterintuitive, but the thinner the paper, the better — thin paper

takes paste better, and will be more likely to rip off in tiny pieces rather than all at once if an art hater takes a dislike to it. Another way to foil such philistines is to run a razor quickly down and across each poster several times immediately after you've pasted it up; a pasted poster sliced in this manner will only come down one small piece at a time.

Technique

If you're pasting up a lot of small posters, they should be easy to access without its being obvious that you have them. A messenger bag works well enough for this — just make sure you can reach into it and slide one out without much fumbling. If you have great big posters, roll them up, top side out so you can swiftly unroll them down the wall, and rubber band them individually.

You'll need a container from which to apply the paste. Wheatpaste tends to be thick, so a vessel with a wide mouth such as a large plastic bottled water container is well suited for it; wallpaper adhesive tends to be thinner and more consistent, so it can be dispensed out of smaller holes, such as that of a dishwashing soap container with a pop-up nozzle. It can help to have something to smooth the posters up on the wall- a window- washing squeegee from a gas station will suffice, or you could get a plastic wallpaper smoother from the same retailers that provide wallpaper adhesive. Big paint- brushes can speed the application of wheatpaste, too (figure 22,1). You can do all of this with your hands, as well.

For each poster, pick a good location, and make sure it's dean; most smooth metal, glass, or stucco will take pasting nicely, while wood or concrete will be somewhat less accommodating, and brick even less so. Next, apply paste. If you are working with smaller posters, you can spread paste over the wall, place the poster on the pasted area and smooth out all air bubbles and wrinkles, and finally spread some paste over the top to hold down the comers — the more wheatpaste, the longer it will take to dry, so use the minimum amount to make sure all of the poster will stick. If you are working with larger posters, you can unroll them flat on the ground and apply the paste to their backs there, before putting them on the wall, smoothing them out, and adding another layer of paste; starting out on the ground enables you to be less conspicuous while you make sure the paste is evenly applied.

When you think about where to paste, balance the length of time the poster will probably stay up against the amount of traffic the location gets, factoring in the question of which demographics will most appreciate your design; often it is better to put up a poster that will remain in an alley for six months than it is to put twenty up along Main Street that will be gone by noon.

Because wheatpasting is somewhat less than legal, it is best to go about it in an inconspicuous manner. Late in the evening, when the streets are quiet but not yet empty and you can pass yourselves off as students going to a party or workers walking back from a bar, can be a good time for it. Behave as though what you're doing is perfectly legal, while being careful not to do it before the gaze of the authorities; you'll be surprised what you can get away with. The last time I was in a city locked under the control of thousands of riot police, many of us were still able to thoroughly decorate whole districts with posters.

A bicycle can be a useful accessory for poster pasting. You can carry your supplies in its basket, and it can function as a ladder to reach places where your art is more visible and harder to remove — not to mention assist in a quick getaway, should the need arise. Also, bring something to dean up with — even if you wear latex gloves to keep your hands from getting sticky with wheatpaste, it can get all over your clothes, which is a dead giveaway that you're the culprit.

A well-coordinated group can cover a city in posters in the course of an evening — divide up the area, have target locations in mind in advance, and hock out the action quickly so you've (dl disappeared by the time police have noticed a new poster appearing everywhere. Wheatpasting can also be applied to rework the images and messages of billboards (see Billboard Improvement, pg. 114). A group attending a massive demonstration or similar gathering could make wheatpasting kits including prepared wheatpaste, posters, and even maps showing vulnerable zones of the city, and distribute these to other groups with time and energy to apply. Best of all, you can paste up posters with wheatpaste recipes on them and a call for submissions, encouraging others to participate in decorating your town.

Account

Most wheatpasting goes so smoothly that there's not much to tell, but it's always possible to push the limits, and this is the story of a time we did just that.

