



Bart Rides Out

I have never questioned the route this journey took: it seems a single trip, the sole option, driven by that same potency that drew me into grizzly country in the beginning.

—Doug Peacock
The Grizzly Years, 1990

1982-Grizzly Country

THE ROUND RIVER RENDEZVOUS in Wyoming was the biggest yet. But even with 500 people milling around, Foreman felt surrounded by the old wilderness tribe. The Buckaroos all came. So did the men Foreman called tribal elders. Ed Abbey. Cecil Garland, the moustachioed ex-ranger who had been Clif Merritt's partner in the Lincoln-Sagegoat Wilderness fight. There was beer and steak and corn on the cob. Nobody brought tofu—or if they did, they kept it quiet. Not a word was spoken about animal rights, hemp farming, or Central America. Bart and his brother twanged away, playing rock and roll under the half-serious name the Lithium Brothers. Ed Abbey even added a few flourishes to his boilerplate speech.

"I'm here today in support of the E.R.A.," said the reformed sexist pig, startling the crowd for a moment. "I mean Equal Rocks Amendment, or equal rights for rocks, and for trees and grass and clouds and

flowing streams and bull elk and grizzly and women—yes, ladies, I also support the E.R.A. for women," he wound up grinning. Nobody gave him any shit. The women laughed along with the men.

Cecil Garland won the audience's affection as soon as he climbed onstage. "I'm here on behalf of the Utah Wolf Grower's Association," he announced. Garland said he had been impressed by the Earth First!ers "utter humility before the ecosystem." He even told the radicals that he would be proud to join forces with them. "I raise my fist, also," the former Forest Service employee said with good-hearted awkwardness.

The third Round River Rendezvous was a blending of old and new converts to radical environmentalism. A giant barbecue, drunk-in, and environmental conference, it was deep ecology by total immersion. People wandered in and out of workshops, played hooky to go hiking up in the nearby mountains, and fell in like with other rendezvousers. A few people even had serious business there. One was Sierra Club representative Bruce Hamilton. Of course, Wyoming was Bruce's home turf and the Northern Buckaroos were his friends, so it was natural for him to show up. But Bruce also had a political reason for coming. The Earth First!ers were going to protest oil exploration in the Gros Ventre section of the Bridger-Teton National Forest—an issue already high on his own agenda. In the early 1950s, Olaus Murie had discovered that the Gros Ventre (Big Belly) contained essential calving grounds for the famous Jackson Hole elk herd. Subsequently, the Forest Service dropped its plans to build roads there. But because the Forest Service had already completed its primitive area system in 1939, the area received no formal protection.¹ In the following years, mining and timber claims were established. Now Bruce was pitting as much Sierra Club clout as he could muster against development in the Gros Ventre. It was a tough issue. The claims were valid, even if most of them had been sold before the days of public involvement in the process. Even with these odds, Hamilton believed the issue was worth taking on. It was now or never. Getty Oil would be going into the Gros Ventre in a matter of weeks. Whether or not Getty struck crude at its first site, the head of Little Granite Creek, the company

would still be bulldozing a seven-mile road just to sink its exploratory wells. The road would serve a dual purpose, opening the area to loggers as well as to energy development. Already, the Forest Service was making their intentions plain by auctioning off the surrounding timber. Once the road was built, it would blow any chance for preserving what had always been a de facto, but not official, wilderness.

It was always like that. Delaying formal protection always started a race between environmentalists and industry. It was a stupid game, really. It was too easy to get lost in the intricacies and forget why you got started in the first place. But Bruce had no doubt that the Gros Ventre was worth fighting for. The elk were only one consideration. The Gros Ventre was a broken circle of loping, snow-covered peaks higher than 10,000 feet, with bighorn sheep, antelope, moose, grizzly bear, black bear, wolverine, and cougar. Some people claimed that wolves also hid in its tented folds.

As the Rendezvous rolled around that July Fourth weekend, Getty hadn't any gotten further than planting a line of road-survey stakes. But the period for appealing the U.S. Geological Survey's approval of Getty's project was over. In the event that Getty took advantage of this lull to start building the road, Earth First! was prepared for a blockade. On July 3 a few Earth First!ers decided to make a preemptive strike. Very early that morning, five miles of survey stakes mysteriously disappeared. Survey equipment was damaged, enough to make it a felony if someone were caught.

"There were people pointing fingers at me and Dave and Howie, saying that we did it. We didn't do it. Hell, we were doing a rally there the next day," said Bart Koehler. When asked if he knows who pulled the stakes, he smiles and says cutely, "According to legend, it was a daring daylight raid. It was either beavers—beavers are real fond of survey stakes—or ravens. We have learned over the years that ravens really like survey tape. They like to wear it as headbands and they like to fill their nests with it."

On that day, the Earth First! beavers—or ravens—joined a venerable tradition of survey-stake sabotage on the North American

continent. In the 1880s, Yukiuma, of the Fire Clan of the Hopi, encouraged his people to pull up survey stakes marking their allotments under the General Allotment Act of 1887, also known as the Dawes Act. As far as Yukiuma was concerned, the land had already been allotted to the clans by Maasa'u, the Spirit of both Death and Life.² Maybe Maasa'u had come back as a raven in 1982.

As preparations for the Rendezvous got under way, Bart Koehler found that there was a surprising amount of support in northwestern Wyoming for protecting the Gros Ventre. "There were a lot of people around that did not want that project to go through. Including some of the county sheriffs," recalled Bart. "When we did the rendezvous thing, we had to get legal permits and all that shit, we were talking to them, and they said, 'Yeah, I hope they don't get that road through there.'"

The cops may have not wanted the Gros Ventre split open by a road, but they were not quite prepared for what happened when the Preacher, as Pete Dustrud had taken to calling Foreman in the *Earth First! Journal*, did his thing. After the initial speeches by Garland and Abbey, Foreman went through his usual hooting and hollering routine. He wound up by telling the crowd to form a human chain across Getty's road site. Jumping off the stage, he led several hundred people to the head of the dirt road, where they shouted, "Getty Go Home," and "Earth First!" A local newspaper reporter wrote that it looked like hundreds of people who hadn't seen the inside of a church in years had suddenly been gripped by religious fervor.

But the devil disappointed them. Although a number of reporters showed up, nobody from Getty did. The demonstration was successful, but not particularly dramatic. Still, it made a difference. Instead of its usual rubber stamp approval, on August 10 the Wyoming Oil and Gas Commission voted to deny Getty's application for a state permit to drill at Little Granite Creek. Bart Koehler said that one of the commissioners, who requested anonymity, told him, "The threat of civil disobedience has been a thunderstorm over the entire issue.

We're not sure what those Earth First! folks will do if Getty goes up there." Mass demonstrations just hadn't happened in the wilds of Wyoming before.

Later that summer Getty lost more ground in the Gros Ventre. But Earth First! didn't have much to do with it. Bart Koehler stopped Getty almost singlehandedly, not by chaining himself to a tree or dumping a can of oil on a forest supervisor's desk, but with a piece of paper. A bar napkin, actually. Bart was studying maps of the Gros Ventre when he realized that the company needed a right of way to build a road to the drill site. Because they were already legally allowed into Little Granite Creek, the only way to keep them out was to deny the right of way. Bart drafted an administrative appeal, based on the right-of-way question, as well as alleged NEPA violations, and filed it under the aegis of the Wyoming Wilderness Association. But first he showed it to some guys he knew in the Wyoming attorney general's office and also to a good friend who happened to be Wyoming's director of planning.

About a week later, the state of Wyoming filed its appeal, which was a fleshed-out, more legalistic version of Bart's. On September 22, the chief of the U.S. Forest Service granted a stay on construction of the Little Granite Creek road, based on the appeals by the Wyoming Wilderness Association and the state of Wyoming. Only then did the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund jump in and file a lawsuit to stop drilling in the Gros Ventre. Most of the Gros Ventre stayed free of roads. Eventually 287,000 acres out of 400,000 were protected by the Wyoming Wilderness Act of 1984.

Tom Turner, a longtime Brower associate who is now an editor at the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, was working for Friends of the Earth in those days. According to Turner, the Little Granite Creek incident gave Earth First! a modest dose of credibility, at least with some of the more liberal people in the mainstream movement.

"I always thought Earth First! was a trumped-up excuse to drink beer and go out in the woods and yell 'Fuck!' at the top of your lungs," said Turner. "But I expect if Earth First! hadn't gone into Little Granite Creek, the lawsuit would have been too late."

Although the demonstration had played a role in saving the Gros Ventre, the stunning success of his administrative appeal turned Bart's head around. "I loved playing guitar," he said. "But when we weren't on the road, I kept thinking Earth First! should have a wing that could go into hearings and not be branded as terrorists, and do very well-founded proposals for bigger wilderness areas."

Bart and Howie had always planned to set up a more traditional environmental organization within the Earth First! nonorganization. But the idea always seemed to get shuffled under a pile of papers or beneath a wet beer glass. Only Foreman managed to keep the paperwork flowing. In the mid-1980s, he stopped more than three dozen timber sales on Idaho's national forests, using a simple, one-page administrative appeal form. But as a group, Earth First! was too decentralized to fill the more conventional, nuts-and-bolts role that Bart envisioned.

"We were just too busy," said Bart. "That would have been much more accountable. Earth First!'s lack of structure, I mean, it was fine when there were only a few of us, when it was just a small tribe. But pretty soon it was totally out of hand. There was no accountability and it got pretty crazy."

The second Road Show in early 1983 clinched it for Bart. Son of Road Show was smaller but more grueling than the first one. This time Bart and Dave were booked for sixteen gigs in fifteen days, up and down the West Coast. Even if they hadn't been booked so tightly, this Road Show would have been crazier, busier, louder. This time people were ready for them. Stewart McBride's *Outside* magazine article, the template for Earth First!'s environmental cowboy image, had been published in December 1982. In October 1981, Dave's article, essentially the Earth First! position paper, had appeared in *The Progressive*. The *Progressive* polemic had blown people's minds—well, maybe not everyone's, since the magazine was generally read by people who were already well ensconced on the left. But those were the ones you wanted to reach. They were the committed ones. For the most part, they were the ones who turned out to see Dave and Bart that winter.

When the Road Show hit the central California college town of Chico, a few people turned out who were not classic left-wingers. But they *were* wilderness activists. For instance, a ranger, Rod Mondt, had made it a point to attend Foreman and Koehler's medicine show that night. Mondt was a burly, dark-haired guy who talked slow but thought fast. He was a veteran of both the Park Service and the Forest Service, and he was becoming increasingly disillusioned with them both. His girlfriend, Nancy Zierenberg, stayed home studying that night, but she would later become an even more hard-core Earth First!er than Mondt.

A nursing student named Nancy Morton was yet another disillusioned environmentalist who came to hear the Buckaroos that night. The strong-willed, ambitious daughter of an industrial psychologist, she grew up in Sacramento, where her father worked in the aerospace industry. After the show, the Buckaroos followed the usual practice of asking the locals where they should go for a drink. At the bar, which was called Canal Street, Mondt and Foreman hit it off immediately. Mondt had the same sort of western courtesy as Foreman, the tendency to hide his considerable intelligence behind a reluctance to speak ill of anyone, even his enemies. As cynical and pessimistic as Mondt was about the way things were going politically, there was something homey and reassuring about him. Maybe it was all those years working in Park Service law enforcement. In any case, with his twisted sense of humor, longish brown hair, full beard, and the big frame holding up his beer belly, Mondt was an obvious Buckaroo. As for Nancy Morton, well, you couldn't miss her. She was wearing a white lace dress that set off her long brown hair and dark blue eyes. In those days, Nancy resembled the singer Emmy Lou Harris, cowboy's daydream, rock-and-roll girl of the West.

She also looked remarkably like Debbie Sease.

"I remember being in Chico," said Bart. "Dave and I had this great standing-room-only crowd and Roselle was there, too. He was going under the name Nagasaki Johnson at the time. This is when we were still wearing cowboy hats and Fuck Bechtel T-shirts. Dave had

been bemoaning the fact that the only woman he ever loved was Debbie and he was doomed, and all this stuff. . . .

"All of a sudden I see this woman setting over across the way. And I say, Oh, my God. Poor Dave is in deep shit. Here is this woman who looks like Debbie and sounds like Debbie . . . and she looks like she's here to check Dave out. I mean, I really like Nancy. I just took one look at her and I knew Dave was in big trouble."

Trouble like this was just fine with Dave. It was all right with Nancy, too, although she wondered later if the lightning that hit a big tree, causing it to crash in her front yard that night, was an omen. In any case, when the Buckaroos came back for Endangered Species Day in April, Morton took Foreman on a hike in the Ishi wilderness. By the end of the summer the *Earth First! Journal* office had relocated to Chico. Six months later, Ken Sanders got a letter from Nancy about some publishing business he had undertaken for Earth First! "Dear Spurs: How did I get into this? I pick up on Dave thinking 'here's a guy that lives 500 miles away and won't interfere with my life' and now here I am—surrounded by a 2,000-piece mailing that's already 4 days late, working on an accounting system for wholesale merchandise and *not getting laid!!* God damn."

The old gang was breaking up. Koehler lit out for Wyoming one more time, determined to hang up Johnny Sagebrush's cowboy hat for good. During the second Road Show, Koehler had gone into another manic episode. This time a posse of good-natured cops reluctantly handcuffed him on Redondo Beach in Southern California. He hadn't been doing much, just playing a game of baseball—with himself. Naked. At six in the morning. The Road Show had been too much for him, too disorderly, too drunken, too busy. "I discovered how Janis Joplin and Hank Williams died young," said Bart. "Not doing heavy drugs . . . well, it was like you play all night and it just gets wild and you drink beer and tell stories and then you have to get to the next place and so you drink a bunch of beer to get loose again."

Substituting Lone Star for Lithium just wasn't going to cut it.

Koehler knew he was going to have to get some order in his life if he was going to survive. A friend got him a summer job as an interpretive ranger at a Wyoming state park. But soon he was back in the conservation loop. In 1983 he moved to Lander to work with Bruce Hamilton on the Wyoming wilderness bill. One of the most gratifying moments in his life came after he testified at a public hearing on Wyoming wilderness. A colleague who had seen him through the highs and lows of the past few years grabbed him after the hearing, saying, "You're back." It was what Bart had been waiting to hear.

After the Wyoming Wilderness bill passed in 1984, Bruce Hamilton was promoted. He would head the Sierra Club's field program, working out of the national office in San Francisco. It was a high-level job, similar to Foreman's post with the Wilderness Society. Bruce hinted to Bart that he should replace him as the Sierra Club's Northern Plains field representative. With Bruce's wife Joan's voice added to the chorus, Bart agreed to apply for the job. But he had misgivings about working for the Sierra Club. Part of him wanted to get hired to prove that he had the manic stuff licked. But working for the Sierra Club seemed like a step backward.

Just when he was about to find out if he had gotten the job, Bart was called out of town. After completing his business, he rode the train home to Cheyenne. Bruce's answer would be waiting in his mailbox. The train dove through steep valleys, skimming rickety railroad bridges painted with rust. Every so often Bart would catch sight of the nearly full moon. He remembered a conversation with Bill Turnage that took place at the Keystone resort in the Colorado Rockies, which Bart described as "this godawful, dee-luxe ski area with these godawful condos." Turnage had stopped calling Foreman and Koehler his shining stars, Bart recalled. Now he called them "The Untouchables," both accolade and hostility intended. At Keystone, Turnage had humiliated the Buckaroos by forcing them to throw their credit cards in a trash pile. Afterward, he took Koehler aside. This was the gist of their conversation, according to Koehler: "You know, I've been looking around the room at the field reps. I see eleven men out there. They're all between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-five.

They all have long hair. They all have some kind of facial hair, either moustache or a beard. They have sideburns. They're either wearing T-shirts and/or flannel shirts, belts with western buckles on them, jeans, and either cowboy boots or running shoes. Some of them are wearing down vests. Some wear baseball hats and stuff. And you all have master's degrees from funky western schools: Montana, Oregon State, University of Wyoming.' He says, 'Now either you guys are clones or you're rugged individualists.'

"I said, 'Bill, we sure as fuck ain't clones.' . . . That was the beginning of the end as far as I was concerned." As the night went on, that incident kept recurring to him. By the time the train pulled into Cheyenne, Bart had that feeling of clarity that sometimes comes when one is returning from a far longer trip. He decided to turn the job down.

As it turned out, he didn't have to. When he checked his mailbox late that night, Bart found a mailgram from Bruce. Bart remembers that Bruce had written something like: "Oh, shit. After agonizing all this time . . ." It ended "Love and kisses, Bruce." At the last minute, Bruce had hired someone without a checkered past. Larry Mehlhaff was not the dynamo that Bart was, but he was an extremely nice guy with solid credentials. Among his other attributes, Mehlhaff was less likely to be perceived as a threat by the sharks who constantly circled at the Sierra Club's headquarters. Without a doubt, Bruce was covering his own ass by hiring Mehlhaff. But he was probably making the right decision for all concerned.

