
From Protest To Resistance

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In the late Summer of 1997, Southern California was rocked by storms. The meteorologists blamed El Niño and the nightly news featured "Storm Watch." In my 18 years I had never witnessed any storms like these, not in California.

My friend Aspen and I sat on the beach through the storm pounding away on our drums, voices rising high into the night. We reached out to the fury of the storms, into the crashing waves. The raw power of it all filled us with life.

Not more than 20 miles north we saw lightning fill the sky. The cities of Long Beach and Seal Beach were under a tornado watch. The day before a water spout had touched down just off shore. Anyone with a lick of sense was staying inside and riding out the storm.

Not us, we were doing magik. This is what Aspen lived for. I met her canvassing for the Sierra Club. She was assigned the task of teaching me how to convince people to give up their money. Thankfully, she taught me so much more.

It was Aspen who first taught me how to feel the rhythm of Mother Earth and how to reach beyond everything I've ever known. Aspen was a totally free soul. When she taught me things it was more like sharing ancient knowledge. She did not teach me my spirituality, she simply showed me how to find it.

Most nights after work we would go out for chai tea and talk for hours. We were an odd pair. She with an earthy look, dread locks and peaceful presence. I, on the other hand, wore spikes and chains and sported a bright orange mohawk. We were from two different worlds, stuck in the middle of America's second largest city and all we ever talked about was nature and social justice.

One night while sharing a joint she told me about the time she spent in the Redwoods. She told me about a group called Earth First! She shared stories about stopping logging and the joys of camaraderie, and in a hushed voice she told me stories of monkeywrenching.

My eyes lit up. This is what I wanted, someone I could get active with. I'd been involved in protests in LA, but it was largely symbolic. I'd been introduced to the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) and I'd done a few minor actions. But frankly, I was still too scared to go out and do stuff on my own. I needed to do more. I needed to leave my comfort zone. My life in LA was stifling. It was time for me to cut my ties and move on.

A few months later, Aspen and I parted ways with smiles. I was on my way to Eugene, Oregon. Something deep inside me told me I would find my destiny there. I knew very little about the city other than what the University was like. I had a few friends I could stay with until I had a place of my own. But it was something more that called to me. My heart told me Eugene was where everything was going to kick off.

I arrived in January 1998. One month after my 19th birthday. By February, I had plugged into the local activist community and was living out in Fall Creek—an old-growth Douglas Fir Forest, preparing to defend it. I spent nearly two months living out there alone, going to town only when necessary. I camped under a single tarp, my only source of water was the creek. I learned the deer trails, observed the habits of the squirrels, birds and owls. I listened to the frogs and crickets, and I watched salamanders mate. By day, I would get soaked in the rains and by night I'd dry out by a fire. I sang to the forest, the animals, and the sky. I lost myself in the rhythm of life around me.

As I climbed the big trees, setting lines in preparation for the tree sit, I was overwhelmed with the sense that these trees were sentient beings. Soon I was climbing just to sit and sway in the branches of the upper canopy. I had come home.

In the hustle and bustle of modern life we rarely have time to stop or slow down. We move through life so quickly from school to work in our quest for meaning. Striving to make ends meet, to get the next "must have." Before we know it, life has passed us by and in the end few can say what it was to truly live.

Some people say "science killed magik." I don't think it is knowledge that killed magik, it is how we applied it. When I talk to people about communicating with animals and trees or about the power of the Earth, most laugh. We have been indoctrinated to believe that we are not of the Earth, that somehow we are separate from all other life on this planet. We have been taught to believe that the Earth and her creatures exist solely for people to use and exploit. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Mother Earth is a giant living organism. Much as our bodies are made up of cells and organs that together give us life, so, too, is the Earth. The Earth is the giver of life whether by miracle or happenstance. It is only the combined symbiotic existence of the Earth's creatures and geophysical features that allow life to flourish on this planet.

All life is interconnected, making a web in which the survival of any one species rests on the survival of many others. As oxygen breathing mammals, our existence depends on the forests, plankton, and alga that produce the air we breathe. These entities are dependent upon the complex webs of life that ensure their survival. When any one of these diverse ecosystems become adversely affected, a chain reaction starts culminating in a global environmental crisis if left unchecked.

Living in the forest, I learned more about life than I ever had in school. I sat alone for hours with my back against an old growth tree. The forest around me was more than 600 years old, evolution at its perfection. To be able to sit and take everything in, to experience all the forest had to offer, through every one of my senses—this is the reason we are alive. The meaning of life is simple: enjoy it.