It was the night before the one-year anniversary of September of 2001, and we had scammed over two dozen posters five feet tall and three feet wide from the local photo- copying franchise with which to address the pressing issues of terrorism and war. We had cased our city and identified the prime locations for these, in the downtown shopping district and along a few major thoroughfares. We mapped out the area and established the best order for visiting these locations, so we could get the most done in each section of the city before the police would see that we were there, and then move to another zone.

We divided five roles between us. One of us was to ride a bicycle, doing reconnaissance in a radius of a few blocks around every site. The other four of us would travel in a vehicle. This vehicle would drop off a scout to stand lookout at one end of a street, as most of our targets were on one-way streets, then drop off the two people who were to do the pasting around a comer out of sight from the target, before driving down the cross street to keep watch from another direction. After the two had had enough time to decorate the sites chosen in that area, they would meet the driver around another quiet comer, and the three would pickup the pedestrian lookout and move on to the next area, followed by the bicyclist. All of us were connected by two-way radios with earpieces, except one of the two pasters, so news of the movements of police or others could be immediately relayed among us. The corporate news media had made a big deal about the extensive security precautions that had been made for this anniversary; accordingly, we were taking precautions of our own.

We spent a couple of hours brewing wheatpaste, then went out around midnight. We hit all our targets downtown without any trouble to speak of; at one point, the bicyclist informed us that a police officer had stopped a motorist a few blocks away, but we did our work quickly and were out of there before the police car moved. I was one of the pasters; having done some smaller-scale wheatpasting that had involved a lot of anxiety about whether or not I could pass as a law-abiding citizen, it was actually something of a relief to be running around in all black clothes with huge plastic jugs of wheatpaste and rolled posters — there wasn't any posing or passing to worry about, everything was on the table and it was just a matter of moving fast and staying aware. We dashed past a civilian at one point, and I said hello — he just stared at us like we were Martian invaders.

The last target was a freeway underpass, where eight columns held up the other highway; we were to put up eight posters, four facing each traffic direction. We were starting to encounter some problems at this point, after so much success: our clothes had inevitably been covered in wheatpaste, and in fact it was starting to clog the microphone and ear-piece of the two-way radio we carried with us . All the same, the scouts took their positions and we were dropped off next to the underpass to finish the job. Ducking down whenever cars came and then leaping up to apply the posters, we did four columns, and then leaped over the concrete guardwall to run across the freeway; in a scene out of a slapstick comedy, I was holding the wheatpaste in one hand and the posters in the other, and so had to hurtle myself over the wall, crashing absurdly on the asphalt without my hands to break my fall. My friend helped me over the other wall, and we began the fifth column.

At this point our radio made some kind of noise, but it was impossible to make out the words through the wheatpaste. An instant later, headlights appeared, and we got down behind the column, moving slowly around it as the car approached and passed us. It was a police car. It kept going, so we set back to work wheatpasting, but no sooner had we done so than headlights appeared from the opposite direction, and we had to work our way around the pillar again, hiding as another police car drove by. This was starting to look bad. It was impossible now to get our radio to work, so, abandoning the posters, we set out walking quickly away from the underpass. As more headlights appeared ahead, I tossed the last jug of wheatpaste into the bushes.

We turned down a side street as soon as we could; in our black camouflage with paste stains all over — note that wheatpaste stains more visibly on dark colors — we looked more than a little suspicious, especially this late at night in a district with no pedestrian traffic. Worse yet, it turned out the street we had turned down was a long corridor with no exits on the sides, running through a dosed warehouse district — no alibi could adequately explain our presence here. At that moment, a police car turned onto the street, and slowed to a crawl as it approached us. We kept walking, maintaining our conversation as calmly as we could, acting as though we were oblivious to the policeman as he inched past, blatantly staring at us.

Strangely, he kept going ! Seeing that we had no posters or paste, he must not have felt that he had enough evidence to justify arresting us — though the stains on our clothes would have given us away on closer inspection. We made our way down other side streets and walked all the way back to our secret hideout, where the others were waiting, relieved that we had escaped and excited to tell us about the police cars that had started following them and forced them to abandon us.