Not long afterward, Bart was hired by the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council. SEACC was little more than a handful of fairly ordinary folks scattered throughout the rainy panhandle. But they had a big issue. They lived at the edge of the Tongass National Forest, the largest temperate rain forest in the world. At seventeen million acres it was also the biggest national forest in the United States. But one fourth of the forest would be clearcut if they didn't succeed in reforming a notorious piece of pork-barrel legislation that artificially inflated its timber program. Because of a deal made to grease the wheels for passage of the 1971 Alaska National Interest Lands Act, the

Forest Service was legally required to spend \$40 million a year to prop up logging in the Tongass. According to Sierra Club figures, the Tongass timber program hemorrhaged \$360 million between 1977 and 1988. The pork-barrel provision supposedly was inserted to preserve jobs in southeast Alaska, but hadn't even done that. By 1987 the number of Tongass timber jobs had dwindled from 3,500 to 1,800 and a number of small, locally owned mills had closed. Most of the logs from the Tongass were being minimally processed in Alaska before being rushed off to Japan. The only ones profiting from the deal were two corporations, Louisiana Pacific/Ketchikan and the Alaska Pulp Corporation, a consortium of Japanese companies. In exchange for building two mills in southeast Alaska, these corporations had received fifty-year contracts guaranteeing them timber at low prices. For example, according to Catherine Caufield in *The New Yorker*, in one year Alaska Pulp paid \$2.26 for a thousand board feet of Sitka spruce valued at \$700 on the open market. Louisiana Pacific/Ketchikan paid \$49. Even with this advantage, both were cited for significant antitrust violations, including conspiracy and restraint of trade. The Forest Service reported that the corporations had cheated it out of \$83 million and brought a claim to the U.S. Department of Justice. Ketchikan Pulp settled out of court, paying a million dollars in damages. Alaska Pulp refused to settle. The company countersued the Forest Service, but by the time the case went to court, the Justice Department announced that the statute of limitations had run out.³

The only real way out of this mess was congressional reform. But it wasn't going to be easy. Alaskans have a history of favoring development at all costs. Fortunately for SEACC, a small, patchwork contingent of environmentalists was making inroads into the old frontier mentality. But the group needed a leader who could get down not only with the log-cabin hipsters eager to buck the establishment, but also with the region's influential hunters and commercial fishermen. Most important, they needed someone who could pull these characters together in a way that would play in Washington, D.C.

On Easter Sunday, Bart talked to the SEACC people on the telephone from Nancy Morton's garage in Chico. He was still feeling

high from playing his guitar at a gathering along the Tuolumne River in Yosemite the day before. The party had been held to celebrate John Muir's birthday, but April 21 was Koehler's birthday, too. He was thirty-six. It was time to settle down. The match felt right, both to the people in Alaska and to Bart. In May, he spent a deceptively sunny week in Juneau. One day, he rowed a skiff out on Stephens Passage. It reminded him of Yellowstone Lake, but bigger. Everything was bigger. Koehler was overwhelmed by the country that surrounded him, its outlines sharpened and lit by bright sunlight. "I kind of looked around and went, holy shit; I'm in charge of protecting *this*?" But his confidence was returning, in large part because he felt that the members of SEACC had faith in him. The people in southeast Alaska knew Bart's history. They wanted the whole package, the real Bart, not a manicured résumé version.

It wasn't just broadmindedness that made Koehler attractive to SEACC. They were up against the wall. Few grass-roots environmental lobbyists had Bart's national political experience. Even fewer were romantic enough, or desperate enough, to take on a long shot like the Tongass. It was almost as if Bart's mania—he never experienced the depressive aspect of the disease—gave him a psychic frame more all-encompassing than the average person's. Here was a mush-hearted idealist who could play hardball in the toughest league of all—and win. One of his first acts as SEACC's executive director was to tape a photo on his office wall of Teddy Roosevelt riding a white horse. Beneath the picture he copied the T.R. quote: "Fighting for the right is the noblest sport the world affords."



The Oregon Trail

All the next day Floyd spent in the bathtub, and used the whole new bottle of Vick's. It was Thursday before he made another attempt to dissuade Hank. Alone this time, he drove up to Scaler's bridge and parked his car out of sight up a back road; while the government men were talking with John Stamper in the little shack, he slipped out on the blind side with a hammer and a bag of ten-penny spikes. . . .

—Ken Kesey
Sometimes a Great Notion, 1963

January 1983—Goose, Wyoming

MIKE ROSELLE WAS LOOKING FORWARD to coming home to his scuzzy first-floor apartment in Goose, Wyoming. Goose wasn't really a town, although Roselle might try to fool you into thinking it was. It was Roselle's nickname for a small cluster of buildings and mobile homes on the outskirts of Jackson. Roselle, who was going by the name Nagasaki Johnson in those days, and his roommate, Kevin Everhart, aka Airhead, were on their way home from Mexico. The Buckaroos had been celebrating the Little Granite Creek victory on the Seri coast of Sonora, Mexico, just across the Sea of Cortez from Baja California.

When Airhead and Nagasaki got home, they walked into a little Hiroshima of their own. One of their friends had visited while they were gone and left the front door ajar. While the Buckaroos were lolling on Mexican beaches, twenty-below-zero temperatures had

burst the pipes in Goose. An illegal upstairs apartment and three trailers all ran off the same plumbing, so nobody in Roselle's Little Appalachia had water. Their landlord was incensed. He had been a plaintiff on the environmental side in the Little Granite Creek suit, so he was favorably disposed toward Roselle. But when expensive plumbing problems were involved, political loyalties flew out the window. Or could it have been those divots in the floor from the time Kevin decided to chop firewood without making that chilly, inconvenient walk to the yard? In any case, there was only one thing to do. Have a party. Sell everything to friends and neighbors. (Well, maybe not those neighbors.) Pack the rest and hit the road. It was time to join Koehler and Foreman on Son of Road Show.

Nineteen eighty-three's Son of Road Show was booked from one end of the West Coast to the other. The Buckaroos had done a bit of research before leaving for Mexico. There was trouble in the Pacific Northwest, but they couldn't tell which part of the region would blow up first. "We were actually looking for the next big wilderness stand-off. We were trying to look for big areas where the Forest Service was particularly culpable," said Mike Roselle. It wasn't that the Buckaroos had a vendetta against the Forest Service. Not exactly, anyway. Other than Howie Wolke, who had studied forestry, the Buckaroos possessed only the normal environmentalist fixation with an agency that seemed hell-bent on cutting every tree it could get its saws on. Of course, Howie made up for any lack of enthusiasm among the other Buckaroos with his tendency to use the word *Nazi* to refer to respectable employees of the federal timber program. But Howie's pet peeve wasn't the real reason the Buckaroos were targeting the Forest Service. Timber from private lands was running out and loggers were counting on the national forests to fill the gap. As a result, the pace of logging had increased radically, from an annual cut of two billion board feet in 1949 to six times that amount.

Although they didn't know all the details of what was at stake—research that would reveal the importance of old-growth forests was only starting to surface in 1983—the Buckaroos did know that the Forest Service was in danger of wiping out an entire ecosystem. They

couldn't have picked a tougher fight. All the Buckaroos really had going for them was the knowledge that there were rebels scattered in the hippie enclaves of northern California and southern Oregon, along the oddly placed horizontal spine of the botanically rich Siskiyou Mountains.

In 1983, two controversies in the Siskiyous were reaching critical mass. In California, in the southern part of the range, the Forest Service was zigzagging a multimillion-dollar road across a mountain trail that was sacred not just to one, but to four Indian tribes. The Gasquet-Orleans Road, or G-O Road, named for the two towns it would connect, was becoming a cause célèbre. Because of the Native American connection, it was a natural issue for Earth First! Foreman was still in his tribal phase, teased by fantasies of starting a new culture made up of equal parts cowboy and Indian.

But in late 1982, another issue cropped up. The *Earth First! Journal* received an anonymous letter from someone claiming to be a veteran Forest Service employee. The employee wrote that he was nearing retirement and didn't want to risk losing his pension. But he was worried that if something wasn't done to stop the road that was planned for Bald Mountain, a 3,811-foot peak in the northern Siskiyous, the whole place would be ruined.

The author of the letter wasn't really an old geezer. In fact, two people eventually claimed credit for writing the letter. One was a Forest Service scientist who got drunk one night and admitted the deed. The other was a terminally hip timber road surveyor named Charles Thomas, who sometimes used the pseudonyms Chant Trillium, or Chant Thomas. Thomas claims that he met an old ranger who told him about Bald Mountain. When Thomas suggested that the ranger write to the *Earth First! Journal*, the ranger refused. Thomas got the impression that it wasn't so much that the ranger *wouldn't* write as that he *couldn't*. After deliberating for about a year, Chant says that he wrote the letter himself, adopting a corny backwoods style.

Most of the Buckaroos think it was the scientist who alerted them to the Bald Mountain issue. But whoever it was, the anonymous scribe

introduced Earth First! to a region whose political history was as pitted and convoluted as its geology. Bald Mountain was located in a million-acre section of the Siskiyou National Forest called the North Kalmiopsis. Kalmiopsis might sound like a species of dromedary, or a relative of Dr. Doolittle's Push-Me Pull-You. But it was actually the name of a rare flower, *Kalmiopsis leachiana*, a blood-red representative of the heath family. It was fitting that the area was named after a plant, and a rare one at that. The low, dark Siskiyou mountains are an extremely unusual place, if largely unknown. Part of the reason for their obscurity is that they are neither high nor dramatic, like the nearby Sierra and Cascade ranges. Writer and naturalist David Rains Wallace used the word *wizened* to describe them, making them sound like a chorus line of Rumpelstiltskins. But these modest, overgrown hills hold one of the greatest concentrations of botanical diversity in the United States, second only to the Great Smoky Mountains of Tennessee. The Siskiyous were originally an arc of volcanic islands whose isolation fostered the development of unique plant species. As the islands uplifted and eroded, they linked up to the mainland, becoming a peninsula. Eventually the peninsula became a landlocked mountain range. This unusual geologic history caused the Siskiyous to run in an east-west orientation, unlike most mountain ranges, which run north-south. The Siskiyous' strange angle formed the crossbar of an H. On one side of the H are the Sierra and the Cascades. On the other are the Coast ranges of Oregon and Washington. The entire region, which stretches across three states, is called the Klamath geologic province. Wallace has a more lyrical name for it: the Klamath Knot. Wallace's name, which is also the title of his 1983 book about the region, reflects the Siskiyous' diversity. It also hints at the Klamath's tangle of evolutionary influences, many of which remain mysterious. The Siskiyous—the crossbar of the H—are the knot's center, the place where everything meets before taking off in a new direction. When the Siskiyou peninsula joined up with the other mountains, it became both a sink and a source for genetic material. Later on, there were a lot of changes in the weather. Glaciers seeped in and out at either end of the Ice Age. Then, in the xerothermic period, which lasted from

8000 B.C. to 4000 B.C., average temperatures jumped about four degrees. This is roughly equivalent to the increase expected from global warming. As these changes occurred, species floated back and forth across the Siskiyou.¹

Wilderness Society founder Bob Marshall knew the Kalmiopsis was a storehouse of genetic diversity. In 1938, when he was the Forest Service's recreation director, Marshall had recommended the establishment of a Kalmiopsis Wilderness of more than one million acres. In 1946 the Forest Service followed his advice—more or less—and designated a 77,000-acre wild area in the Kalmiopsis. The Kalmiopsis wild area became official wilderness with the passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964.

Even as late as 1964, Bob Marshall's million acres of wilderness still existed in a de facto sense, although less than one tenth of it was protected on paper. Environmentalists and loggers were already vying for the other nine tenths. In the late 1960s, logging roads appeared in the Kalmiopsis, fissures that threatened to spread through the forest. The same cracks were appearing on mid-elevation mountain slopes all over Oregon. The high peaks had been protected by the Wilderness Act, which was based on scenic rather than ecological considerations. Mountain slopes, where wildlife found forage and shelter during the winter, were left unprotected. The Kalmiopsis became a symbol of how biodiversity had been left out of the political equation.

When logging roads started appearing on the steep, rainy mountainsides in the 1960s, there was less than a handful of professional environmentalists in the Pacific Northwest. Brock Evans, who worked for the Sierra Club in Seattle, was a member of this small fraternity. Evans often felt as if he were in a remote, hostile outpost of the French Foreign Legion. He remembers a newspaper columnist in Mormon-dominated Lemhi, Idaho, who called Sierra Clubbers "green niggers." Evans was careful not to trumpet his affiliation with the Sierra Club in such places. As a part-time representative for the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs, he availed himself of the opportunity to pass

himself off as one of the hook-and-bullet boys when it seemed more politic.

The environmental movement was stronger by 1973, when Doug Scott succeeded Evans as the Sierra Club's Northwest Representative. Not content to finesse his way out of awkward situations—and perhaps not possessing quite as much finesse—Scott brainstormed with fellow Legionnaires, Wilderness Society representative Joe Walicki and Sierra Club activist Holly Jones. In early 1974, they decided that the solution was to start a statewide front group called the Oregon Wilderness Coalition. Veteran activists, mostly Sierra Club people, would sit on the board. But the group's more visible members would be Oregonians, many of them new to the environmental wars. That way, nobody could say that environmentalists were outsiders bent on taking jobs away from loggers.

The OWC might have ended up as just another state wilderness group. But in the fall of 1974, its executive board hired a soft-spoken wildlife biologist named Jim Monteith. Monteith replaced the group's recreation-oriented approach to wilderness with an ecological one. But there was more to Monteith than science. There was passion, intelligence, and a healthy dose of eccentricity—almost enough to make him an honorary Earth Firster. From the beginning, Monteith made it clear that he was willing to go to the mat for his beliefs. He informed OWC's board of directors that he would accept the coordinator's job only if they would back his position on wilderness. His position was this: Save it all. Monteith's stance stopped just short of Earth First!'s. He wasn't pledging to roll back the frontier by reintroducing grizzly bears and tearing down dams along the Columbia River. But his beliefs went beyond anything OWC had previously endorsed. Fred Swanson, a Sierra Club activist who was the outgoing coordinator, agreed to Monteith's terms.

"That is not a commitment I made to you, or even to Fred, so much as it is made to myself," wrote Monteith to the OWC board a few years later. "This wilderness resource we deal with every day is part of us. No OWC staff person has ever felt that less than 100

percent of the roadless land base should be retained. Regardless of so-called realities, it is this goal which will enable us to save maximum Wilderness acreage.”²

When Nagasaki Johnson and Airhead arrived in Oregon, Monteith was one of the few local environmentalists who welcomed them. But it was another OWC staff member, Andy Kerr, who saw the true significance of Earth First!’s local debut. Although Kerr worked within the system, his style was as bold as Earth First!’s. Ultimately it would fall to bare-knuckled rebels like Andy Kerr and the Buckaroos to create a new mythology for the forest. Kerr, in particular, was well suited to the task. He had grown up as a scrappy mill-town kid steeped in the old myth of inexhaustible resources.

“I had a choice in high school,” he said. “I could have dropped out and worked in the mill or in the woods. I could have made a lot of money, got my pickup, got married, had kids, all that stuff.”

Most of the guys in his high-school class did exactly that. But Kerr was different. For one thing, he was smarter. And he knew pretty early on that he didn’t want to work in the woods. “It was a dangerous, cold, miserable occupation. I guess it was all the old guys walkin’ around town that were crippled and missing fingers,” he said wryly.

Like the Earth First! founders, Kerr was not a product of Earth Day or the antiwar movement. He remembered Earth Day, of course. He was still a teenager, living with his parents in Creswell, Oregon. His high-school class got half the day off. They were supposed to do something for the environment. Most of them picked up trash. “I screwed off,” said Kerr.

But a demonstration on the TV news the previous year had made an impression on Kerr. That time, protesters hadn’t been marching against the Vietnam War, but against logging French Pete Valley in the Willamette National Forest. This was a far more radical stance, at least in Creswell, a typical Oregon town where timber had been a way of life for more than a century. Many of Kerr’s classmates would grow up to be the third or fourth generation of loggers their families had produced. But things were changing. There were only three large

valleys in Oregon that hadn’t been cut; French Pete was one of them. The battle over French Pete signaled a turning point in the Pacific Northwest. Like the birth of the wilderness movement at the end of the nineteenth century, it was yet another moraine left by the receding frontier.

In the late 1960s, Brock Evans and Mike McCloskey had made protecting French Pete a top priority. Before he replaced David Brower as the Sierra Club’s executive director in 1965, McCloskey had preceded Evans as the club’s first representative in the Pacific Northwest. He knew about the region’s reliance on the timber industry firsthand. If environmentalists can win on French Pete, they can win anywhere, McCloskey told reporters. Instinctively, Andy Kerr, a kid who had grown up in a town of 1,000 people and three lumber mills, grasped the significance of the French Pete fight. The sight of 1,500 antilogging protesters massed outside the Eugene federal building in 1969 was a revelation, tantamount to the storming of the Bastille. “I remember watching TV and thinking, ‘What a novel idea—a national forest that you don’t log,’ ” said Kerr.

No blinding flash turned Kerr into an environmentalist. It was more like burnout. In the spring of his junior year at Oregon State he made the dean’s list and came down with mononucleosis. That summer, he spent six days pounding nails for his contractor father. His dad was on vacation for five of those days. On the sixth, Kerr quit. It was time to grow up.

Since his freshman year, Kerr had been hanging around the Oregon Wilderness Coalition, which was based in Eugene. In September 1977, Monteith and another staff member, who already were sharing a single salary of \$750 a month, each offered to donate \$50 a month to hire Kerr and another young organizer, Tim Lillebo. It was enough to convince Kerr to drop out of college right before his senior year. “One could go to school anytime,” said Kerr. “The forest was being cut down. The war needed to start.” A war was indeed starting. And in the ranks of professional fighters, Kerr and Lillebo were the leanest, meanest guerrillas. Few people could boast that their wages were lower than the \$300 a month Bart Koehler had been paid by

the Wilderness Society in 1973. Kerr recalls that in 1977 his \$50 salary didn't quite cover the cost of gassing up his VW bug to make the daily commute from Creswell, where he still lived with his parents because he couldn't afford to pay rent. Three months later Kerr got a 400 percent raise—to \$200 a month. "I call it operating costs, but no maintenance," Kerr says. "You're using up your clothes, you're using up your car, you're using up your teeth."