The forest was so harmonious it was hard to believe that it was in danger. Who in their right mind would destroy an entire ecosystem in order to make phone books and ass wipe?

I had a lot of time to ponder these questions, as well as question my own beliefs. The last package of supplies I had received had zines written by Rod Coronado, as well as some *Earth First! Journals*. I was inspired by Rod's words, and for the first time I was exposed to the Earth Liberation Front. I read the history of the ELF's evolution and commentaries about how the ELF and ALF should work more together.

My road to militancy had begun in LA and this had just reconfirmed my belief. However, I had made a decision to try every other method first. After all I'd be a hypocrite to resort to the sword before diplomacy had failed.

One day in April, the Forest Service started building roads into the forest. They cut down trees and buried streams, leaving torn earth in their wake. There was a sense of urgency now. The "sit" had to go up.

In town we rushed together supplies. In two days the campaign would officially begin. That night I sat behind the log mill that had bought the "right" to destroy public land. I'd sat in this spot on many nights. Months ago I had tested the security systems and discovered only motion sensitive lights—nothing had changed. I knew all of this could end right now with one match.

As I sat there thinking about my options, an owl appeared. It swooped over my head and circled me three times, as if to tell me something. As quickly as it had appeared, it was gone. I was profoundly affected by this encounter. I remembered my oath to myself. My path had already been set in motion, I had to see it through!

The months passed. I left my tree sit for the ground, believing I could be more effective there. I'd watched from the treetops as ancient trees were

felled to make way for the road. I vowed never again would I sit by and watch what I could stop.

Under the light of billions of stars and the solemn gaze of the moon, the pickaxe came crashing down penetrating gravel and dirt. This must have been the third time in as many days I'd helped dig up this culvert. Each time the road was shut down, building stopped and they had to fix it. Each night, masked defenders would dig it up again. The neatly piled log deck would become a convoluted disarray spread across the road. Road blocks were doused with gasoline to serve as burning barriers. This forest would not be allowed to fall.

Each morning the battlefield was set. Road workers and Freddie's (Forest Service Law Enforcement Officers, also LEOs) were met with new blockades and 20–30 masked and camouflaged individuals. The confrontations could be fierce lasting days or weeks, but the most heated lasted only hours. Ultimately, the roads were built, but we reclaimed them, and in the end, we controlled more than ten miles of roads. The signs were very clear. "Beware of Caltrops," another warned "If trees fall, blood spills."

At any given time there were more than two dozen road blocks. Walls were built with second growth felled in road construction, as well as walls made out of dug up culverts. Pitfalls the size of Freddie Broncos were dug in the road and covered with tarps and dirt. Tunnels, tripods, bipods, mono-poles, and other platforms were used as lock downs

We maintained a myriad of trails through the forest. I could get anywhere faster on foot than a vehicle on an unobstructed road. We had 24-hour security using radios and drums to communicate. And each night under the cover of darkness, the fairie folk would take to the road ripping and tearing until Wild Earth was free again.

As our control over the forest grew, so did the heavy handed tactics of the LEOs. Many people, some as young as 15, were assaulted. One young man was hit in the head with the flat of a machete, another was buried up to his waist by a bulldozer, while the Freddie's looked on laughing.

In raids designed to intimidate, as much as reclaim control of the road, the Freddie's would descend en masse upon our camps. Our water jugs were punctured with knives, our food dumped out and stepped on, and our kitchen ware was stolen or tossed into the woods. Our camp sites were dismantled, thrown into the road—possessions and all—then set ablaze. Arson is not a tactic practiced solely by dissidents.

During one raid and road closure, a comrade and I were holding a road block platform. The LEOs had parked a bulldozer next to the platform so four officers could climb up to remove us. The platform would not go without a fight. As the LEOs gained the platform, I cut the support lines and we began to shake the platform in order to make it fall taking us all with it.

With frightened expressions the officers leaped back to the safety of the bulldozer leaving us on our still standing, if leaning platform. Unsure of what to do next, one officer snatched a stout branch off our platform

that we had been using as a support for the tarp. Using it as a makeshift club, he began to try and knock our food and water off the platform.

Thinking quickly (or not thinking at all), I jumped in front of the supplies to protect them with my body. I thought surely he would not hit me. Officer Friendly raised his club and began to strike me in the thighs and waist.

"We see you hurting him and we are videotaping," tree sitters shouted from above.