We slept a scant few hours, then went out shortly after morning rush hour to inspect our work. It turned out we had undone ourselves with our overachieving; had we only put up standard-sized posters, they would have stayed up in some areas for a long time, but the city's entire anti-terror force, having nothing else to do but intimidate citizens and squelch free expression, had spent the whole night working to remove our massive art installations. That was demoralizing!

Fortunately, we weren't the only ones on the streets that night. We soon learned that our friends in the larger city nearby had spent the evening the same way, and their posters stayed up for week afterwards — including a few facing the city's busiest freeway!

Backmatter

How to join CrimethInc.

By now you've heard of the notorious Crimethlnc. ex-Workers' Collective, an underground railroad of escapees and freedom fighters hell-bent on total liberation. Perhaps you have contemplated how you might join such romantic, adventurous circles; perhaps you are yourself one of the many who have written to or shown up at the various CrimethInc addresses, seeking do so.

If the latter is the case, then you have already learned that no one can join Crimethlnc. To repeat it once more, no shortcuts exist to freedom, self-determination, or adventure. Accordingly, Crimethlnc. is not a membership organization: there are no recruitment drives, no yearly dues, no boards of trustees. Nor is it a movement: movements come and movements go, but Crimethlnc. endures like a ghost. One could describe Crimethlnc. as a decentralized underground, but it would be more precise to say that it is a myth — not in the sense of that word that designates superstition, nor that indicates celebrity, but rather that suggests a self-fulfilling prophecy (see Spell Casting, pg. 501).

A myth is greater than the sum of the parts that give rise to it. Considered in isolation, the projects undertaken by individual Crimethlnc. cells have only a limited effect; together, they are powerful because they draw upon and imply the existence of subversive currents in every psyche and sector of society. Indeed, crimethought is practically ubiquitous: it is present in every life, in every heart, woven into the history of humanity and the cosmos as surely as submission and inertia and everything else are. If it were not, there would be no such thing as Crimethlnc, and you certainly wouldn't be reading this book

If Crimethlnc. is everyone, then, by the same token, it is no one. There is no enchanted inner circle that can claim credit for its achievements, no secret cabal behind the daily revolts that give teeth and a heartbeat to the rhetoric in pages such as these. Those in need of a device with which to transform their lives might seize upon the Crimethlnc. collective as a screen onto which to project all the dreams they need to

believe are possible, but they, not Crimethlnc, are due the credit for the possibilities they thus envision. The various saps and sects that act as Crimethlnc. have no patent on crimethought — they barely how what they're doing. You, dear reader, with your vivid imagination and fresh perspective, are bound to how much better than they do what Crimethlnc. is capable of and must do next.

There is no way to go about joining a myth-on the contrary, mythology is what remains of human activity when the participation of individuals has been factored out. One may be inspired by a myth, one may even inspire myths, but one always acts in the real world. At the same time, in acting anonymously, one can arrange for one's actions to highlight or augment a mythology, rather than add to one's own reputation. In doing so, one can avoid both the attention of law enforcement agents and the adulation and vilification of spectators, while connecting one's actions to a larger current of similar activity. At its best, Crimethlnc. can serve these practical

purposes, becoming a sort of mythological revolutionary organization for those who how that the traditional "revolutionary organization" with all its hierarchy and inertia is a contradiction in terms.*

It is not unrealistic to suppose that, though largely mythological, Crimethlnc. might be able to play a part in bringing about the end of global capitalism, epidemic ennui, and other all the other current manifestations of hierarchy and misery. These monstrosities are themselves largely grounded in myth: they have a reputation for being eternal and unassailable, without which they would swiftly be assailed and brought to an end. Nothing can fight a mythos like a counter-mythos put into action. Like cultures and economies, myths may seem to have power over human beings, but that power flows both ways: as they are distilled from human activity, they can be refashioned by means of it.