But it was worth it. When he took the job with the Oregon Wilderness Coalition, Kerr walked into a firefight. That year, Monteith began pushing for a national lawsuit to challenge development in *de facto* wilderness areas. The Sierra Club's reaction to Monteith's idea was much the same as it would be two years later when California's commissioner of natural resources, Huey Johnson, came up with a similar plan. They told Monteith they feared a backlash, especially if the suit was successful. In the years since the Alaska pipeline's narrow victory, Congress had become adept at creating exceptions to environmental laws. Oregon's congressional delegation wouldn't hesitate to use their power to protect the state's timber interests. As things got rougher, the Sierra Club tried to oust Monteith in 1978. But Monteith prevailed, winning a two-to-one victory that cemented the Oregon Wilderness Coalition's commitment to hard bargaining. Animosity between the Sierra Club and Monteith's group, which is now called the Oregon Natural Resources Council, remains to this day.

"The Sierra Club leadership in Oregon thought the OWC was politically naive while the OWC prided itself on its Indian and sportsmen constituency and felt that the Sierra Club was an 'elitist western Oregon recreation group' populated by the 'wine and brie set,'" wrote Forest Service historian Dennis Roth.³

Although Roth relegates the attribution to a footnote, the "wine and brie" remark, not surprisingly, was Andy Kerr's.

Because of their frustration with the Sierra Club's wimpiness, Jim Monteith and Andy Kerr thought it was just great when the Buckaroos showed their unshaven faces in Oregon. When Foreman's infa-

mous VW bus slid into Oregon in January 1983, the Buckaroos were rested, tanned, and ready to rock and roll. Their first stop was La Grande, where they had arranged to pick up a dark-haired folksinger named Cecelia Ostrow. Foreman had assumed Ostrow would be a weedy vegetarian hippie. At least she could keep Roselle company when he smoked pot, he figured. But his stereotype was blown when Ostrow ordered a chili cheeseburger at the first truck stop they reached. Later she matched the Buckaroos beer for beer, quite a feat in those days. If you could stop her from telling people about how the trees talked to her, Ostrow made a dandy Buckaroo.

The Earth First! caravan worked its way south to Grant's Pass, where Chant Thomas lived. Even though Foreman didn't know about Thomas's claim to be the author of the geezer letter, his name (or names) was on file at the *Earth First! Journal* office. Thomas was one of a grand total of two *Journal* subscribers in southern Oregon at the time, recalled Mike Roselle. Thomas invited the Buckaroos to his ranch, a commune called Trillium, or more familiarly, the Trillium Trout Farm, which lay on the banks of the Applegate River. He told the Buckaroos to consider their stay at Trillium a vacation. They wouldn't even have to entertain anyone. Instead Thomas's "eco-folk-rock" band would play for them.

Trillium turned out to be a gold mine for the Buckaroos. Thomas, a big, blond paterfamilias, invited every disgruntled government employee he had ever met. To the Buckaroos' surprise, the green uniforms of Thomas's Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management buddies had very deep pockets. Bumper stickers and T-shirts practically flew out of their hands. Donations flowed like beer. These folks were *pissed*. Bald Mountain, which was right in their backyard, inched higher on the Earth First! list of windmills to tilt at.

Not long afterward, the Buckaroos checked in with Ogden Kellogg, Jr., a Sierra Club volunteer from Gold Hill who had worked on an unsuccessful lawsuit to save Bald Mountain. Kellogg explained that his wife had just had a baby, and he was devoting less time to environmental work. "They tracked me down at work," recalls Kellogg. "We sat in the coffee room and I basically handed it over to them."

The Buckaroos wouldn't have much competition on the Bald Mountain issue from the Sierra Club—or much help. Local Sierra Club volunteers were simply burned out. Since the 1960s, when the loggers started hacking away at the Kalmiopsis, club members had been pressuring Senator Mark Hatfield, the state's powerhouse Republican, to preserve a significant portion of the forest. After all, the Kalmiopsis was not only a storehouse of biological diversity, but also the largest temperate rain forest outside of Alaska. At one point, Hatfield had even proposed a 134,000-acre wilderness addition. But like many good old boys in the West, Hatfield had philosophical problems with “locking up” land. His major campaign donors were even more uncomfortable with the idea. Under timber-industry pressure, Hatfield reduced the Kalmiopsis wilderness proposal to 86,000 acres. In 1978, he backtracked even further, fighting the inclusion of the North Kalmiopsis in the Endangered American Wilderness Act. Hatfield's doggedness held up the entire bill for more than two months. Finally, over Monteith's and Kerr's protests, Doug Scott redrafted it. He cut back the OWC's 325,000-acre wilderness proposal to 102,950 acres. The new wilderness included the south slope of Bald Mountain, but not the north slope. The south-facing slope wasn't worth much; there were a few big trees, heavy brush, and hardwood groves. But the mountain's north slope was valuable old-growth timber.

By coincidence, Dave Foreman happened to have been sitting in on a Senate-House conference, waiting for New Mexico to come up on the agenda, when Mark Hatfield killed Oregon Congressman Jim Weaver's bid for protection of the Kalmiopsis in the Endangered American Wilderness bill. Not long afterward, Hatfield slipped through one of his infamous “Riders from Hell.” These were not stars of a spaghetti Western, but fine-print amendments tacked onto important legislation. Often riders had absolutely nothing to do with the bill they were “riding” on. Hatfield, because he served on the Senate Appropriations Committee, had access to indispensable budget bills. It was a simple matter for him to attach a rider that would escape most people's notice but cause environmentalists in his home state to writhe in agony.

Foreman was aghast when Hatfield changed the Bald Mountain wilderness boundary, reducing the American wilderness system by a minuscule, but crucial, percentage. The wilderness boundary originally had been drawn slightly north of the mountain's summit, making it difficult and expensive to build a logging road there. Now the line between wilderness and nonwilderness ran right across the top of the mountain, where bulldozing a road would be a simple matter. Brown bears still circled Bald Mountain in the spring. In winter they returned to their dens, whether the dens were in wilderness or nonwilderness land. Yet half of their habitat had been opened to logging. Bald Mountain's fate was a textbook example of politics imposing its map over the ecological map of wilderness. Bald Mountain was not the most unique ecological spot in the Klamath. It wasn't the tallest mountain, or the steepest, or the most densely forested. But when bureaucratic hubris so blatantly imposed its badly tailored laws on nature, the mountain's importance grew.

In 1982, the Sierra Club tried one last time to save the Kalmiopsis. Despite the difficulties between the two groups, the club backed Kerr and Monteith in a suit to stop the Forest Service from building the Bald Mountain Road. The Sierra Club lawyers argued that under NEPA the Forest Service should conduct an environmental-impact statement for the region, instead of merely an environmental assessment. (An environmental-impact statement is more rigorous than an environmental assessment.) But once again, the Sierra Club didn't allow OWC to mount a NEPA challenge to RARE II. In the meantime, of course, Huey Johnson had done just that and won. In the Johnson case, the court had blown away RARE II by ruling that it had not adequately examined the environmental consequences of logging. This forced the Forest Service to write more specific and comprehensive environmental-impact statements. (The exception was in cases where a state wilderness bill had passed with “soft” release language that declared RARE II sufficient for all land not included in the bill.) But Huey Johnson had sued only on behalf of *California's* forests. The California delegation, which included the powerful congressman Phil Burton and California desert advocate Senator Alan

Cranston, was friendly to the environment. Doug Scott was still concerned about a backlash if Johnson's suit cloned itself in less friendly states across the nation.

This time ONRC knuckled under to the Sierra Club, omitting RARE II from their case—and lost. “We made a good argument,” said Andy Kerr. “We didn’t make the *great* argument.”

The bulldozers were on their way to Bald Mountain.

But as the Caterpillars crawled toward the forest, there were other changes occurring, mostly in people's attitudes about the big trees that they had always taken for granted. True, the Forest Service budget was not about to replace *Dynasty* as the top entertainment of the early 1980s. But people couldn't help noticing that the trees were disappearing. The problem was particularly severe in the Northwest, which was the cash cow for the entire Forest Service timber program. Two billion board feet were being cut annually from the forests in California alone. This equaled the total cut from all the nation's forests in 1949. The equivalent of 120 football fields a day was disappearing from the forests on the west side of the Cascade range in Oregon and Washington.

One of the first people to get curious about the consequences of these actions was a scientist named Jerry Franklin, a mill worker's son who had played in Douglas fir forests as a boy. “I was thinking, My God, here are these incredible forests, and nobody really knows a damn thing about them,” Franklin recalled in a conversation with *New Yorker* writer Catherine Caufield.

Once Franklin began to study it, he discovered that the Pacific Northwest forest is the most densely green place on earth. One acre of old-growth Douglas fir forest contains more than twice the living matter of an acre of tropical rain forest. Some stands of trees harbor as many as 1,500 species of plants and animals. “If human beings were as efficient in supporting themselves as these forests are, one square mile would be enough land to sustain nearly three million people,” wrote Caufield.⁴ But as unique as its green, tumbling plants is the forest's *smell*. The mixture of moss, wet bark, and pine needles is like a half-remembered childhood walk in the woods. The odor of the

newly born combines with the sweet, familiar smell of decay. It is air that has passed through a cleansing filter, transpired mistily in an alchemist's retort. Even the reserved Caufield, whose earlier book, *In the Rainforest*, brought her to the most spectacular of Brazil's tropical forests, sounds a note of excitement in the Pacific Northwest. “As one walks through these forests, one is struck by the sheer volume of green stuff and by the exuberance with which it strives to live,” she writes. “Things grow in the oddest places. Every tree is hung with epiphytes and ferns. More than a hundred species of mosses and lichens grow high in the canopy. Fifty or a hundred feet above the ground, large trees sprout from the trunks of even larger trees.”

Wandering through the bare-floored cathedral of the old-growth forest, early conservationists like Robert Sterling Yard and Bob Marshall could understand it instinctively. If you were sensitive enough, you could feel it, too. The Douglas fir forest was some kind of mysterious science experiment, a perpetually-in-overdrive, hydraulic, pneumatic, and aesthetic engine. In 1969, Jerry Franklin set out to prove this, with the help of a grant to study the forest's ecology. It may have been the first time that anyone had looked at these giant trees with the broken-off tops as anything but potential Pampers since Yard's impassioned 1936 article called “The Third Greatest American Tree.” Comparing the Douglas fir favorably to the redwood and sequoia, Yard wrote in *The Living Wilderness*: “Seen from below, the high plumed ceiling of many hues of green, light-shot in places and often swaying gently from the winds above, these forest scenes are very different indeed from the vast dim cathedrals of the Redwood. Here we have variety and color, spread magically over a canvas of size.”

In the 1970s, Franklin and his interagency team of scientists started the long process of laying bare the skeletal framework of this moss-laden honeycomb. Douglas fir trees, which reach as high as 300 feet into the air and measure more than 5 feet across, were the forest's most spectacular sight. But Franklin found that the big trees are only one lever in an intricate mechanism that includes birds of prey, ro-

dents, yeasts, and fungi. In fact, it was Franklin and his team of scientists who made mycorrhizal fungi a household word in the 1980s—if you happened to live with an environmentalist. What Franklin discovered was that mycorrhizal fungi (truffles, for instance) bind together the forest's fragile soil. Small mammals like the red-backed vole eat and disperse the mycorrhizal fungi. Spotted owls eat voles, which tend to live in fallen trees. So when trees aren't allowed to fall down and decay naturally because they are being clearcut, voles disappear. Then the owls die out. It isn't a good sign for the fungi—or the forest.

It took many years for Franklin's 1981 report "Ecological Characteristics of Old-Growth Douglas-Fir Forests" to reach a wide audience. Eventually it would play an indirect role in changing the public's perception of a forest from a tree farm to an ecosystem. From this new evidence for John Muir's idea that everything was hitched to everything else in the universe, some environmentalists would extrapolate that the forest had spiritual significance and make common cause with Native Americans who felt the same way.

But even people who had never heard of John Muir had a gut feeling that something was wrong. With clearcut patches bleeding into one another, the national forests looked like big, harmless victims of a psychotic barber. Foresters kept telling people that clearcuts just *looked* bad. But the research of Franklin and other biologists indicated that the soil's architecture was breaking down under the constant barrage of "management." Of course, if you never left your car, you could drive through national forests for months without getting a clue. The Forest Service nearly always left narrow strips of trees lining the roads.

But as nature became fashionable, more people were leaving their cars. Someone who had been slamming car doors long before it was chic was the writer Peter Matthiessen. In the 1960s Matthiessen had written about endangered mountain gorillas in East Africa. In the 1970s, he trekked the Himalayas in search of rare snow leopards. In the 1980s, his attention was caught by vanishing pieces of the American landscape. Twenty years before, he had written *Wildlife in Amer-*

ica, a depressing but impressive compendium of extinct and extirpated species. Now he turned his attention to American Indians, and, inadvertently, to the old-growth forest. When he visited the Klamath region, he learned that in many places where the soil is particularly unstable, logging is not just destructive: it is catastrophic. While researching the 1984 book *Indian Country*, Matthiessen visited the southern Siskiyou. He saw the disintegration of the landscape that Jerry Franklin's research had been predicting:

Natural landslides are common in this region, where the most recent uplifting of two million years ago did not turn the old rivers from their courses but only deepened them, so that the steep mountainsides may fall away even without excessive rain or snow. The soil itself, shot through with intrusions of the beautiful weak slaty jade called serpentine, is poor and shallow, and those slopes that are marginally stable when bound up by forest roots collapse quickly in the first rainfall and erosion that follows road-building and the removal of trees.⁵

Land is not the only thing lost to logging erosion. Rivers are transformed from vodka clear into a substance resembling café au lait. Sometimes they disappear altogether, leaving a channel of drying mud. Even when the rivers remain, they can easily become barren. When rivers silt up from logging, salmon and steelhead, an anadromous rainbow trout, can no longer reach the clean gravel beds that they need to lay eggs. Fish that must return to the same section of river where they were born in order to reproduce are blocked by logjams and erosion slides. Clearing land also causes higher temperatures, which can kill young fish. Almost all of northern California's rivers have been affected by logging in one way or another. More than a thousand summer steelhead used to run in the south fork of the Trinity River in northwestern California. Now fewer than fifty fish return each year.

The Siskiyou high country contained one of the region's few undamaged watersheds. While he was there in the 1970s, Matthiessen visited a network of trails that Native Americans called the ladder to

the "sky world." The ancient paths had been cleared by the Yurok, Karuk, Tolowa, and Hupa people, who used them in their vision quests and medicine training. Along the trails lay a series of stone outcroppings, all with religious significance. The largest was a one-hundred-foot-tall boulder, which in the nineteenth century had been called the Medicine Rock. Matthiessen's guide, a young Yurok, called it "Doctor Rock" and made no bones about the fact that "nine tenths of the people have never been to Doctor Rock and the rest of 'em went up most of the way by truck." But when Matthiessen traveled to the high country in the 1970s, native people were trying to resurrect the old ways. Into this effort walked the U.S. Forest Service, which was determined to add yet another fifty-five miles of road to the hundreds of thousands of miles it had already built. The Gasquet-Orleans road would be a two-lane highway. Once it was built, loggers could get into a big stretch of wild country lined by one of the region's clearest streams. In return, the Forest Service promised to protect the sacred rocks with a chain-link fence. Maybe the medicine men could wave feathers over it or something.

In February, the Road Show was booked in Arcata, California, not far from the Siskiyou and the proposed Gasquet-Orleans road. Arcata is a Victorian college town on the rugged northern California coast and the home of perhaps the best food co-op in the state. (Because the state is California, it may be the best food co-op in the world.) One of the *Earth First! Journal's* more vocal subscribers happened to live in Arcata. He was a Humboldt State University sociology professor named Bill Devall. Devall was one of the American popularizers of deep ecology, a not-quite-philosophy invented by Arne Naess, a Norwegian professor, mountain climber, and Buddhist. In their 1985 book, *Deep Ecology: Living As If Nature Mattered*,⁶ Devall and George Sessions provide a valuable service by tracing the intellectual lineage of deep ecological thought, which has probably been around since the days of the cavemen. They characterize the underlying worldview of Western civilization as dominance over nature, while deep ecology is

based on the idea of harmony with nature. All nature has intrinsic worth, Devall and Sessions wrote. It wasn't a very controversial point or a very new one. But one of its corollaries pushed Aldo Leopold's ideas one step beyond the old game manager's well-trodden intellectual path. In their deep ecology commandments, they included the idea that all species are equal. The message had been hinted at by the Endangered Species Act, which gave legal protection to other species. But by saying that other species not only had a right to live and thrive, but a right *equal* to humanity's, deep ecology became truly radical.

Still, this assertion was not enough to transform deep ecology into a philosophy. As Bron Taylor, a religion and social ethics professor at the University of Wisconsin wrote in *The Ecologist*, referring to the explanation of deep ecology offered by *Earth First! Journal* associate editor Christopher Manes: "Manes' argument displacing humans from the centre of moral concern does not adequately explain where *value* actually resides."⁷ At its worst, deep ecology is fuzzy-headed, anti-intellectual, pie-in-the-sky, pseudo-spiritual gobbledygook. Deep ecologists have an unfortunate propensity for using the intellectual tools they are bashing—obscure, academic philosophical constructs—to wend their way back to the basic ideas expounded by Aldo Leopold in *A Sand County Almanac*. "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise," wrote Leopold in the 1940s. At its best, deep ecology offers a blueprint for putting Leopold's ideas into practice.

The confusion engendered by deep ecology could be explosive when it was injected into the political test tube of logging communities, particularly in places where a cyclical economy was already putting the squeeze on blue-collar workers. Even in the early eighties, environmental issues in northern California had a violent tinge, as the Buckaroos discovered when they blew through town in February. Devall had rounded up their biggest audience yet. Almost three hundred people showed up to listen to their kick-out-the-jams environmental proselytizing. After the professor briefed them on the G-O

Road controversy, Mike Roselle and Dave Foreman decided they would return to Arcata. A few weeks later they drove through a blizzard to attend a strategy session on the road.