This officer had just crossed a line that ought never be crossed. I caught the next swing mid-stroke disarming the thug in uniform. Much to the surprise of the LEOs.

"How would you like it if I hit you?" I screamed, as I raised the club. "You wouldn't like it very much, would you?"

The tough guy officer on the far end of the dozer provoked "Go ahead. It will be the last time you hit a cop."

What he didn't know is that it would not have the first. I moved toward the new threat.

"It'll be the last time you draw breath, pig!"

"Everyone back off, he's serious," the head honcho down on the ground instructed.

The Freddie's retreated and made no other attempt to remove us. We held the platform through the day and long into the night. Around midnight, still being watched by LEOs, we agreed that with a lack of supplies and a badly leaning structure, we could not hold the blockade for any length of time. Grudgingly, we decided to abandon the structure.

Despite the short lived victory, that platform was the only roadblock at Fall Creek to ever repel an eviction attempt.

Less than a month later we had reclaimed the roads. My partner and I were holding the gate at the only entrance to the series of roads that comprised the timber sale. Sometime around 3 AM she took watch while I slept.

I awoke to her screams of pain, and cries for help. It was still dark out. I jumped out of my sleeping bag to see two armed men in full camouflage. One man was trying to wrestle her to the ground, the other was near the gate and me.

A primal instinct to protect my loved ones roused in me. I charged her assailant taking him down and landing on top. As I raised my fist, I was suddenly aware I was looking down on Officer Friendly. In the same instant, he screamed for help and before I could react, I was hit from behind by bad guy number two.

As the officers fumbled with compliance holds, I calmly said "I'm not resisting," and went limp.

Fuck, I thought. How am I gonna get out of this one?

Fortunately, my partner's screams had brought backup with a video camera. They were able to videotape the officers being out of uniform, as well as the fact that it was only 5 AM and the sun had not risen.

At the jail, I was placed in maximum custody. No phone call. No charges. No nothing. Locked in my cell I stewed on the possibilities until around 10 PM when I gave up on getting out that day.

I had no idea that the entire jail was on lock down due to a large rowdy crowd protesting my arrest. Sometime around 2 AM an officer opened my door.

"You Free?"

"No, I'm in jail."

"Roll up, you're getting out."

What? I grabbed my stuff and went down to see the release officer who had denied my release ten hours ago. She asked the same questions again. Did I have an address? No. Did I have a phone number? No. If let out, would I check in? Hey, she didn't ask that before.

By 3 AM they were literally kicking me out of jail. Outside I was met by approximately 100 sleeping protesters. They had refused to leave until my release. Even though I wasn't in jail, I ended up spending the night anyway.

Weeks later, I was indicted on 17 Federal charges. One felony assault with a deadly weapon on an officer, and 16 misdemeanors. The Judge threw out the assault on grounds of self-defense and the lack of a weapon. And I plead out to the other charges agreeing to 30 days in jail on an unrelated resisting arrest.

I served my time in a Federal Correction Institution and was released in January 1999. I spent the rest of that winter alone in a tree sit thinking about what direction my life was going to take.

That Spring, I dedicated my life to full scale resistance. I had realized no amount of protest or begging for redress would stop the onslaught against life and freedom that the state endorses. I had been lied to too many times by Government Officials. I had been beaten and witnessed my friends beaten by a brutish police force too often. While those responsible for the injustices continued with business as usual. I could tolerate no more. It was time to walk a different path.

By the time I was arrested in June 2000, I had engaged in street battles with cops during riots; sabotage and armed forest defense. When it came to dealing with the State and greedy corporations, the word "please" was no longer in my vocabulary.

In Spring of 2000, I found myself returning to Eugene. I'd spent the last couple of months hopping trains and hitchhiking. Upon my return, I found myself thrust into the role of security for Eugene's Seven Week Revolt (which, ironically, was nine weeks long). There would be workshops,

squatting, forest defense, and it would all end with a Reclaim the Streets, Reclaim the City demonstration on June 18th.

On June 18, 1999, the city was rocked by organized rioting as part of a worldwide day of resistance to the G8. The police sustained several injuries and were forced to retreat on multiple occasions. Damage was in the tens of thousands of dollars. Banks and police were the hardest hit, incurring the biggest losses. The city was covered in political graffiti. Eugene was suddenly center stage in the United States anti-capitalist movement.

This year's event was billed as a historic reenactment of last year's festivities. Of course, the problem with advertising a revolution is the police state prepares for one.