Crimethlnc, like any mythical force, belongs to anyone who has the audacity to claim it. Anyone can put on a bandanna and join the Black Bloc, anyone can dumpster food and become Food Not Bombs, anyone can burn down buildings as the Earth Liberation Front or design a poster with the familiar bullet logo at the bottom. So while you cannot join Crimethlnc, you can make use of its power once you have apprehended your own Remember, energy proceeds from you to the tools you use, not the other way around.

You could begin the way some of us did: with a few treasured friends, set out upon a quixotic mission to transform the world, turning every resource at your disposal to this task. Work from the moments of liberation with which you are most intimately familiar, grounding your revolutionary struggle in the concrete pursuit of more of these. Use existing countercultures as staging areas from which to launch assaults on society in general, neither being too comfortable within nor too critical of these enclaves; choose your enemies carefully, as they will shape your activities more than any other forces. When you strike, strike with the times, and know when to dig trenches and when to disappear into the night. Throughout, use the Crimethlnc. moniker when it will enable you to find or inspire companions, and set it aside whenever it would be superfluous.

If you still cannot imagine how to get started, flip through the pages of this book and pick a recipe at random. Carry out the instructions, claiming credit in the name of Crimethlnc. If there is a communiqué to be issued, add a Crimethlnc. logo — you can find one two pages hence if you do not wish to design your own. Derive what lessons you can from the experience and repeat as desired, drawing on what you learn to hone your objectives and techniques. Joining Crimethlnc. is this simple, and this difficult.

Once you apprehend that Crimethlnc. is not a party or a platform, that whatever it has been and is to be is up to you, you will be free to dispense with your superstitions about it — and then, if you like, to make use of it, unhindered by infatuation, defensiveness, or cynicism. Certainly it has its shortcomings, like any format; it also offers some advantages others don't. Consider this an invitation to show what can be done with it. Who knows, maybe you will find this tome in a dusty attic two decades hence, when all its authors and editors have long been defeated by the twin scourges of repression and depression; then, if you like, you will be the elusive inner circle of the Crimethlnc ex- Workers' Collective, and what it is and does will be up to you.

Ultimately, like anything, Crimethlnc. must be superseded to be realized. Whether you act autonomously as "Crimethlnc," or under any other name, is immaterial — the important thing is that you begin to act autonomously, to discover your own capabilities and dispel the superstitions you have about those who exercise theirs. The next move is now in your hands, the fate of Crimethlnc. — and much more important things — along with it.

How to Hijack the CrimethInc. ex-Workers' Collective, In Five Easy Steps

1. Have your own reasons for being involved, your own goals for and interpretations of what you're doing. No one can act as Crimethlnc. who is still waiting for institutions — to be an ex- worker is to be self-starting and self-directing. Those who are already active are busy enough with their own projects; besides, management corrupts both leaders and led.

2. Accept the responsibility of making the best of the legacies of both Crimethlnc. specifically and revolutionary activity in general. Thinking in terms of collectives rather than atomized individuals means recognizing that when one of us acts, he or she acts on behalf of whatever part of the rest of each of us, however small, would do the same thing. The important question is not which projects or tactics to passively endorse or oppose, but what you can add to existing contexts to make the most of them.

3. Be careful to avoid accruing personal glory in association with anything claimed ty Crimethlnc. At worst, Crimethlnc. could become a hierarchical organization after all, with status established simply by celebrity standing.

4. Choose some projects that need doing and do them. If you need help, contact others, fellow "Crimethlnc ex-workers" or not, for advice and collaboration. If you need raw materials, don't hesitate to steal from previous Crimethlnc projects, or from anywhere else for that matter.

5. It can be fun, not to mention useful for preserving anonymity, to assume a pseudonym or three. Think of something that says everything that needs saying without an essay or manifesto, like Jello Biafra or Rolf Nadir. Once the fictions of intellectual property and changeless identity are dispensed with, the signature on any work has significance only as an element of the work itself. Remember that using just one alias will not obscure your identity for long — better that you shift between a series of them, or borrow someone else's name or pen name from time to time. All existing Crimethlnc aliases are fair game, for example. Confusion as to who is really who protects revolutionaries from both stardom and investigations, and keeps the focus on the relevance of the ideas to the readers' lives, where it belongs.