At the meeting, the Buckaroos encountered a fractious group of counterculture homesteaders. There were refugees from the peace movement, lesbians from sheep-farming communes, and Native Americans with ties to the American Indian Movement. This was the first of many informal alliances that Earth First! made with AIM, which by the late 1970s had been forced underground and practically destroyed by the FBI. Although it remained a presence on reservations, AIM kept a low profile for a decade or so, often operating through its United Nations entity, the Native Treaty Council. Later the organization emerged as a public presence called AIM once again, with more of a focus on working within the system. At the time, though, AIM was still in its radical phase. "The Indians were really militant," said Foreman. "The peace and love types were appalled. Roselle and I got along better with the Indians. We were dressed like them, in cowboy boots and sunglasses."

It wasn't just sartorial style that caused tension among the various groups. The "peace and love people" were taken aback when the Indians talked about violence, Foreman said. At one point, the meeting got so contentious that each faction wandered off to meet separately before reconvening to negotiate an overall strategy. "Eventually everyone agreed the honkies would do their wimpy Gandhi CD stuff at the lower elevation, get arrested," and then the Indians would stage their demonstrations up in the sacred land near Doctor Rock, said Foreman. The Indians thought the lesbian separatists should stay in camp and cook. The lesbians, torn between feminism and Native American cultural sovereignty, were in a quandary.

Fortunately, they never had to choose. On May 25, a federal court blocked construction of the G-O Road. It was the first time that Indian territory had been protected under the freedom-of-religion provision of the First Amendment. Years later the Supreme Court reversed the decision, setting a damaging precedent for Native American cultural rights. But by the time the Supreme Court got around

to hearing the case, the G-O Road was a dead issue. Half of it had been constructed, but the second half would remain nothing more than a ghostly white line on an old surveyor's map. The action moved north to Bald Mountain, and so did Mike Roselle.

In April, Mike Roselle and Kevin Everhart parked the Lumbago, a 1962 GMC motor home Roselle and Foreman had bought to use as a mobile office, just outside Grant's Pass, Oregon. Shortly after their arrival, Nagasaki and Airhead made an executive decision. They would blockade the Bald Mountain Road. Since the Gros Ventre rendezvous, the Buckaroos had been itching to mount a civil-disobedience action, but all those successful injunctions and administrative appeals kept getting in their way. Direct action was the hot new thing in the environmental movement. It had started in the early 1970s, when a boom-and-bust real estate developer and Canadian badminton champion named David McTaggart was beaten up by French sailors for trying to stop nuclear testing on a South Pacific atoll. The organization that McTaggart had recently joined, Greenpeace, would become the best-funded environmental group in the world. Direct action was the group's *raison d'être*. They left almost everything else, including philosophy, lobbying, and sabotage, to others. The Greenpeace image was brilliantly molded in a campaign orchestrated by direct-mail expert Richard Parker and a young man named Herb Chao Gunther, who was later joined by eco-advertising veteran Jerry Mander at the Public Media Center in San Francisco. In their Greenpeace campaign, Gunther made the astounding discovery that cute, furry baby seals opened wallets even more effectively while they were actually in the process of being clubbed to death than when they were on a coatrack.

Although it began with individual acts of heroism, Greenpeace soon became bloated beyond recognition. But some direct-action heroes turned down the chance to go big-time. One was Mark Dubois, a Friends of the River founder who chained himself to a cliff along California's Stanislaus River in 1979 to stop construction of the New Melones Dam. Dubois's passion grew out of a sense of place. He grew

up in prosaic Sacramento, the son of a secretary and a Mobil Oil executive. But after he got his driver's license at sixteen, he began caving in the canyons of the Stanislaus. Eventually he turned to river running.

"I had never been very good with people," he said. But like David Brower, the tall, boyishly direct Dubois felt at ease in the outdoors. Eventually, that ease communicated itself to others. Dubois lived the next decade of his life in the company of people who loved the river almost as much as he did. "I realized in a way the river had become every relationship I had ever had: spiritual teacher, guru, almost lover. For me, there weren't too many choices. Once you fall in love with something, you can't walk away."

Like the funky grass-roots appeal of Earth First!, Dubois's approach was a sign that the wilderness movement was changing. It came after Friends of the River literally tried everything else, including a referendum, to stop the New Melones dam. When authorities were unable to locate Dubois, Governor Jerry Brown asked the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to reconsider filling the dam. The Corps agreed to stop the water from rising beyond 808 feet of altitude until Friends of the River could negotiate a deal with Congressman Phil Burton. Mark Dubois had been hidden for a full week before the 808 agreement flushed him out. When he emerged from the canyon, he was shrouded in an aura that approached myth.

Despite Dubois's willingness to be a martyr, the Stanislaus was cut from the 1980 Wild and Scenic Rivers Act when Burton found himself one measly vote short in committee. The members of Friends of the River, who had worked eighteen-hour days and lived on tiny salaries through the whole campaign, were bereft. "I remember sitting there and thinking, this group of goddamn *men* had just destroyed the river," said Catherine Fox, a blond, gentle-voiced woman who was a stalwart of the group. "I remember bursting into tears in the halls of Congress. Phil Burton called a few of us into his office. Phil offered us all a drink and said he was sorry. This hadn't happened to him in a long time. 'Sorry, kids.'"

Despite the defeat, Friends of the River survived. They hadn't

intended to. The group had formed for the express purpose of saving the Stanislaus. Its founders had even called David Brower to ask permission to "borrow" the name from Friends of the Earth, because Friends of the River was meant to be an ad hoc, temporary outfit. But its members found that there were more than enough issues related to western rivers to keep them busy for years to come. Dubois, who could have parlayed his bravery into a political career, didn't do so. He remained active on river issues, but worked for small groups. He married Sharon Negri, the founder of the Mountain Lion Foundation. They continued to live in the funky Sacramento house that had been the Friends of the River group house during the Stanislaus fight. Despite his shyness—or maybe because of it—Dubois remained a symbol to other environmentalists, including Earth First! founder Mike Roselle.⁸

In America, the environmental movement was becoming more confrontational. But in other countries things were happening even faster. While "the decade of environmental legislation" had given U.S. environmentalists leverage through the court system, environmentalists in other countries did not have the same degree of recourse through official channels. They were forced to rely on moral pressure. When that failed, they got physical. Often, civil disobedience attracted respectable members of society who probably would have confined themselves to acting within the law if they had the choice. In Australia, things were positively raucous. Logging blockades in Australian rain forests began in 1979. In 1982, John Seed, a diminutive, fine-featured back-to-the-lander of a somewhat less recent vintage than some of his hippie compatriots, allied the Australian movement with Earth First! The Australians staged protests far larger than U.S. Earth First!ers could even dream about. In 1983, for instance, 1,500 people demonstrated to save a wild river in Tasmania. In New South Wales, 300 people blocked a logging road being cut into a rain forest called The Big Scrub. The protesters lay down in front of equipment, climbed trees to prevent them from being felled, and tied the trees together with cables, wrote former *Earth First! Journal* associate editor Christopher Manes in his lively, if somewhat pompous, Earth First!

manifesto, *Green Rage*. "The scene had a surrealistic air about it as a squad of police one hundred strong escorted the rumbling road-building machinery through the primeval forest half-light, harassed at every turn by protesters," wrote Manes. Eventually half a million acres of The Big Scrub became parkland.

Mike Roselle thought it would be a piece of cake to pull off a similar demonstration in Oregon. The Pacific Northwest was full of old antiwar activists trained in nonviolent civil disobedience, including Roselle himself. But for some strange reason, Roselle found that there was a shortage of people willing to get arrested. "Everyone always wants to save themselves for later," Roselle said crabbily. "They think if they get arrested they'll never get out."

On April 26, four people strode up to the clearing where a crew would be bulldozing the Bald Mountain Road the next day. At the last minute, Mike Roselle and Kevin Everhart had been joined by two locals, Steve Marsden, a former logging road engineer, and Pedro Tama, the editor of a bioregional newspaper called *Siskiyou Country*. When the road crew arrived, the two sides parleyed. Roselle told the crew flat out that the protesters were going to stop the road. Period. End of story. One of the bulldozer operators was a particularly aggressive fellow named Les Moore. Moore and the rest of the road crew didn't seem to be taking the protesters very seriously. They suggested that the Earth Firsters wouldn't have the balls to be there the next day, when construction was scheduled to begin. But when Moore & Co. arrived the next morning to start bulldozing the road, the suckers were there again. This time they were standing right in the middle of the road, holding a goddamn banner.

Nothing like this had ever happened in Oregon's timber country. These tall hippies were spitting on Mom, apple pie, and Les Moore's paycheck. Moore cursed and shouted, but his theatrics had little effect on the demonstrators. Then he jumped off his bulldozer, a big D-8K Cat. He shouted at the blockaders, who stood there silently, in good civil-disobedience fashion.

Finally Moore ran out of words and clambered back on the bulldozer. He backed down the road scar about fifty feet, lowered the

blade and prepared to charge. The big Cat moved forward, its thirteen-foot blade scraping a wall of dirt up against the protesters' feet. Raising the blade, Moore swung it around, expertly dislodging rocks from the high side of the road onto the pile of dirt. Nobody moved. Visibly frustrated, Moore backed up the bulldozer about ten yards. The protesters jumped over the dirt pile, hustled up to where Moore was, and faced off against the blade again.

"First down!" someone shouted.

Now Moore was really disgusted. He backed the bulldozer up another ten yards or so, grabbed his thermos, and took off for the nearest pay phone, spitting over his shoulder, "Bunch of communist bastards! Who funds you, anyway? The Rockefellers?"

"Touchdown!" barked the Earth First! announcer.

In the meantime, Dave Foreman was slogging through the mud, a mewling passel of out-of-shape reporters dogging his heels. Foreman and the press arrived about half an hour after Les Moore had stomped off in frustration. Fortunately, the sheriff's department took even longer to arrive, so the reporters had plenty of time to interview everyone. When the cops finally got there, they duly arrested the blockaders. Chant Thomas watched them being carted off, shaking his head as he saw Mike Roselle ignore his advice.

"Mike, don't go limp," Thomas said he had warned Roselle. "You and other people who come in from other parts of the country . . . it's the same cops we deal with all the time. They resent driving three hours and they get skinned knuckles and stuff because they're trying to lift a two-hundred-pound oaf."

Despite Roselle's limpness, the blockade was deemed a success. Roselle even wrote his own account for the *Earth First! Journal*. "The blockade of the Bald Mountain Road had begun, after months of planning and preparations; so too, began the nonviolent struggle to save all wilderness," ran his modest pledge in the June 21, 1983, edition. The charm of his hyperbole lay in the fact that the blockaders were literally possessed by their own breakneck idealism. The mood was incredibly optimistic, especially among the native Oregonians. The blockade confirmed their long-buried perceptions about the

closed-off, provincial society in which they had grown up. It was as if an evil empire were toppling before their eyes, the victim of a freak gust of fresh air.

It was a great time for Mike Roselle, too. The hillbilly mongrel from Kentucky via Los Angeles had found a home on the Pacific coast, at least as much of a home as he would ever have. He felt comfortable with the hippies and back-to-the-landers; he could speak their language, and they respected him in a way that nobody else ever had. Cowboy hat notwithstanding, he was one of them. Unlike the other Buckaroos, he had a social conscience that extended beyond wilderness issues. It was easy for him to see the big picture: the links between technology's oppression of people and its destruction of nature. Somewhere in between the Yippie period and the Kalmiopsis blockade Roselle had become an autodidact. Abbie Hoffman's *Revolution for the Hell of It* was still his bible, but he had also read Thoreau and Abbey and Leopold. Once he got to Oregon, he read up on the peace movement and studied the lives of Gandhi and Martin Luther King. "Roselle and I were both having fantasies of being the Mahatma Gandhi of the environmental movement," recalled Foreman.

Roselle versed himself in forest legislation, parks legislation, the history of the wilderness movement. Not only that, he learned about art, music, food. He developed the ability to analyze politics from a variety of perspectives. This protean quality was his greatest strength as an organizer. Dave Foreman and the other Buckaroos kept saying they welcomed diversity, that anyone could join Earth First! But they felt most comfortable with people like themselves: traditional wilderness activists. They might be narrow-minded, but they knew how the game was played. If they broke the rules, the way Earth First! was designed to do, they did it consciously, strategically. At least they knew the rules they were breaking. The people in Oregon were different, and the Buckaroos didn't know what to make of them.

"Most of the people in the blockades weren't environmentalists," said blockader Steve Marsden. "They had a feeling for the land, the place. There was a spiritual connection. But they were mostly back-to-the-landers and liberal arts college majors who had moved to the

boondocks. Environmental groups had never catalyzed that energy because these people weren't environmentalists."

Roselle didn't care if they were Sufi dancers or hog callers. When he said anyone was welcome, he meant it. Besides, Roselle wasn't allergic to crowds. Foreman only liked large groups of people when he was separated from them by a stage. Bart Koehler, for all his warmth, tended to be the same way. Howie Wolke was happiest rooting around the forest by himself. Ron Kezar was even more allergic to Homo sapiens. His brand of misanthropy took the form of living in Ely, Nevada, located smack on Route 50, "the loneliest road in America." If the Buckaroos hadn't created their own mass movement, they wouldn't have come within a mile of one.

Roselle was different. If he had been a teenager instead of an experienced old pro of twenty-seven, he probably would have been among the gaggle of fresh-faced, long-haired freaks coming out to blockade the Kalmiopsis. He was attracted to the frenzy of political movements. He liked living outside the mainstream. Even years later he would say, "I'm not a workaholic like Foreman. If there wasn't so goddamn much to do, I'd sit around and smoke dope all day."

But between April and July of 1983, there was a lot to do, not just for Roselle, but for everyone. During this four-month period Earth First! staged seven blockades in the Kalmiopsis. Students from the University of Oregon started showing up, people like Mary Beth Nearing, Marcy Willow, and Doug Norlen. Mary Beth Nearing was the daughter of Catholic social workers in the Dorothy Day mode; political activism came naturally to her. So did physical guts. Geared more to action than reflection, Nearing became an ace tree climber and the best civil-disobedience trainer in Earth First!

Marcy Willow was one of Dave's myriad ex-girlfriends and a liberal-arts student at University of Oregon. Along with a couple of other blockaders, she introduced a new tone to Earth First! Later it would be disparagingly called "woo-woo," a euphemism for ecological maunderings in a vaguely New Age spiritual vein. When Willow wrote about "ancient new-born hills" [sic] and "passionate misfit[s] in

the selfish world of moderation and compromise" it was a far cry from the usual nose-picking gnarliness of the *Earth First! Journal*. Other Oregon blockaders wrote rhapsodies like this one, after an out-of-control bulldozer driver tried to bury them alive: "Our blockade taught me that there are greater forces than us working on this. When the dozer was coming on the final run that plowed us under, my fear was taken away and I was given a feeling of peaceful acceptance of whatever was coming. I felt a unity with the earth and the spirits that I can't describe and I knew that that time I wasn't going to move." This was the sort of account that caused cowboy Earth First!ers to gag and mutter, "CD junkie!!!" Civil disobedience did seem to produce a weird, passive-aggressive sort of high. It was pretty wimpy compared to the terminal Rocky Mountain weirdness that *Journal* contributor Jim Stiles, the Arches National Park ranger, exhibited in his column, "Sleaze from the Slickrock." "I am the head of Joaquim. I live in the slickrock desert of Southeastern Utah and watch the many imbeciles who have no heads attempt to destroy this sacred place. Let me tell you but a few of the stories . . .," wrote Stiles. "I was perched in the Westerner Grill only yesterday watching my friend eat lard. (I do not eat-it just comes out of my neck) when Moabite M.H., average I.Q. known to exceed certain specimens of Entrada sandstone says to no one in particular, 'any environmentalist pukes in here?' I mention this incident, so as to set the tone for all that is to follow. Southeast Utah, land of red rock splendor and dreamlike skies, home of M. H. . . . let us pray." Eventually Stiles would leave the park service and start his own newspaper in Moab, *The Canyon Country Zephyr*, causing intestinal distress closer to home.

Not everyone fell into the two extremes of woo-woo or Hunter S. Thompson-derived hallucinations. There were a few blockaders—and the occasional *Earth First! Journal* writer—who fit neither mold. Doug Norlen was a bright, unassuming Mayberry RFD-type kid who had been a business major before becoming a blockader. He ended up taking the usual vow of poverty by becoming a professional environmentalist.

The Bald Mountain blockades also changed Lou Gold's life. Gold,

a chain-smoking former political-science professor who had taught at Oberlin and the University of Illinois, was visiting friends in southern Oregon when he heard about the action at Bald Mountain. He had never seen the mountain but decided to take part in a blockade. Afterward, Gold started spending four months each year on Bald Mountain, becoming a Jewish hippie mystic who made his wisdom and herb tea available to youthful tie-dyed pilgrims. He also provided a practical service by cleaning up the mess left behind by fire-lookout stations. The rest of the year, Gold toured the United States, giving a bang-up slide show on old-growth forests. Forest Service officials would later say they could trace Gold's route from the postmarks on letters they received from citizens complaining about logging in the Siskiyou.⁹

The Bald Mountain blockade also drew a young woman named Karen Pickett. Pickett was pure Yankee. She had even grown up right next to Plymouth Rock. When she moved to the forested hippie enclave of Canyon, California, just west of Berkeley, she brought with her the sensibility of her Puritan forebears. Yankee frugality motivated her to co-found Berkeley's recycling program. Her Puritan moral sense led her to Earth First! Pickett was converted to the Earth First! philosophy after Dave Foreman walked into the Berkeley Ecology Center armed with newsletters, T-shirts, and ideology. "He said, 'There's this group of people and we're trying to do things a little differently,'" Pickett said. "He caught my interest, and when he left a *Progressive* article he had written, I read it. Not to sound corny, but it was like a religious experience, it caught me so hard and so fast."