For nine weeks Eugene was a hot bed of police and anarchist activity. Folks were gathering en masse at parks, streets, cafes, and bars, while the police and SWAT Team patrolled the city—four officers to a car.

The city was tense. I really believed something big could kick off. The energy and repression were boiling to a head. I would not have been surprised if the opening shots of the second American Revolution had been fired. Impromptu marches were starting all over the city, and no corporate chain store was safe, as groups of people would simply walk in and walk out with food and beer. The police substation in the Whiteaker neighborhood had been attacked not once, but twice, and cops routinely were forced back into their cars when they tried to stop or arrest somebody.

I, too, was planning something to go along with the seven week revolt. During my time traveling I'd spend many a night shooting out windows of big car dealerships with my slingshot. It was a perfect way to rack up some good damage amounts, shattering those giant showroom windows and taking out the windows on those pricey SUVs. Very quickly I learned security for these places was often minimal. I'd never encountered anything more than lights and cameras.

I began to put together an idea of how to go about torching a dealership. It would be so easy to rig up a few devices and place them under some SUVs. I wanted to send a strong message to the car and oil industry, as well as to the public that not only is the extensive use of fossil fuels in this country contributing dangerously to global warming, it is also directly responsible for the hostile and imperialistic foreign policy of the US Government. These acts of injustice would be resisted.

The Seven Week Revolt put me back on my home turf and provided my opportunity. The city was ripe for action, and I wanted to help fuel the fire. I wasn't planning on a major action, just something big enough to raise the issue and inspire other actions.

I believed a clandestine attack on an SUV dealership—one of the symbolic hearts of industrial greed and power—during the gathering would inspire and encourage others to resist.

I targeted Romania Chevrolet because Chevy is a subsidiary of General Motors. Romania was the second largest dealership in Eugene. The truck and SUV dealership was selling a commercial fleet of vehicles (as opposed to those marketed to the public). The dealership was also located near the college campus providing an easy opportunity to get in and out.

The “where” and the “why” were easy issues to solve. However, I still needed to figure out how.

One day during a discussion with my friend and trusted ally, Craig “Critter” Marshall, he spoke of wanting to take his own actions further. Critter and I had worked together extensively on numerous tree sit campaigns. The level of trust between us allowed for very open and blunt conversations. After a few exploratory questions and the requisite security precaution of plausible deniability, we figured out we were on the same page. I shared my theory on car dealerships.

Excitedly, we set about our plan. For close to a month, we observed our target. Romania had private security, something I had yet to encounter at a car lot. Still, there are ways around security guards. We just had to learn the routine.

The dealership was also near homes which meant we needed to learn if anyone worked late or had any regular night activities that would have to be accounted for. The other concern was regular police patrols, as the neighborhood was part of the University District.

Finally, because of the many bars and restaurants nearby we needed to learn any regular pedestrian traffic, particularly when these establishments closed.

Once we had gathered the necessary information about our target and the surrounding area, we set about deciding our goals. We passed the idea around that we could take out the whole dealership. I could have easily rigged multiple devices to ignite at the same time and we could have punctured all the gas tanks on the vehicles to further feed the conflagration. Other ideas involved leaving graffiti behind or other messages.

Ultimately, for the sake of simplicity, and because this would be our first time working together in such a manner, we decided to use one device each and place them under two separate vehicles. It would not be a big fire, but to get the point across, it wouldn't have to be. Come the early hours of Friday, June 16th, we would strike. By the morning of June 18th our communiqué would be public knowledge. If all went well, the black block would rally and last year's uprising would look like a picnic.

All did not go well. On the night of June 14th, I was arrested while doing Cop Watch. Three local activists had been stopped by four police officers for the heinous crime of riding a bike at night with no headlamp. During the stop, I videotaped the police giving a warning to a couple riding by for the same infraction. I notified the police that any action now would

qualify as select enforcement, and that I would be more than happy to provide all sides with copies of the tape.

During the course of the stop, the crowd had grown to about 20–25 people. The officers, too, had multiplied to eight including SWAT members. The Commanding Officer ordered no citations be given and that the police leave before things escalated. But, the pigs had come to pick a fight, and they weren't leaving without one.

As I stood on the sidewalk filming, the officers dispersed. One walked directly toward me. I focused the camera on him as he came closer—ten feet, five feet, he walked right at me. His shoulder lowered as he walked into me. He threw his arm around my throat as he dragged me behind the police car.