About the Authors

Although the majority of the contributors to and editors of this work prefer to remain anonymous, the following collectives and individuals also played important roles:

Our Tools Collective (several recipes), Chicago ARA (Antifascist Action), Ray M Jones (photography for Antifascist Action), The Billboard Liberation Front (Billboard Improvement), The Fuse Is lit Collective (Classroom Takeover), Isabell (Coalition Building), Tiny Molly T. (Distribution, Tabling, and Infoshops), Mook (Graffiti), The Down There Health Collective (Health Care), The People's Law Collective of New York City (Legal Support), Chris Somerville (Mental Health), The Biotic Baking Brigade (Pie Throwing), Add (Portrait Exchange), Farah (Reclaim the Streets), Rod Coronado (Sabotage), Marco Baggins (There and Back Again, or, How to Survive a Felony Trial), and DC R.I.O.T. — Responsible Individuals of Tomorrow (Torches)

Countless other sources were mercilessly plagiarized.

Further Reading

As long as it might take one to read and try out all the preceding recipes, together they comprise only the most cursory of introductions to the possibilities of direct action. Innumerable other books can provide similar wellsprings of information and points of departure for inquisitive readers. Here follow a scant few of the countless works that might prove complementary to this one.

<biblio> Mike Hudema, An Action a Day Keeps Global Capitalism Away, Between the Lines, Toronto, 2004

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A New Mew of a Woman's Body: A Fully Illustrated Guide by the Federation of Feminist Women's Health Centers, Feminist Health Press, West Hollywood, CA, 1992

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Rodale's All-New Encyclopedia of Organic Gardening, Rodale Press, Emmaus, PA, 1997

Earth Liberation Front, Setting Fires with Electrical Timers, available on the internet

Bill Bryson, A Short History of Nearly Everything, Broadway, New York, NY, 2003

Abbie Hoffman, Steal This Book, Four Walls Eight Windows, New York, NY, 1996

Grace Llewellyn, The Teenage Liberation Handbook: How to Quit School and Get a Real Life and Education, Lowry House, Eugene, OR, 1998

Michael Fogler, Unjobbing: The Adult Liberation Handbook, Free Choice Press, Lexington, KY, 1999

K Ruby, Wise Fool Basics, Wise Fool Puppet Intervention, Berkeley, CA, 1999 </biblio>

When the world ends, people come out of their apartments and meet their neighbors for the first time; they share food, stories, companionship. No one has to go to work or the laundromat; nobody remembers to check the mirror or scale or email account before leaving the house. Graffiti artists surge into the streets; strangers embrace, sobbing and laughing. Every moment possesses

[1] As this author once baselessly threatened the editors of this tome with litigation, we suggest that readers do not pay for this book but rather obtain access to it by other means.

an immediacy formerly spread out across months. Burdens fall away, people confess secrets and grant forgiveness, the stars come out over New York City…

You must always have a secret plan. Everything depends on this: it is the only question. So as not to be conquered by the conquered territory in which you lead your life, so as not to feel the horrible weight of inertia wrecking your will and bending you to the ground, so as not to spend a single night more wondering what there is to do or how to connect with your neighbors and countrymen, you must make secret plans without respite. Plan for adventure, plan for pleasure, plan for pandemonium, as you wish; but plan, lay plans constantly.

And when you come to, on the steps of the presidential palace, in the green grass beside the highway, in your cell's gloomy solitude, your secret plan finished or foiled, ask your comrades, ask your cellmates, ask the wind, the waves, the stars, the sea, ask everything that ponders, everything that wanders, everything that sings, everything that stings — ask them what time it is; and your comrades, your mates, the wind, the waves, the stars, the sea all will answer: "It is time for a new secret plan. So as not to be the martyred slave of routine, plan adventure, plan pleasure, plan pandemonium, as you wish; but plan, plan secretly and without respite."

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