Although she admired Foreman, Pickett became closer friends with Mike Roselle. His good-time hillbilly looseness appealed to her; it was so different from her own brand of intensity. But his political commitment went as deep as hers. Pickett, along with almost everybody else in Oregon, was impressed with how Roselle could support and motivate people.

With Mike Roselle hitting his stride, and forceful figures like Pickett, Nearing, and Gold entering the scene, Dave Foreman was receding from the central role that he had played since 1980. Although he

had good memories of a childhood stint in Blaine, Washington, he felt uncomfortable with the peace-and-granola people who were joining Earth First! in the Pacific Northwest. Foreman left the hands-on organizing to others and went back to concentrating on the Southwest and the Rocky Mountains. To Mary Beth Nearing, Dave Foreman was "just some guy named Digger that we used to call when we needed money." But Foreman did his stint as a road blockader. Although forty-four people were arrested in road blockades, Foreman's was the only civil-disobedience action to become enshrined in Earth First! mythology. Maybe it was his karma. In any case, Foreman's blockade turned out to be the most violent.

By the time Foreman arrived, things were already getting weird. On May 10, five blockaders, including Doug Norlen, had been attacked by a bulldozer operator. First the driver tried to back over them. When that didn't work, he tried to bury them, stopping only after one woman had been covered with dirt up to her neck. When the cops arrived, they refused to make an arrest.

Foreman and Roselle went to the office of the Siskiyou National Forest supervisor and demanded that he revoke the road construction company's contract. The supervisor denied that violence had occurred. Later, the sheriff's department backed him up.

Two days later, Foreman and Dave Willis set up a blockade on an access road ten miles from the construction site. Willis, a mountaineer who had lost his hands and feet to frostbite, was in a wheelchair. A support team, which included Chant Thomas and a few other regulars, dragged a felled tree across the road. Not long afterward, a sheriff's deputy arrived. It was 6 A.M. The deputy asked Foreman and Willis to move. When they refused, he had the log winched out of the way. Fifteen minutes later, Les Moore drove up in a truck carrying five workers. Moore decided to run the blockade. Avoiding Foreman, he whipped the truck around Willis, almost knocking his wheelchair over. Foreman ran over to block the truck. When Moore swerved again, Foreman ran back to his original position.

For a very long minute, there was stasis. Truck and man faced

each other in the cold gray mist of the early morning. The quiet evaporated when the truck shot forward, hitting Foreman in the chest and knocking him backward. He righted himself, leaning onto the hood with his hands. Moore drove the truck forward again, digging its grill into Foreman's chest. Foreman pushed back, but the truck kept going. Foreman found himself running backward, uphill, holding on to the truck. The truck speeded up. Foreman ran faster. Everything kept getting faster, Foreman running backward, the truck surging forward. But to the people watching, it was almost as if things were moving in slow motion. Every detail became clear, the way things do when there is going to be blood or pain and it is going to happen and there is absolutely nothing you can do about it. Then it happened. Foreman's foot caught a rock and he went down. He grabbed the truck's bumper and it dragged him like Indiana Jones, except he felt more like a road-killed raccoon. It dragged him and dragged him until Les Moore finally slammed on the brakes. Winded, Foreman lay under the truck for a few seconds, while Moore screamed down at him. "You dirty communist bastard! Why don't you go back to Russia!"

"But, Les," Foreman replied. "I'm a registered Republican."

It was the only documented case of one-upmanship by an environmentalist lying on his back in the mud, a fat rubber tire inches from his face.

Being a smartass didn't do Foreman much good. The deputy handcuffed him and led him away to Grant's Pass, where Foreman unsuccessfully tried to file assault charges against the construction company's employees. Instead he was charged with Blocking a Public Thoroughfare. Nancy Morton sent the money to bail him out. When he was released that afternoon, Foreman mounted the Josephine County courthouse steps to accuse Les Moore of attempted murder. Later that evening, two local television news programs ran his accusation, along with footage of Foreman being run over by Moore's truck. On Friday, May 13, Moore's employer tacitly admitted guilt when he ordered employees to refrain from further violence. Foreman was arraigned the same day. He pleaded not guilty and was released

on his own recognizance. Unmoved by Foreman's explanation of civil disobedience and equally unimpressed by his disquisition on wilderness, the judge told him to stay out of national forests.

The incident was reported in the *Earth First! Journal* of June 21, 1983. Tucked down at the bottom of the article was a one-paragraph, one-column-wide story. "Sue the Bastards," read the headline. Lawsuit? Earth First!? Things were happening pretty fast. By the next issue of the *Journal*, everything became clear. The real story was that Andy Kerr had gotten hip to the true potential of the Buckaroos' migration to the Pacific Northwest.

Once Earth First! had gotten publicity for Bald Mountain, Kerr discovered that he was suddenly able to raise money for ONRC's long-awaited RARE II lawsuit. Now the local boys could finally mount their own battle, without depending on the chickenshit Sierra Club for funding. As it turned out, the lawsuit came just in time to put additional pressure on Hatfield et al. to pass the Oregon Wilderness bill. "Earth First!, literally like the cavalry, came to the rescue in two ways," said Kerr. "One way, they came and brought attention to the issues by their demonstrations. And eventually they slowed down the bulldozers. People got upset. 'Save Bald Mountain' became the rallying cry. So we said, send us a check." Kerr and Monteith not only found money, they found a lawyer. Neil Kagan, a refugee from suburban Long Island, New York, with a background in biology, had just graduated from the University of Oregon law school. Unlike the Sierra Club, Kagan had no reservations about using the Huey Johnson case as his main argument against the road, which he claimed violated NEPA because of RARE II's inadequate evaluation of the roadless area. He even made Earth First! the lead plaintiff in the suit, reasoning that ONRC had already sued once. It was the first time Earth First! participated in a lawsuit, and probably will be the last. By early July, when the Round River Rendezvous rolled around, Kagan had made headway. A judge had issued a preliminary injunction, stopping construction of the Bald Mountain Road. The Rendezvous, which Earth First!ers had expected to be a war, turned into a victory party. Marcy Willow presented Dave Foreman with a T-shirt with a big bulldozer

track silk-screened onto it. There were speeches, dancing, and music. The hippies and the rednecks partied happily together.

Things were not so simple once the case actually went to court. The government argued that Earth First! did not have standing to sue, under the doctrine of "unclean hands," which meant that people who do illegal things can't fight their battles in court, too. Federal attorneys also attacked the legal standing of the Oregon Natural Resources Council, saying that ONRC had already sued unsuccessfully. Of the seven individuals named as plaintiffs, almost all of them were members of Earth First! or ONRC. Some of them had been arrested, too, making their "hands" unclean. But the environmentalists lucked out. One woman had just moved to town. She had no track record as an environmentalist. She hadn't even been arrested yet. As a citizen, she had legal standing to sue. The road was stopped, at least until a state-wide wilderness bill could deal with the issue.*

After the Bald Mountain blockades, Earth First! became a prominent feature in the political landscape of the Northwest. A few months later, it became notorious. That was when a stand of trees in the Willamette National Forest was spiked by monkeywrenchers calling themselves the Bonnie Abzug Feminist Garden Club. Tree spiking was a time-honored ruffian's tactic. A sawblade hitting a spike blade could shatter into shrapnel, costing time and money, and possibly injuring a logger. The "official" Earth First! policy was to notify newspapers, radio, and TV stations after trees had been spiked. Publicity forced the timber companies to comb the woods with metal detectors to show that they were concerned about the safety of their workers.

Tree spiking certainly had potential to be dangerous. But Mike

* Subsequently, Bald Mountain was left out of the 1984 Oregon Wilderness Bill and remained open to development. Earth First! protests resumed in 1986 and 1987, with demonstrators camping out in trees to stop logging. Another series of blockades took place in 1988. In 1992, Earth First!ers in southern Oregon, including Steve Marsden, who never rejoined the U.S. Forest Service, were still trying to protect roadless areas in the Kalmiopsis.

Roselle liked to downplay the ethical questions. Even loggers admitted that they had been hitting everything from bullets to tin cups since their granddads started whaling away on big trees in the late nineteenth century. Few, if any, had been killed. If the *modus operandi* subscribed to by Earth First! was followed, nobody would even get hurt. After timber cruisers went over the woods with detectors, the whole timber operation actually became safer than it would have been otherwise. It also became more expensive. That was the point. Spiking was calculated to infuriate, not to wound. "At Hardesty Mountain, we flagged the trees with survey tape," said Mike Roselle. "In the Middle Santiam, we spray-painted them. All they had to do was locate and remove the nails. The big deal is that it's a very marginal business, harvesting on public land, and spiking threatens its economic viability."

Roselle was going around taking credit for the actions of the Bonnie Abzug Feminist Garden Club. Of course, Mike sometimes acted like one of those loonies who rush to the cop shop to confess every time there's an all-points bulletin. He seemed to want to reassure others that you could be radical and get away with it. While sources have confirmed that Roselle was hammering away somewhere in the grove of giant trees, they also believe that Bonnie Abzug's name was not taken in vain—there was a woman or two sneaking around the woods, too.

Not long after Bonnie Abzug's acolytes hit, a young, slightly crazed mountaineer named Mike Jakubal was sitting around the proverbial Earth First! campfire when he had a brainstorm. Jakubal had brainstormed frequently, but this one had some real heft to it. Jakubal had been blockading timber sales, but was frustrated that he was only able to delay them a day or two. He had heard about Australians who climbed trees to stop logging. In typical American fashion, he resolved to do it bigger, better, and longer—and to get as much publicity as possible. Using mountain-climbing techniques, Jakubal ascended a big tree that was about to be cut in the Middle Santiam wilderness. Unfortunately, he had been camped out in the treetop for only a day

when, mistakenly thinking he was alone, he descended to urinate and was nabbed by authorities.

By the time of the next protest Jakubal had fine-tuned his technique in such a way that obviated the need to descend. A month later, half a dozen protesters joined him in the branches of Douglas firs large enough to house the whole Swiss family Robinson. Each protester used pitons and climbing ropes to ascend the thousand-year-old trees. The trees, thought to be among the oldest in Oregon, were located in a section of the Willamette National Forest that environmentalists took to calling Millenium Grove. Jakubal stayed up for a week; another protester named Ron Huber persevered for a month. Their trees began to feel like home. When Jakubal revisited the grove after the trees had been cut, he seemed gripped by nostalgia, the kind people feel for any inanimate object that they invest with emotion and time. But the tree sitters might have argued that they had experienced something else, the essence of each individual tree. It certainly didn't take Jakubal long to spot "his" tree. Immediately upon entering the grove, he made a beeline for the enormous stump and sat on its flat, round surface for a while, his long legs splayed but still not reaching over its sides.

After the initial bathroom glitch, Mike Jakubal had managed to invent tree sitting, which would become standard Earth First! protest fare, although after Ron Huber's stint, no Earth First!er would be crazy enough to spend a whole month living on a platform the size of a closet again.

In 1984, at the height of Earth First!'s guerrilla war, Kerr and Monteith made a tactical decision to go national. Former Buckaroo Tim Mahoney, who was working for the Sierra Club, had just managed to ram through the Oregon Wilderness Act. If Doug Scott was the hero of the 1970s, Tim was the mainstream star of the 1980s. "Tim was a genius," Scott said. "We passed twenty-two state wilderness bills in 1984 for a total of 8.9 million acres. That's a high-water mark. It was a tour de force."

Or a debacle. Even though Dave Foreman's relationship with Tim Mahoney was still one of mutual respect, Foreman noted unhappily that Tim's victory had resulted in the release of almost twenty million acres from wilderness consideration. Much of this land was even more valuable ecologically than the high-elevation "rocks and ice" that were preserved as official wilderness.

Certainly, at 950,000 acres, the Oregon Wilderness Act was a far cry from the 3.4 million acres of roadless land that ONRC and Earth First! had wanted to preserve. Even the Sierra Club and the Wilderness Society had proposed 1.2 million acres. The environmentalists got what they could. Normally, they would have simply resolved to go after the rest later.

But this time Mark Hatfield was pledging to hold the line on wilderness. There was reason to believe that Hatfield would change his mind. Every previous election year, Hatfield had caved in to environmentalist pressure and shepherded a wilderness bill through Congress. Today, Kerr thinks that Hatfield might have let another bill pass when he came up for reelection in 1990. But ONRC was not content to depend on Hatfield's reelection blues. Earth First!'s effect on legislation may have been negligible, but the group was influencing the political climate. With the increased publicity from Earth First!'s actions, the ONRC staff decided to take on their mortal enemy. After the 1984 bill passed, they began lobbying the lobbyists, trying to convince the national groups that old-growth forests were an issue of importance to all Americans, a green, leafy version of the Grand Canyon, a wonder of the world, a Sistine Chapel you didn't want to flood. They were attempting the impossible, an end run around their own state's delegation.

It took the Oregonians several years to pull the big national groups into line. Brock Evans, who had joined the staff of the National Audubon Society in 1981, was one of the first to support their cause. He didn't regard Kerr and Monteith as upstarts. He even said Andy Kerr was as good a strategist as Doug Scott, albeit with a different philosophy. Nationally, Evans became known as "the savior of the ancient forests." Between 1982 and 1988, he served on the Sierra Club

board, where he lobbied to make old-growth forests a national priority. But he couldn't buck the staff, which persisted in the belief that the way to win on old growth was through working with Hatfield and Les AuCoin. (AuCoin had been a valuable ally to Doug Scott when the Sierra Club was trying to convince Congress to pass the Alaska National Interest Land Conservation Act in 1980.) To critics, the Sierra Club's failure to take a stand on old growth was a tragic repudiation of John Muir's legacy. "John Muir is back and, boy, is he pissed," wrote a columnist in the environmental magazine *Buzzworm* in 1992.

But other environmental groups not geared so exclusively to pummeling legislation through Congress were working on saving old growth. The National Wildlife Federation fought Forest Service policies by filing a series of administrative appeals in the early 1980s. These appeals later became the basis for a succession of lawsuits, mostly focusing on the spotted owl. It soon became clear that the owl was going to be the snail darter of the 1980s. In the Pacific Northwest, the owl became such political football that everyone became heartily sick of the whole subject. By the end of the 1980s even environmentalists were throwing darts at photos of the shy, small raptor—when no one was looking, of course.

The timber industry's charge that environmentalists were just using the owl as a way to save the habitat were well-founded. The problem was that no "Endangered Habitat" law existed yet. But increasing numbers of people were becoming sophisticated about ecology. They understood the relationship between the owl, an indicator species, and the old-growth ecosystem. John Muir's intuitive maxim, "all things are hitched to each other," was vividly brought home by the discovery that the Pacific yew, an old-growth forest species, contained a chemical that helped fight cancer.

Nationally, Forest Service policies were drawing public concern. The Forest Service was a road junkie with a habit that kept growing. By the end of the 1980s there were 340,000 miles of forest roads—eight times the size of the federal highway system. And the agency kept building. Major logging roads cost \$45,000 a mile and secondary

ones \$15,000 a mile, on average.¹⁰ Timber sales were supposed to pay for the roads, but the federal government found itself making up the shortfall each year to the tune of almost \$200 million. In effect, the government was giving an unofficial subsidy to the timber industry, just like its unofficial subsidy to cattle ranchers. To justify these outlays, the timber program had to produce high revenues. The pressure to cut timber beyond sustainable yield (a forestry buzzword that means cutting trees no faster than they can be grown) eventually led the timber beasts themselves to start a reform group called the Association of Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics, which began in 1989.

In terms of national strategy, everybody knew that the best way to uncover the timber program's disastrous financial picture was to get at the Pacific Northwest. The majority of Forest Service timber sales actually lost money. But revenues from the Northwest kept the program afloat. In 1987, for instance, 90 percent of the program's net receipts came from the twelve old-growth forests in California, Oregon, and Washington, even though two thirds of the timber came from the other 144 forests.¹¹ If the carnage in the Northwest stopped, the bad economics behind the program would be exposed.

Slowly, the majors fell into line. Around 1986, the new, improved Wilderness Society began to wake up. By this time, the society had changed radically from the grass-roots-oriented group it had been in the 1970s, becoming an environmental think tank without a real presence in the boondocks. But think tanks could be valuable, too. The new, streamlined Wilderness Society funded aerial surveys and photography by Project Lighthawk, a Santa Fe-based group of volunteer pilots who called themselves "the Environmental Air Force." According to Catherine Caufield's account, Lighthawk discovered that the U.S. Forest Service had grossly miscalculated the amount of old-growth forest. Peter Morrison, a forest ecologist, compared the Lighthawk photographs with Forest Service data for six national forests in the Pacific Northwest. Morrison's estimates cut the agency's in half. When his information was presented to the Forest Service, they lowered their own estimates.

The first significant lawsuit was filed in 1987 by the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund on behalf of the Audubon Society. The Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund had formed in 1971, at the height of the controversy that ended in David Brower's dismissal. The original funders of SCLDF, particularly the Ford Foundation, felt more comfortable with the new organization being legally independent of the Sierra Club, which appeared to be somewhat unstable at the time. Nevertheless, the Sierra Club was SCLDF's most frequent client. In this case, though, SCLDF's strategy was at odds with the Sierra Club's political game plan. Although the Sierra Club later joined lawsuits over the spotted owl, the club's participation was grudging, especially at first.¹²

The National Wildlife Federation. Audubon. Even the Wilderness Society was getting in on it. The one group still dragging its feet was the Sierra Club. Doug Scott had vociferously opposed the spotted owl lawsuits, which he called "incredibly counterproductive." His argument appeared at least partially valid. It seemed as though every time a lawsuit threatened to stop logging, Hatfield nuked it with another "Rider from Hell."