If I'm honest, I would have to say that most times I would have fought back, as much out of instinct as pride. This time, I simply held the camera and captured my own beating. It's kind of funny now if you can picture my head slammed into the road, and I'm laying face down with camera held out in front of me and pointed back.

The police got what they wanted. My beating triggered a response: the crowd charged, batons were raised and the smell of pepper spray filled the air. Mine would not be the only arrest that night.

The next morning I was released from jail. In a little more than twelve hours, I was supposed to slip through the darkness with a gallon of gas and a lighter. First things first, though. I went and had breakfast, then I went and took a nap. At 4 PM I met up with Critter at a gathering in the park. Against my better judgment, I assured him we were still on.

For the better part of the last year I had worked frequently by myself on actions, except on a few occasions when I would join with others for a specific action or event. I preferred working by myself because it brought out the best in me. I alone was responsible for planning and carrying out the action. I was free to listen to my instinct and change plans as needed without affecting any others. In this way I was able to incorporate a lot more ritual and magik in my actions, which was important to me.

Working alone I was also fully aware of my own abilities and limitations. I paid more attention to the details because I didn't have anyone to double-check me. By myself, I felt more careful and focused.

For whatever reasons, I was always nervous when working with others. It never reflected in my performance, but on this night it reflected in my judgment.

In times past, I saw to it that all incriminating evidence was properly disposed of prior to any action. On the evening of June 15th, I failed to take that necessary precaution, thinking it was detail that could be taken care of after the fact. I felt compelled to stick to our schedule, and we were already falling behind and so to both Critter's and my detriment, loose ends were left untied.

As I rigged the devices, and triple checked that no fingerprints or hairs would be left on anything going to the scene, I had a very bad feeling. I'd felt it all day. Something was wrong. Every instinct I had screamed at me to walk away. Maybe Critter had felt it too. But we had made a commitment to each other, and our sense of honor made us keep it. Had we communicated our feelings perhaps things would have been different.

Unbeknownst to us, not more than 200 feet away, sat an undercover detective spying on us. (During the course of my trials, three different reasons were given for the surveillance. The most frightening being someone told the detectives to keep an eye on me, but no detective could recall who gave the order or who else attended the meeting.)

It was time we loaded the car I had borrowed earlier in the day. I had told the owner that I intended to go camping out at Fall Creek. I can still vividly remember the look she gave me when I picked up the car. It was like she could see right through me. I could tell she didn't want me to take it. She would later tell me her instincts said something was wrong. Still she gave me the car because she trusted me. I betrayed her trust that night and got her involved in something she had absolutely nothing to do with. I will always regret that. I will forever be sorry and ashamed for my betrayal, and the fact that the consequences of my actions touched the lives of innocent people.

As we pulled out of the driveway, the detective signaled to his partners, "The subjects are in motion."

At the first red light another of the three detectives called in a positive ID: "Jeff Luers is the passenger."

None of their communications came in on my scanner. All was quiet. We drove on, completely oblivious to the fact that we were being tailed by three vehicles. Yet, deep down that bad feeling persisted.

We turned onto a side street. The vehicle behind us did as well. Warning bells rang in my head. Another turn and it was gone. We kept repeating this game of cat and mouse until we were satisfied that we were not being followed by a specific car. We rationalized that it was only coincidence that there was always a vehicle behind us. After all, it was a busy night, school had just let out for the summer and traffic was everywhere. We forget the age old axiom, "Just because you're paranoid, doesn't mean they're not after you."

One last drive by the target, no cars behind us. Let's go! We parked about a block away. Critter grabbed the pack with the devices. From here we knew our parts. Together we walked through a dark parking lot across the street from Romania. We crossed the street to a bike path that would lead us back around to Romania. If we had paused for a few moments, the detective now following us on foot would have run right into us.

My heart was pounding. A few hundred feet left to go. Suddenly, I was in the headlights of a big black SUV. It drove by slowly like it was getting

ready to pull into a home. Shit! I did not want to be seen. I had my hood up and my head down. I might have looked suspicious, but I knew I wasn't recognizable.

After a quick talk we decided to go on with it. We'd come too far now, with no time for second-guessing, it was now or never.

We reached the hedge that separated the properties. This was our cover and our entrance point. Quickly we ducked behind the hedge. We made our way crawling between the building and the row of new trucks.