"You're not going to win that fight on biology. Biology is important, the PR those groups have done is excellent, the movies, all that stuff," Scott said. "But in the final analysis, if you want to pass a law in Congress and get a stick of timber saved, you still gotta contend with some realities.

"And the realities start like this. The ranking minority member of the Senate Appropriations Committee is Mark Hatfield. The Speaker of the House of Representatives is Tom Foley. Before he was Speaker of the House of Representatives and majority leader, Tom Foley was the chairman of the Agriculture Committee. In many ways, he still is. No piece of legislation involving old-growth forests in Oregon and Washington can be passed if it is not with the compliance of Mark Hatfield and Tom Foley."

Scott believed it was possible to get Hatfield, AuCoin, and Foley to play ball. After all, he had done it with French Pete, which he had been able to include in the Endangered American Wilderness Act of

1978. Of course, it had taken twenty years to save French Pete. The old-growth forests would be gone by then.

To be fair, Scott was not the sole architect of the Sierra Club's policy on old growth. The Sierra Club's approach to the old-growth issue had also been fashioned by Jim Blomquist, who succeeded Scott as the Northwest regional representative. But Scott took most of the heat, both out of staff loyalty and a sense of integrity so stubborn it verged on contrariness. Besides, he agreed with Blomquist's reading of the mood in the Pacific Northwest. Blomquist, Scott, and even Bruce Hamilton argued that preserving Douglas fir forests was a regional issue, not a national one. Local volunteer leaders should be allowed to decide how to handle it and they had insisted on a measured, less confrontational style. It was easy to see why Scott, who liked to call himself "a democrat with a small d," would be swayed by this argument. Yet despite his assessment, a significant number of rank-and-file Sierra Club members felt the logging situation was dire enough to warrant confrontation. They were outraged at what they viewed as the club's policy of appeasement. Some let their membership lapse; others simply became active in other groups. One by one, they realized that the Sierra Club's legislative machinery was not going to power old-growth reform through Congress.

In any case, Congress was nearly paralyzed. Environmentalists were finding new ways to circumvent recalcitrant legislators. Some devised innovative legislative strategies; others bypassed the Congress entirely. Up in Alaska, Bart Koehler was putting together his coalition of old-time Alaskans, fishermen, and environmentally conscious post-sixties transplants. His staff was traveling around the country, trying to generate enough support in the Lower 48 to force the Alaska delegation to make a deal. Brock Evans was interested in Bart's strategy. He had even loaned Bart a windowless cubbyhole in the Washington, D.C., offices of the Audubon Society. When he saw the results of the Tongass campaign, he came to believe something similar could work with the forests of the Pacific Northwest.

Once again, Doug Scott vehemently disagreed. He repeated the conventional wisdom. Alaska is the only state with a delegation you

can steamroll. Only Alaska, the last frontier, is icon enough to galvanize voters all over the country. Alienating Mark Hatfield isn't going to save the forests.

"It's not easy. It's not glamorous. It requires being in the temple of the enemy," Scott admonishes. "If you're going to have a fight with Mark Hatfield . . . I want to be in the room talking in his ear. He may not vote the way I want but at least I'm talking to him. Because I'm sure he won't vote the way I want if I'm in the street with a torch."

Scott said these words—or words very much like them—to people like Andy Kerr, Jim Monteith, and Brock Evans many times. But by the late 1980s, they were not doing a whole lot of talking. There had never been love lost between Doug Scott and Brock Evans, who had been forced out of the Sierra Club by Scott and Chuck Clusen in the early eighties. Now their dispute over strategy was spilling over into nastiness at public meetings. In 1988 the Wilderness Society held a major old-growth conference in Portland. At the conference, Evans was offended by Scott's behavior. "After three or four years of failure and defeat doing the traditional thing on the ancient forests campaign, trying to deal with the Northwest delegation, which was nutty—Mark Hatfield's the most . . . no human being's done more damage to the state than that man—finally we had called the battalion leaders together from all over, including the Sierra Club.

"The Sierra Club cadre were all in the back of the room with their arms folded. They'd be talking when other people were talking, there'd be whispering, snorting, all the body language. Doug is a master of the rolling eyeballs. All the snorts of contempt. They were just barely participating. But they had to be there, because everybody else was there."

Evans gave a speech in the morning, telling the crowd that they had to "wrench" the old-growth issue out of the Pacific Northwest. "We have to make it a national issue," he thundered. "That's the only thing that's going to save it."

Doug Scott was scheduled to speak at lunch that day. According

to Evans, Scott “trashed the whole thing,” reiterating his commitment to working with Hatfield and AuCoin. In Evans’s view, Doug was slavishly following the tradition of his mentor, the Wilderness Society’s Howard Zahniser. Tim Mahoney agreed. “Scott might not have assessed it accurately for the long term,” commented Tim Mahoney. “But he was true to Zahnier.”

Although both Evans and Scott had defensible points of view, the 1989 conference made it clear that blood would be spilled in the coming battle—and some of it would be environmentalist blood spilled by environmentalists. Ultimately the 150 environmental leaders who attended the Portland meeting adopted Evans’s three goals: to form a united front, to support old-growth legislation in Congress, and to “wrench this thing out of the Northwest.”

“Brock successfully bridged the ONRC–Sierra Club gap,” Tim Mahoney said in 1992. “The ONRC ancient forest strategy—if it was thought out—was to leverage the national groups. The Sierra Club’s was to work with the Northwest delegation. Brock combined the two into a national lobbying effort to roll the Northwest delegation. It hasn’t happened yet, but he correctly realized—more than the Sierra Club—the national power of the issue.”

Needless to say, Doug Scott was not happy. He distanced himself from the old-growth fight, which helped Evans assume a greater leadership role. Not long after this gathering of the clans, there was a smaller discussion among Evans, Monteith, Kerr, and several other environmentalists that helped change the course of the campaign. It was a simple matter, really. The environmentalists were looking for a catchy phrase to describe what they were fighting for. For hours, they talked about how they should describe the forest of big trees and giant ferns, a forest so rich it actually seemed to *breathe*—even if you hadn’t been sampling some of the more questionable specimens of the region’s fungi. Andy Kerr kept pitching the word “primeval.” “This is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the hemlocks . . . / Stand like Druids of old,” said the thirty-four-year-old college dropout, quoting Longfellow. But this was a strategy session, not a liter-

ature seminar. The environmentalists meeting that day in the Portland office of the National Wildlife Federation couldn’t afford to consider anything but results.

Brock Evans, talking to them on a conference call from Audubon Society headquarters in Washington, D.C., voted for ancient forests. Primeval was too clunky. Ancient was actually more poetic, Evans thought. “It has that connotation of antiquity.”

But it was the scientist who made the decisive argument. *Primeval* has three syllables, Jim Monteith pointed out. *Ancient* has two. Pure marketing. Evans and Monteith turned out to be right. Within weeks, the campaign’s effect was being felt. Newspaper headlines were bantering out “THE FIGHT TO SAVE THE ANCIENT FORESTS.” Not only did the word *ancient* bring to mind the romance of prehistoric pyramids in the jungles of the Yucatán, but it also was clipped enough to catch a journalist’s ear. “When we heard that phrase, ‘ancient forests,’ we knew we were dead,” a Forest Service public-relations man later confided to Evans. It was a gratifying moment.

Despite support from Evans, the rest of the movement was feeling the Sierra Club’s absence on the old-growth issue. Each environmental group filled a niche, and the Sierra Club’s clout with Congress was one of the strongest cards the movement could play. In 1989, the SCLDF attorneys became so frustrated by the Sierra Club’s inaction on old growth that they hired their own lobbyist. The Sierra Club remained unmoved. Not until 1991, after Doug Scott had resigned, did club policy begin to change. By then, even the board of directors felt uncomfortable with the Sierra Club’s failure to take action. Privately, a group of them approached Evans. Evans suggested that they talk to the Sierra Club’s elder statesman, Dr. Edgar Wayburn. Wayburn was an elegant and canny old gentleman who had twice served as the club’s president and steered it to several of its most important victories. With Wayburn’s support, the issue of old growth was officially declared one of the club’s national priorities. But the Sierra Club still did not take the active role that other environmentalists expected of it. No other environmental group had the Sierra Club’s clout with

Congress. As the arguments over old growth grew in volume and intensity, the Sierra Club remained on the sidelines.

In any case, it was beginning to look as if lawsuits would play a larger role than legislation in saving the tiny percentage of old growth that remained. Sensing which way the wind was blowing, Andy Stahl, a forester turned environmentalist, had moved over to the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund from the National Wildlife Federation. By 1992, Stahl was saying that any compromise bill that could struggle through Congress would be a step backward. There had been a string of courtroom victories—and there promised to be more. Just as Doug Scott predicted, Mark Hatfield had neutralized most of them as easily as a trigger-happy teenager playing Donkey Kong. But environmentalists didn't have to convince Hatfield to *support* a bill, said Stahl. They had to stop him from writing more "Riders from Hell." If environmentalists took the right approach, the delegation could be rolled.

In the face of congressional atrophy and fragmentation in the environmental community, the strategy on old growth was changing. Environmentalists like Stahl and Kerr were figuring things out, breaking the monumental job of saving an entire ecosystem into more manageable tasks. To stop the decimation of old-growth forests, the short-term answer did seem to be lawsuits, backed by strategic lobbying efforts against the Riders from Hell. After the election of Bill Clinton and Al Gore in 1992, Tim Mahoney predicted that an old-growth bill would finally make headway in Congress. But even successful legislation was likely to continue the polarization between the no-compromise ONRC and the rest of the movement. In the meantime, local environmentalists were still doing the nuts-and-bolts work, racing around appealing all the timber sales they could before every big tree on Forest Service land became a toothpick or a matchbook cover.

Science meant something, too, despite Doug Scott's words. A committee of scientists led by high-level Forest Service biologist Jack Ward Thomas in 1990 issued what is informally called the Thomas Report. The report confirmed what environmentalists had been saying

all along. If you wanted to save the spotted owl—an indicator species for the health of the forest—then you had to save most, if not all, of the remaining old-growth forest.

After ten years of work, hundreds of arrests, anger, broken alliances, and new strategies, the old-growth issue moved closer to resolution in 1992 when a Reagan-appointed judge stopped logging until a bona fide plan to save the spotted owl could be developed. The half-baked compromises reached by the Forest Service and mainstream environmentalists just didn't make it.

A compromise brokered by the Clinton administration in the spring of 1994 didn't solve things either. That summer, ONRC and other groups sued to stop the Clinton deal, which was called Option 9 because it was the ninth alternative to be considered. They argued that it failed to take into account that the old growth forests were worth more dead than alive; also by allowing one-third of the remaining old growth to be logged, the government was endangering the Northern spotted owl and Pacific salmon.

Things were changing, not only in the Pacific Northwest, but around the country as well. Montana logging disputes were hitting the pages of *The New York Times*. Forest supervisors themselves were publicly protesting overcutting. The Forest Service was slowly reforming its logging practices, leaving wider stream buffer zones and haltingly agreeing to more selective logging practices.

As for the Northwest, fifty years after Robert Sterling Yard's article on the Douglas fir forest, the "Third Greatest American Tree" was entering the country's mythology. It was happening slowly and angrily. In large part, it was happening because Earth First! acted without considering so-called political realities. They just fought for the old-growth forests because it was right.

"All of these things, people sitting in the trees and getting arrested, in my view were very beneficial to the cause," said Kerr. "Because they got the attention of the assignment editor in New York, of NBC News. They [the journalists] knew there was more to the story than just these fringe dwellers—and I say this affectionately—these people

who live on the edge of society sitting in trees. But nonetheless that's what got the attention. It wasn't administrative appeals, it wasn't rational discourse. It was somebody getting busted."

It wasn't enough to get busted. Somebody had to call the newspapers to tell them why it was worth getting busted for a couple of trees, or an endangered cave bug, or a river. "Any publicity is good publicity" became the motto of Earth First!

There was more than a tinge of self-mockery, if not self-disgust, as people recognized the central role that publicity occupied in their work. At the Round River Rendezvous, Earth First!ers began handing out awards for "Media Slut of the Year." As commendable as these stirrings of conscience and self-mockery were, a crucial perspective was missing. What most Earth First!ers didn't realize was that any publicity is bad publicity if there is too much of it.



The Crackdown

These people are terrorists, plain and simple.

—Pat Williams, Democratic congressman from Montana

It is environmentalism gone mad.

—American Forest Institute official

1985—Pinedale, Wyoming

IT WAS A SUMMER DAY in the Rockies. Ice was melting and the marmots were coming out of hiding. Blue harebells dangled from granite crevices. Howie Wolke was enjoying a Sunday stroll on Greyback Ridge. Coincidentally, he and his female companion had chosen the exact spot where men from the Chevron corporation were building a road. The road was supposed to lead to oil. If it did, there would be more men and more roads.

Somebody had already "de-surveyed" the four-and-a-half-mile roadbed twice. Now Howie was doing it a third time. Bending over, he strained to yank up a stubborn stake. Howie was so intent on his work that he didn't notice the survey company owner until the guy was practically on top of him. "Someone's gonna die!" the surveyor yelled.

It was one of those fight or flight situations. Wisely, Wolke's fe-

male friend chose flight. But Howie had nowhere to run when the surveyor went apeshit. "He swung the hatchet at me a couple of times," said the big, rawboned environmentalist. "It seemed like he was trying to split my head down the middle. I ducked both times. Then he seemed to calm down a little."

It was lucky for him that he did. Pounding the surveyor into coyote bait wouldn't have been out of character for Howie. In the early eighties, he had worked as a bouncer at The Cowboy Bar in Jackson, Wyoming. The Cowboy Bar was the hippest place in town, even if it was kind of touristy. The whole town was getting that way, tamed and commercialized. But Howie was still living on the wild frontier. Once he lost his temper, Howie couldn't seem to get it back. More than a few times he had to be pried off a bloodied bar patron.

Slowly, though, Howie was getting civilized. Having a girlfriend probably helped. In the old days, Howie had never had much success with women, despite his good looks. Figuring that sexual frustration was adding to his orneriness, his friends got inspired to help Howie over his little problem. Their prescription was a pair of pretty twin sisters with a mercantile bent who worked at a certain now-defunct Wyoming institution. Whatever the twins did, it worked. Bart noted with amusement that Howie suddenly had more women than he could handle. He correctly predicted that Howie might even find a regular girlfriend. "I told him sooner or later he was going to find a woman who would put up with him no matter what, that'll love him no matter what, and I said once that happens, you're in deep trouble, pal. You're finally going to settle down. And he goes, naah, it'll never happen."

His prediction might have sounded like a bad Willie Nelson song, but Bart knew his friends. A gorgeous, busty, Nordic-looking nurse named Marilyn decided that Howie was a Viking god and his fate was sealed. Howie was domesticated. Sort of. In fact, he reportedly told his friends that if Marilyn hadn't been with him on Greyback Ridge, his exchange with the surveyor would have been significantly different. "One of us would have gotten killed," he remarked to someone.

The big Jewish cowboy might not have become entirely domesticated, but he would be living indoors for a while. After being marched off to the authorities at hatchet point, Howie was hit with an even bigger shock—a felony property-destruction charge that carried a maximum \$100,000 fine and ten years in jail. Wisely he decided to pursue a plea bargain, which resulted in his felony being reduced to a misdemeanor. Great. Howie had no problem pleading guilty to Removing a Landmark. Hell, it even *sounded* trivial. This way he got to keep his pride—not to mention his all-important sense of moral superiority—and save his ass at the same time. "The plea bargain allows me to admit to doing something I'm not at all ashamed of doing," he said. "I would have been very uncomfortable denying the charge to avoid a felony conviction."

In fact, things had gone so smoothly that Wolke was totally floored when Sublette County Justice of the Peace William Cramer gave him the maximum sentence for Removing a Landmark. Pack your duds, said Cramer. Six months in the slammer.

Cramer's decision wasn't entirely motivated by Wolke's lack of remorse. ("I did it and I'm damn proud of it," Howie told reporters, shaking his fist and grinning.) The judge, a transplanted easterner, said he had been influenced by local people who explained the area's economic dependence on national forests. "Most times I try not to let people influence me," said the judge. But, he added, "people's comments do have an effect on me in a case like this."

As the judge blathered on, Howie couldn't help thinking that the plea bargain had saved a lot more than his pride. His ass had been on the line here. "If the original felony charge had been pursued . . ." Cramer told him, "you would indeed have gone to the penitentiary. If the jurisdiction of this court had been higher, I would have imposed a higher fine and a higher sentence."

Whew. Six months in jail was bad enough. Howie could tell the judge was yet another victim of a disease that afflicts easterners during their first few years in the West. You could call it cowboyitis or wingtip-in-mouth disease. Even the grizzled old radical Ed Abbey had

been prey to it in his tender youth. Abbey told the story of his own metamorphosis in "The Cowboy and His Cow," a speech he gave at the University of Montana in 1985.

"When I first came West in 1948, a student at the University of New Mexico, I was only twenty years old and just out of the Army. I thought, like most simple-minded Easterners, that a cowboy was a kind of mythic hero. I idolized those scrawny little red-nosed hired hands in their tight jeans, funny boots, and comical hats," said Abbey.