In our planning, we had decided on the middle two trucks of the back row. We had observed that security never walked back here and there was another row of trucks buffering us from his path. While this row was closer to the building of a non-target, if the guard decided to change his route and patrol this lot before the other lot, we would be safely out of harm's way when the devices ignited. We wanted to ensure the safety of people as much as possible.

The downside to this is that we could not place the devices under the engines where they would have caused the most damage. Instead we had to place them under the gas tanks and hope the fire would be intense enough to do the trick.

Critter reached his truck first, as I crawled on to mine. He handed me a device as I prepared the fuses. The final assembly complete, I placed my device under the left rear tire and below the gas tank. With the flick of a lighter my fate was set in motion.

We ran through the back of the lot until we reached the street. We walked as calmly as anyone could in the situation until we reached the shadows near the car. From there we sprinted.

Once inside the car we felt safe. Critter turned the key and off we drove. We had only pulled out a few feet when the headlight of a big black SUV pulled in behind us. My heart skipped a beat. It was the same one that had passed us earlier. The thought that it was a cop didn't even cross my mind. We both figured it was a concerned citizen, as it continued to follow us.

About 15 minutes later my scanner was a buzz of activity. A fire had been reported at Romania Chevrolet. The car erupted with laughter as we cackled. At that moment the SUV behind us didn't matter, we had done it. No matter what happened now we had put the ball into motion.

After a while the SUV faded. We pulled off the highway and pulled into an Albertsons to grab some beer; head up to Fall Creek and establish our alibi. Then we saw the flashing lights coming off the highway. Not far behind was a big black SUV.

I turned to Critter and our eyes met. I didn't have to say it he already knew. "We're going to jail, bro. Got a smoke?"

Casually, we both rolled our cigarettes as we sat on the hood of the car waiting for our "traffic ticket." Then they took Critter and put him in a police car. I was left to observe the illegal search of our car.

Here is where I made a fatal error. When asked if I had been anywhere near Franklin Blvd. (the street Romania is located on), I said, "No."

"What would you say if I told you I had three officers ID you there?"

"I'd like to speak to my attorney."

"You are under arrest for Criminal Mischief."

"Can I finish my smoke?"

"No!"

I took two more drags before allowing myself to be cuffed. It was my last act of defiance as a free man.

Two trials and one year later I was convicted of three counts of Arson in the First Degree, two counts of Attempted Arson, four counts of Manufacture and Possession of a Destructive Device, and two counts of Criminal Mischief. The only two charges I actually beat were Conspiracy to Commit Arson with "Persons Unknown." I was sentenced to 22 years and 8 months.

The Prosecutor tried for a year to get me to plea bargain in exchange for my cooperation. The first offer was to testify against Critter. Then after they gave him a five-year deal, they wanted me to debrief about the ELF, my cell, and other cells I knew about. I steadfastly refused to deal and claimed no affiliation to any group. Each refusal was met with a re-indictment on new charges.

My attorney tried again and again to get me the same deal Critter received. Each time the prosecutor accused me of being an ELF leader and uncooperative. After each failed attempt, my attorney would ask me why they thought I was a leader. I never answered him.

The truth is I could think of a dozen reasons why they might think that. But, ultimately, I think the real reason they labeled me an ELF leader isn't because of any role I played in Fall Creek or the community. They needed to catch a "leader" after years of catching no one. They needed to set an example.

Their idea backfired. Thousands of people have been inspired to fight back because of this injustice.

Was a fire that destroyed one SUV worth 22 years of my life? Of course, I wish things were different.

I wish that the world was not run by powerful military, government, and big money men. I wish that people had more rights than corporations. I regret that people have to fight for their freedom and to protect Mother Earth.

Most of all, I regret that I am an American citizen, that my privilege and lifestyle has been the root cause of oppression and suffering for so many. I am saddened that most of my fellow citizens are, at best, unaware of the death and injury dealt to the indigenous people and citizens of other nations in order to serve American interests; oblivious to the destruction

and pillaging of the earth to secure American opulence. And I am ashamed and disgusted because, at worst, my fellow citizens are aware and are indifferent.

So, we must continue to struggle, to educate and make aware, to challenge and fight back. Always we must seek the balance between building a better future and destroying an old civilization corrupted by values and morals that lead us to our death. We cannot waver in the face of repression. We must find strength in our fear, for if we fail to act, if we fail to win, our government and the corporations that finance them will take our last semblance of freedom in the process of destroying our world.

Now more than ever we need a unified front. Our voices must be heard and our actions must be felt. Our only silence should be our footfalls in the dark of night.