He proceeded to ramble on at great length about a college friend he called Mac. Mac was a cowboy, a bronc-ridin', gun-totin' maniac whose parents had left him enough money to buy a forty-acre spread in the Sandia Mountains where he raised tumbleweed and committed genocide on rabbits. Mac was so disgusting that after a while even the young, impressionable Abbey couldn't stand him. But Abbey didn't get grossed out enough to end his hero-worshiping until Mac had led him on a series of alcoholic, gun-crazy gambling adventures that ol' Cactus Ed probably lifted wholesale from Bret Harte's "The Luck of Roaring Camp" and exhumed from memory expressly for the sake of several hundred credulous University of Montana students. (When he included the speech in his 1987 book of essays, *One Life at a Time, Please*, Abbey pruned its long, digressive gambling stories considerably.) Somewhere in between the rigged poker games and exploding pistols the students got a damn convincing fact-riddled diatribe about the deleterious effect of cattle grazing on the public lands. Then they got the ranting. Shoot the cattle and stock the West with elk, said Abbey. Bring back pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep, moose, and eagles. Especially eagles. "Real animals, real game, real protein." In other words, restore the prehuman West. In Abbey's imagination, if nowhere else, the frontier had been rolled back. Way back. "Down in the desert, I would stock every water tank, every water hole, every stock pond, with alligators," Abbey wound up, quite correctly casting his lot with the artist's imagination instead of realpolitik.

Fancies aside, by the end of the speech a transformation had occurred in the character of Ed Abbey, Narrator. The greenhorn or dude, sketched in the tradition of Mark Twain in *Roughing It*, had

become a bona fide westerner. In the classic western tradition, Ed Abbey could now poke fun at the people he considered dudes, "Especially critical of my [antigrazing] attitude will be the Easterners and Midwesterners newly arrived here from their Upper West Side apartments, their rustic lodges in upper Michigan," wrote Abbey. "Our nouveau Westerners with their toy ranches, their pickup trucks with the gun racks, their pointy-toed boots with the undershot heels, their gigantic hats. And, of course, their pet horses. The *instant rednecks* . . . I'm going to say good-bye to all you cowboys and cowgirls. I love the legend, too—but keep your sacred cows and your dead horses out of my elk pastures."

Even in homespun, hippie Missoula, Abbey writes that his speech was greeted with a "sitting" ovation and gunfire in the parking lot. When it was published in *Harper's* magazine, Abbey reported that it was "rewarded by the usual blizzard of abuse, some seventy-five letters from outraged cattlepersons, including one Gretel Ehrlich of Shell, Wyoming (another instant redneck)." Ehrlich, a Californian who had moved to Wyoming and helped support herself with ranch work, is the author of several books. Her letter denounced Abbey as "arrogant, incoherent, flippant, nonsensical, nasty, and unconstructive . . ."

It was a typical reaction to Abbey, who had indeed verged on incoherence that alcoholic night in Montana and was flippant at the best of times. His style was just a little too, well, a little too *human* for certain kinds of people. Funny when you looked at the people he offended. It was never someone like Katie Lee, one of Abbey's oldest friends, a river rat and cowgirl poet extraordinaire, who qualified as one of the toughest broads in the West.

Of course, there weren't too many Katie Lees around. The pool of readers offended by Abbey's views was broad and diverse. For instance, the editors of *The New York Times* Op-Ed page rejected an article that he wrote on illegal immigration. After unsuccessfully making the rounds of national publications, the column was finally accepted by the Phoenix-based alternative weekly *New Times*. Even the weekly's owner, a feisty Irishman from Jersey City named Mike Lacey, took the precaution of publishing it alongside a rebuttal piece. "Stop

every campesino at our southern border, give him a handgun, a good rifle, and a case of ammunition, and send him home. He will know what to do with our gifts and good wishes," Abbey had written somewhat naively. Protest letters streamed in to *New Times* after the piece ran—all from Anglos.

Criticism from the politically correct only provoked Cactus Ed to greater orneriness. For instance, Abbey's reply to Ehrlich and other defenders of the cowboy was positively gleeful. "Our cowgirls and beef ranchers are such *sensitive* people—touchier than lesbians, thin-skinned and high-strung as prima ballerinas. ('Nasty and unconstructive'—I love that)," he wrote in the unregenerate introduction to *One Life at a Time, Please*.

Like Abbey, Howie Wolke had gone through a prickly transformation from dude to real live westerner. He had been working on ranches since arriving in Wyoming in the mid-1970s. In 1978, he started an outdoor guide service called Wild Horizons, but for about ten years he kept taking outside work while he built the business. Usually he worked as a cowhand or an irrigator, often at the Parker Ranch outside Dubois. Howie couldn't be as articulate about it as Ed Abbey (even when he was just as loaded) but his philosophical transformation had followed the same curve. Until he saw the depressing effects of overgrazing in the West, he had viewed cowboys as romantic figures. He couldn't help feeling contemptuous of the little nerd, Judge Cramer, the "preppie transplant" who had sentenced him. It was like getting screwed by your own ignorant younger self.

It was especially ironic because Wolke felt that he had been reasonable about this Greyback Ridge thing. Maybe too reasonable. Wolke, along with the Jackson Hole Alliance for Responsible Planning, had actually helped cut a deal with Chevron. If their test well came up sucking air, Chevron had agreed to reclaim the road. The company also agreed to pay a hunting guide \$10,000 because his hunting camp would be off-limits to the public while they searched for oil.

All this good behavior was conditional on the environmentalists' promise not to sue. It was a classic trade-off, a RARE II situation in

miniature, but it seemed unavoidable. Howie and the others weren't thrilled with the idea of a road in a steep, easily eroded section of a big roadless area, but the mineral rights had been sold years before. Howie had already agreed to the deal with Chevron when the Bridger-Teton forest supervisor startled everyone by insisting that the road be kept open after the oil company left. Wolke and the other environmentalists knew what that meant—an ugly snowball effect. Give these land rapers an inch, and they'll take a mile. As soon as Chevron was out of the way, Greyback Ridge would be clearcut.

"That's when we decided you just can't reason with this agency," Howie told a sympathetic female reporter from the *Casper Star-Tribune*. But these nuances were lost on Justice of the Peace Cramer, who even called Howie a "coward" for monkeywrenching. Howie replied that it hadn't been cowardice that got him caught, but foolhardiness. Howie had seen the surveyor in the distance that morning. But he decided to go ahead with his Sunday-afternoon stroll anyway. "I spotted him before he spotted me and, at that point, should immediately have said, this is not the time. But I had set that day aside and being a compulsive Type A type of guy I decided to go ahead," Howie recalled. "I was thirty-three years old and afflicted with the nothing-can-happen-to-me syndrome."

Howie wasn't the only one with that syndrome. It was racing through Earth First! like a bad case of flu. The old saw about safety in numbers was particularly untrue when it came to thousands of people thumbing their noses at the federal government. But the psychological effect of being in the tribe defied reality, even if Earth First! was really nothing more than a patched-together, hyped-up conglomeration of rednecks, hippies, and general misfits. (When asked in 1991 if Earth First! was a "tribe," Mike Roselle snorted. "Not as much as the Grateful Dead," he said.) But in 1986, when Howie Wolke was sentenced, many people, Foreman included, still believed that Earth First! might coalesce into a less schizophrenic version of the American dream. Foreman could sense the slow fracturing of the nation-state. The global economy was literally taking places apart, not just in the United States, but around the globe. Indigenous people who had lived

in Malaysian rain forests for thousands of years were being torn from their way of life because Japan needed timber. In the United States, company towns were turning into ghost towns as timber giants like Louisiana-Pacific closed mills in the Pacific Northwest and opened operations in Mexico, where labor was cheaper. The big national groups could not seem to respond adequately to a growing sense that communities were under siege. The United States and other enlightened First World countries could pass all the environmental laws they wanted. But on the international level, there was virtually no regulation of industry.

By the late 1980s, two new models for environmental organizations emerged. Sophisticated environmentalists set up international networks, such as the Rainforest Action Network and the Dolphin Project. Fax machines and electronic mail—high-tech, low-cost communications gear used by multinational corporations to hasten their hegemony—also made it possible for protests to start almost instantly. For instance, when more than thirty people were arrested for blockading a logging road being bulldozed into the Malaysian rain forest in 1987, the computer bulletin board Econet broadcast the news to environmentalists around the world. The protesters were released in a few weeks, which many environmentalists attributed to the international letter-writing campaign made possible by Econet.

But most people were not sophisticated or technologically adept enough to tap into global communications. They reacted in a more visceral way to being buffeted by the tides of international commerce. In the 1980s, literally hundreds of small, grass-roots environmental groups were formed around the United States by frustrated, disenfranchised citizens working outside established channels. Foreman tapped into this phenomenon with his inspirational public appearances. As globalization increased, so did Earth First!'s membership. By 1986 the number of Buckaroos—and wanna-be Buckaroos—had already exceeded anyone's expectations. A startling number of them shared Foreman's rootless background, either because they were military brats or because their families had moved around frequently for other reasons. In a sense, they *were* a tribe, unified by their desire to

build cohesiveness out of the ruins of a social structure resembling the gray, smoking landscape of postwar Berlin. Hope had become a scarce commodity for everyone, but particularly for environmentalists. It was seductive to believe that Earth First! might go the distance, set a new paradigm, build a new society. Foreman, in particular, was riding high on the movement's success.

"It was only a couple of years ago when there were four or five of us in a car and someone came up with the thought that if we got squashed by a semi truck there would be no Earth First! movement," he said in May 1986. "We're at the point now, where it would take a much larger vehicle," he laughed.

There was no way to tell precisely how many Earth First!ers there were. In the second half of the 1980s, the number of subscribers to the *Earth First! Journal* was about 5,000. It was an impressive number, considering the publication's strange combination of dry scientific writing and gonzo politics. For instance, an article with the headline "DENVER BEARS PROTEST YELLOWSTONE" written by someone called "Gainesburger" began this way: "Dogmeat the Berserker had spoken and Colorado Earth First! appeared [*sic*] at the National Park Service Regional Headquarters in Denver to answer the call. At the Park Service sign in a landscaped decorator 'environment,' complete with token pines, we unfurled Brush Wolf's banner, 'U.S. PARK SERVICE: GRIZZLY KILLERS.'" In the same issue, ethnobotanist, author, and MacArthur fellow Gary Paul Nabhan would exhibit some of his least user-friendly prose. "Whereas the tropical agroforester has few growthforms, but many tree species from which to choose, desert agroecologists are actively investigating the genetic resources of water-efficient cacti, drought-evading annuals, drought-escaping perennial tubers and salt-tolerant shrubs," wrote Nabhan.

What made the *Journal's* growth even more amazing was its relatively high price, which by 1986 had crept up from 0 cents to two dollars a copy and later reached three dollars. Despite its unevenness, the *Journal* clearly was serving a purpose for western environmentalists who wanted the straight poop, unencumbered by the internal politics that weighed down other conservation magazines. Reading the *Journal*

was like listening to a friend talk to you on the phone, assuming that your friend was either a scientist or an overly committed maniac with idiosyncratic spelling.

There seemed to be a sizeable number of both breeds running around the hinterland, although the *Journal's* figures didn't tell the whole story. Like every other environmental group, the number of active members in Earth First! was much smaller than the number of folks willing to ante up a few bucks and receive a publication. Many people who considered themselves Earth First!ers didn't subscribe to the *Journal*. The inner circle, people who were dressing up as bears and getting arrested, was usually a couple of hundred people. But that was enough to grab headlines in publications ranging from *The Wall Street Journal* to the *Corvallis Gazette-Times*. Earth First! was fast becoming a highly charged electrode stuck to the body politic—the shock it delivered was based on intensity, not size.

In 1984, Dave Foreman and Nancy Morton moved the *Earth First! Journal* to Tucson, where Nancy was entering the graduate program in nursing at the University of Arizona. Soon after the move, Dave flew home to New Mexico for a quick visit. Over the years, Foreman and his father had established a friendly relationship. Skip had mellowed and so had Dave. They never talked about it, just gradually let the conflict fall away. Maybe it had helped when the other kids had problems. Roxanne, the baby of the family, was going a little wild in high school, and Steve had gotten into real trouble with drugs. Somehow these days everyone was staying on speaking terms, even though they weren't always on *polite* speaking terms. In fact, when Dave went home that time, Steve came over to see him. The family was sitting down to dinner when Skip clutched his chest. It was a heart attack. He was dead within minutes.

Two years later, Steve died of an overdose. It had been a long time since Steve was the golden-haired boy Lorane Foreman liked to remember. He had been a heroin addict and a drug dealer since college. His habit had bankrupted Lorane both financially and psychologically. When he died, Dave was numb. He was relieved that his mother's ordeal was over, but he couldn't bring himself to feel much of any-

thing for Steve. Roxanne was the one who grieved. She had been closer to Steve, but it was more than that. She was the one in the family who felt things. Dave buried his regrets and moved on.

Within a year or two after Dave and Nancy arrived in Tucson, a cadre of Earth First! supporters had grown up around the couple. Ron Kezar began spending winters in Tucson, living at Dave and Nancy's house and working on the *Earth First! Journal*. Soon an eccentric back-to-the-lander named Lynn Jacobs migrated down from Northern Arizona with his wife and two kids. Jacobs, who had grown up in an affluent Republican family in southern California and resembled an off-kilter Clint Eastwood, had an interest in cattle grazing that bordered on the obsessional. Earth First! was the only environmental group that met his criteria for antigrazing fervor. Jacobs spent the next three years hunched over a word processor, grinding out a self-published tome called *Waste of the West*, a lively and encyclopedic, if spottily referenced, "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Grazing—Even If You Didn't Know You Wanted to Know It."¹

In February 1985, a skinny kid named John Davis showed up at the door of the suburban tract house that Morton had bought in the foothills of the Tucson Mountains. Davis had graduated from college a few weeks before, but he looked no older than fourteen. He had written a letter to the *Earth First! Journal*, but Foreman had merely filed it with the usual mail. When Foreman answered the doorbell, Davis offered up his services to Earth First! He had majored in environmental ethics at a well-respected school in Minnesota that nonetheless sounded like a sitcom joke—St. Olaf's—and didn't know how to do anything particularly useful. But free labor was free labor. John Davis became the *Earth First! Journal's* junior staff member.

Davis might have resembled a baby stork, but he actually was fairly competent for a twenty-two-year-old fresh out of college. He made himself useful at the *Journal* and eventually was made managing editor. By summer he had also managed to move in with Dave and Nancy, who appreciated the free ice cream he brought home after strenuous evenings of ecological dumpster diving.

By then Roger Featherstone had arrived, too. Featherstone was a

farm boy from Wisconsin who had been radicalized by the antinuclear movement of the 1970s. His dour upbringing made him sound like a twentieth-century John Muir: hard work at an early age, low cash flow, strict but honorable parents.

By the time he dropped out of an electrical engineering program at a state college, the plodding farm boy had become a rebel. In 1975, he started working with Northern Thunder, an antinuke outfit in Wisconsin. A few years later, he got involved with a group of farmers called the Bolt Weevils, who were fighting plans to run a high-voltage power line across their land. Back in 1972, two Minnesota power companies had hatched a plan to build a giant coal-burning power plant next to a North Dakota strip mine. The plant's electricity would run across a 430-mile power line through North Dakota and Minnesota to just outside the suburbs of Minneapolis. It would be the largest direct-current line in the United States, carrying 800,000 volts of electricity.

In two Minnesota counties, farmers took the unusual step of organizing to fight the power line. They had a gut feeling that living under high-voltage lines was dangerous, and this would be the highest-voltage power line ever built. In 1975, the farmers succeeded in getting the county supervisors to deny the right of eminent domain to the power company.

The local authorities were quickly overruled. Eventually the case went all the way up to the Minnesota Supreme Court, where they were overruled again. The power line was going through. In June 1976, power company surveyors were met by sixty angry farmers blocking their path. Over the next several weeks the blockade grew in strength until it reached several hundred people. There was not much violence, just a bunch of obdurate farmers refusing to move.

But the power companies had just gotten the biggest loan ever made by the Rural Electrification Administration. They had plenty of money and plenty of clout. Out of a total of 500 Minnesota state troopers, 200 were assigned to patrol the power line. The companies hired 300 of their own security guards. By 1978, the survey was complete. The 1,685 steel towers began rising out of the wheat fields.

On the night of August 2, 1978, the first tower crashed. The Bolt Weevils had struck. In the next week, three more towers went down. Over the next year, ten more towers toppled. The companies offered \$50,000, then \$100,000, as a reward for information. Eventually they gave technical ownership of the line to the federal government, so that the FBI could come in. Still, nobody was arrested.

In the end, neither civil disobedience nor Luddism could stop the power line. But token resistance continued even after it was energized. A few more towers fell—the last one on August 2, 1983, the fifth anniversary of the first. To most people, these acts seemed merely symbolic. But others, including the writer Noel Perrin, from whose *Harrowsmith* article much of this information is taken, say the \$6 million in damage helped kill the same companies' plans for a 78-mile line called the Wilmarth Extension. Perrin also says that doubts raised by the Minnesota farmers helped stop a similar power line in Texas.

For Roger Featherstone, the farmers' resistance had personal as well as political significance. Although he often felt angry at the rigidity of his upbringing, he understood the farmers' stubbornness. He was struck by the lengths to which these traditional-minded, politically conservative people would go when they felt their rights had been violated. "One of my theories is that when push comes to shove conservative people are a lot more likely to do what they think is right," said Featherstone. "A lot of it there had to do with the fact that the people up there had been kicked around by lots and lots of things."

Featherstone also understood that the Bolt Weevils were a Populist phenomenon, a homegrown variation on the Luddite theme. The Populist movement of the late 1800s began as a reaction to the crop-lien system—a sort of company store setup—that existed in the South. The first Populist organization, the Farmers Alliance, formed in 1877 to bypass the crop-lien system by buying and selling goods cooperatively. But the lawful alternatives offered by the Farmers Alliance were not the only response to a system that was one step away from indentured servitude. In Delhi, Louisiana, the crop-lien system was so crushing that a band of small farmers rode into town in 1889 and demolished the stores of merchants "to cancel their indebtedness," in

a rebellion very much like the English food riots. Before it was subsumed into the Democratic party shortly before the turn of the century, Populism had moved northward to Featherstone's territory, the upper Midwest.²

Although Populism eventually died out as a political movement, many of its beliefs and mores persisted in rural American culture. These included a tendency to close ranks against big banks and big business. For instance, Roger's father refused to buy anything on credit. Roger himself had even attended a few penny sales—foreclosures where local farmers pushed aside other bidders to buy the farm and its machinery for pennies and sell it back to its original owner.

During the Bolt Weevil days, Roger lived in northern Minnesota for six months, working with farmers who were just as strongly united—this time to fight the power line. It didn't take him long to realize that the Bolt Weevils were following Edward Abbey's prescription for ethical sabotage. They had exhausted all the legal remedies before taking out their monkeywrenches. "I think it's important that everybody went through the [legal] process many, many times and the process was really, really slanted. After that, they decided they might as well go for it," said Featherstone.

Featherstone was the kind of person who went for it, too. He threw himself into politics, almost deliberately losing track of everything else in his life. In the early 1980s, Featherstone burned out. He took the profits from a few seasons of construction work and bought a house in South Dakota. "I retired," he says. "Raised peaches, grewed chickens, threw out my TV." He lasted a year or two. A friend had given him a subscription to the *Earth First! Journal*. In late 1983, he read that a guy he knew in Ashland, Wisconsin, was hosting an Earth First! Road Show. Featherstone packed his dog in the pickup and headed down to Eau Claire, where he remembers staying up all night drinking cheap Wisconsin beer with Foreman, Cecelia Ostrow, and John Seed, who had flown in from Australia to join the band. By spring Featherstone was in Tucson, stranded at his aunt's house after a construction firm's check bounced. He looked up Foreman et al. Mike Roselle was living at the house with Nancy and Dave. Roger

got to know Roselle, who invited him on a trip to Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument to celebrate the five-year anniversary of the founding of Earth First! After a lonely farm childhood and his long stretch of solitude in South Dakota, being welcomed into the unpretentious communal society of Earth First! was deeply gratifying to Featherstone. His whole tone of voice changes when he talks about the trip.

"I got kidnapped to go with them on the famous Organ Pipe trip. I went over to see if Roselle wanted to go for a couple of beers, there were all these people milling around, and he asked if I wanted to go. I think I had a tent and a sleeping bag still in the car. I borrowed a few clothes from him and that was it. There was the night when we went out drinking in Mexico, ten or eleven of us in Kezar's truck. We had a case of beer which we knew we couldn't get across the border. So he dropped us off and we crossed the fence illegally. That's when we became illegal aliens. By the time he picked us up we drank most of the beer. We set the empties out along the road to tell him where we were."

After the trip, Roselle took off for Grants Pass and Roger moved into Nancy's brick house on Calle Carapan. John Davis's possessions were already ensconced, and Davis himself would be moving in when he got back from a family trip to France. After a couple of months Roger stopped working in construction and went to work full-time for Earth First! This unlikely commune—Dave, Nancy, John, and Roger—became the Earth First! office support staff for the next few years.

Like most communal situations, the Calle Carapan household had its problems. Roger and Dave were not a great match. Foreman woke up early, like most desert-rats. He wanted everybody else around him to be on the same schedule. Roger would sit around all morning, then get energized around two in the afternoon and work until the middle of the night. Since Roger was the only handy one in the house, he often promised to fix things. Sometimes they got fixed, sometimes they didn't. But the living arrangement hung together, at least for a while. It helped that Foreman was on the road a lot of the time. He

was becoming a hot property on college campuses, where he could get paid as much as \$1,500 for a speech. After the speech, there would usually be a potluck at someone's house. Local Earth First!ers would show up, and for a few minutes Foreman would slip away to talk quietly with them at the edge of the yard. It was a remarkably efficient system, with Foreman's speaking engagements providing a hefty chunk of Earth First!'s organizing budget. It might also have been considered a bit of a scam, if the left-leaning professors who booked the bearded, rafter-shaking radical hadn't been in on it. Besides, Foreman's speech was worth every penny. It was mind-bending, the things people said to him afterward. They acted as if he were some kind of a saint, even though he made sure to throw in a little self-deprecating humor whenever he could.

Flattering as all this attention was, it wasn't enough to make Foreman entirely complacent. In 1985, another patron saint of the environmental movement, the legendary David Brower, was ousted by Friends of the Earth. This was the second time that Brower had been overthrown; FOE was the group that he had founded after having been dismissed as the Sierra Club's executive director in 1969. Foreman rushed to Brower's defense, saying that if there were a Mount Rushmore for environmentalists, David Brower's face would be carved on it. But Brower's ouster caused Foreman tentatively to question his own role in Earth First! In early 1986, *New York Times* reporter Daniel Goleman wrote a revealing piece on the psychology of entrepreneurs. Foreman recognized himself in Goleman's article. For one thing, the experts called entrepreneurs "wild men," echoing Bernard De Voto, who, in the 1930s, had called the westerner "the national wildman, the thunder-bringer, disciple of madness, begetter of economic heresy, immoral nincompoop deluded by maniac visions, forever clamoring, forever threatening the nation's treasury, forever scuttling the ship of state."³ Foreman was all those things, and he reveled in them. But Goleman's article contained a more somber prediction for the man one writer dubbed Summer Thunder.

"To understand the entrepreneur, you first have to understand the

psychology of the juvenile delinquent," joked Harvard Business School psychoanalyst Abraham Zaleznik in Goleman's article. A desire for autonomy, which characterizes entrepreneurs, is also a hallmark of the adolescent, Zaleznik said. But the entrepreneur's sense of autonomy is neither simple, immature, nor easily dismissed.

Zaleznik and other analytical psychologists believe that visionary entrepreneurs—David Brower, Steve Jobs of Apple computers, and Dave Foreman are just a few examples—are striving to create the world they craved as children. It is "a world with him as star," where the entrepreneur can outdo even his main rival—his father.

"The tale of childhood that emerged most often was of a young boy who felt close to his mother and disappointed by his father," writes Goleman. Clinical psychologist Harry Levinson concurred, saying, "In some subtle, or not-so-subtle, ways the mother lets the son believe at an early stage that he has a chance to win out in the rivalry with his father."

If Levinson's perception is true, it doesn't require much of a leap to see how the combination of Skip Foreman's absences and his mother's rapt attention could have helped Foreman to grow into the "wild man" at the Wilderness Society. Levinson points out that there may be nothing horribly wrong with an entrepreneur's family. In fact, having a child who grows up to be an entrepreneur may be a sign that a mother has done her job right, by giving her offspring increasingly complex tasks that he succeeds in mastering.

But when there is a strong rivalry between father and son, it almost invariably gets enacted in the workplace. In the case of the entrepreneur it is enacted in a particular way, Levinson believes. "The entrepreneur handles these ghosts of childhood past by rebellion. The final act in this inner drama comes when the entrepreneur frees himself from tyranny by creating his own world," Levinson asserted.

A sense of tyranny also may be evidence of what psychoanalysts call "splitting," said John J. Kao, a psychiatrist who teaches a course on entrepreneurs at Harvard Business School. "For the entrepreneur this takes the form of a mental split in how he sees the world: one

domain is full of blocks and frustrations, and the other is an ideal of freedom. He is compelled to seek his freedom by building his own business rather than staying trapped in someone else's," said Kao.

Certainly Foreman's rhetoric was riddled with the extremes of freedom and tyranny. His favorite analogy linked Earth First!ers to the rowdies of the Boston Tea Party, who dumped stores of tea overboard to protest taxation without representation. His aim was to construct Earth First! to embody a similar spirit of responsible rebellion. For instance, some accounts mention that the Tea Party rebels replaced a lock that was broken during their spree. Boston was a small town in those days, and everyone knew one another, including the rebels and the merchants who owned the boats. It wasn't that different from Earth First!'s habit of notifying timber companies after spiking their trees. In both cases, there was a tacit understanding that this was not pure vandalism, but an attempt to overcome a block to negotiations by reducing the disparity between the two sides. There also seemed to be a psychological denial of the act's warlike overtones—and the response they were likely to provoke.

This "act now, think later" approach is common to entrepreneurs. Goleman called it "goalless planning." It also has been described as "a flexible and action-oriented strategy" rather than the rational goal-setting that is supposedly common to large organizations. In other words, entrepreneurs tend to be intuitive, charming risk-takers. They set things in motion without knowing exactly in which direction they will go. "Let action set the finer points of our philosophy," Foreman often admonished people. So Earth First! became a mishmash of deep ecology and spontaneous, kick-out-the-jams, in-your-face blockading. Whatever worked.

In 1986 it seemed to be working better than anyone could have reasonably expected. But according to Goleman's article, all the guts in the world couldn't help the entrepreneur who failed to adjust to the managers he had hired. Steve Jobs, who was bounced from Apple after hiring manager John Sculley, was the perfect case in point. "The great entrepreneur accomplishes his act of conception at the price of his own extinction," John Kenneth Galbraith once said. Goleman

concurred. "An entrepreneur's gifts and drives—such as goalless planning and the maverick's thirst for autonomy—do not necessarily serve him well as the leader of a major corporation," he wrote. When he read this, Foreman wondered if he, too, might become a victim of built-in obsolescence. The writer and editor Angela Gennino, who had worked with David Brower at Friends of the Earth, called it "founder syndrome."

At least if Foreman went down in flames it would be for a good cause. Goleman ended his article by talking about the appeal that entrepreneurs have for young people. "The answer may lie, in part, in the hopeful lesson he teaches," Goleman wrote, "a lesson of increasing import as huge corporations dominate work life more and more, and as economic horizons appear dimmer for each coming generation. By virtue of his tenaciously solitary course, the entrepreneur holds out a hopeful message that life is not a trap but a promise."

"We have become a force greater than geology in determining the future of evolution," Foreman admonished college students all over the country. "It's our decision whether the charismatic megafauna in the future will still have grizzly bears and great blue whales in it, or whether there will be cockroaches or Norway rats. It gets depressing after a while. That's why I drink as much beer as I do. If I thought about it all the time I'd go stark, raving mad. That's why I take Ed Abbey's advice a lot and get out in the wilderness and enjoy it. But we've got to encounter the problem, we've got to encounter the magnitude, the enormity of what our generation is doing to the planet. If we confront that I think then we've got to ask what can we do about it, how can we begin to deal with it? I mean, do we just give up, go home, stick something in the VCR and run out a line of coke, sit back, and forget?"

"If we can see that grizzly bears and mosquitoes and redwoods and algae have value in and of themselves and are important just like we are, then I think we start making the first step. And after you begin to think of other things as having intrinsic value, I think the next step is emotion; to be passionate, to feel." This was what his

audience had been waiting to hear. All their lives, they had been waiting for permission to do the precise thing that their society was telling them not to do—feel.

You know, when I went back to Washington, D.C., to be a lobbyist in the mid-seventies, a U.S. senator put his arm around my shoulders and said, "You know, Dave, we can work with you. You're reasonable. You know how to compromise and consider other interest groups." I was told to put my heart in a safe deposit box and replace my brain with a pocket calculator, to not get emotional. That would harm my argument. I'd ruin my credibility. . . .

But, goddammit, I *am* emotional! I am passionate. I'm angry. I feel something. I'm not some New Age automaton, some goddamn computer, a pocket calculator. I don't have silicon chips up here. I'm flesh and blood. The winds fill my lungs, the mountains make my bones, the oceans run through my veins. I'm an animal and I'll never be anything but an animal. When a chain saw rips into a two-thousand-year-old redwood tree, it's ripping into my guts. When a bulldozer plows through a virgin hillside, it's plowing through my side, and when a bullet knocks down a grizzly bear or a wolf, it's going through my heart. . . . We think with the whole world, we're alive with the whole world. We're not blocked off, just these robots, these unfeeling things. But that's how we've become. We're afraid to love somebody else, to love a place, to feel something because we might get hurt. We don't want to get hurt. Don't care about anything, just cut yourself off, be a happy yuppie robot. That's the way George Bush wants you to be. That's the way Exxon wants you to be. . . .

About twenty years ago, there was a wonderful little case in northern New Mexico that made all the supermarket check-out stand tabloids. The cattle mutilations. I don't know if any of you remember that, but dead cows were being found and there were no external wounds on them at all, but their livers

were gone. Cut out with surgical precision. And I mean, the ranchers just freaked out. I mean, obviously there were some Satan-worshipping hippies out there with laser beams doing weird rituals with their dead cows. There were little green men with flying saucers doing something. I mean, it got really freaky in northern New Mexico. The governor nearly had to call out the National Guard to quiet things down. But the New Mexico Cattle Growers Association decided to get to the bottom of this. So they hired a retired FBI agent. He took the latest Vietnam War technology, starlight scopes and all this neat stuff, and staked out a dead cow. Every night for a week he watched the dead cow. And you know what he found? I mean, it wasn't hippies. No Satanists, no laser beams, not a single flying saucer. You know who was doing it? Weasels! Weasels. Little carnivores about this big. Weasels are real smart little critters but they're also really hungry and they have a real high metabolism. They have to eat their own body weight every day or something like that, or they starve to death. And weasels know dead cow liver is really good. It's tasty, highly nutritious, easy to chew up. There's only one problem. If you're a little weasel this size, there's a lot of hair, hide, muscle, bone, and fat between you and that cow liver in the dead cow.

But weasels are smart. They know if they walk around the hind legs of that dead cow there's a perfect pathway in there to the liver. Eat the liver, go home for the day, come back the next night, eat the pancreas.

And when I die I want a weasel to crawl up inside of me and eat my liver. I want buzzards to peck my eyeballs' out. I want mountain lions to crunch my bones. Because I want to live forever. I don't want to be pickled and stuck in a lead box. That's how you *die*. I want to be recycled. I want to run around the forest on little weasel feet. I want to go back into the flow, I want to be part of the food chain.

When death comes, I want to enjoy it. I want to embrace it. Let's not be afraid of dying. Let's not kill ourselves. Let's

not pretend that we're immortal. We're all gonna die. There's nothing to be afraid of, nothing to avoid. If you aren't afraid to die, then you can be happy to live; you aren't afraid to live, you can open up, you can love somebody else and not be afraid of getting hurt. You can love a place and not worry about losing it, because you have the courage to go out and fight for it.

Foreman's words gave purpose to a whole generation of college students. To disillusioned middle-class environmentalists, he handed their dreams back. To back-to-the-land dropouts, he gave a sense of community. But even in heartfelt, do-gooding entrepreneurs like Foreman there is an element of hucksterism. Despite his attempts at self-restraint, Foreman was just too damn good at creating a legend. Not only did he pander to college audiences by larding his inspirational talk with incessant references to beer drinking; he also milked his hick horseshoer image for all it was worth. Here he was, a buckskinned Daniel Boone who had wandered into history—or better yet, the Andrew Jackson of the environmental movement. Hell, Foreman's encounter with the Antichrist James Watt in the Grand Canyon even *was* a myth. Doctoring up myth was, of course, a venerable tradition of the American West. As *New Yorker* writer Jane Kramer noted in her 1977 book, *The Last Cowboy*, the real cowboys were “range bums and drifters and failed outlaws, freed slaves and impoverished half-breeds, ruined farmers from the Reconstruction South and the tough, wild boys from all over who were the frontier's dropouts.” The restorative power of myth transformed these “boys who had no appetite for the ties of land or family, who could make a four-month cattle drive across a thousand miles and not be missed by anyone.” Eventually, “the myth, with its code and its solemn rhetoric, caught up with most of them, and if it left them still outside the law, at least it took the edge off their frightful lawlessness and made a virtue of their old failures.”⁴

Not everyone came to the frontier from hovels in the New World. John James Audubon, another heroic figure who created his persona

out of the western myth, came from a hovel in the Third World—Haiti, to be exact. After studying art in Paris, he pursued unsuccessful get-rich-quick schemes for seventeen years, forcing his wife and family to live in penury until he was seized by what he later called his “Great Idea.” For the next three decades, he raced around the continent, drawing every American bird and beast. In a brilliant 1991 *New Yorker* article, Adam Gopnik puts Audubon, whose real name was Jean Rabin, in perspective.

... Audubon's strange origins, his slow start, and the long period of shaky struggle in his middle years add to the clear, eighteenth-century glow of his legend a more peculiarly nineteenth-century American touch—of frontier purification and renewal and reform. Audubon's self-transformation from the dilettante in a ruffled shirt arriving in America into the American woodsman eventually returning to France is one of the great awakenings in American biography. In his poem “Audubon: A Vision and a Question for You,” Robert Penn Warren called this transformation a “passion,” lending a Christian overtone to the story of Audubon's rebirth in the wilderness.

Like Audubon, Foreman became the central character in his own story of frontier rebirth. Surrounded by beautiful wild animals, the “charismatic megafauna” that gave his speech its soundtrack of goose music and wolf howls, Foreman left the East to become the source of his own myth, a prime example of charismatic megafauna himself. Of course, he was a native westerner. But as Mike Roselle later said, Foreman was as much a military brat who wanted to be a redneck as a real redneck. In fact, Foreman was more of an artist than anything else. His speech was the canvas he repainted over and over again, making minor changes to an eternal landscape. It was easy to mistake the artist for his art. As *Earth First!* grew, Foreman found himself battling to retain some degree of humility. But he also acted as the *Earth First!* PR man. These two tasks were contradictory, to say the

least. The contradiction surfaced in Foreman's own comments on the subject in 1986.

"I think personality cults are by definition dangerous," he said, explaining that he went out of his way not to publish photos of himself in the *Earth First! Journal*. "It scares me when I think Earth First! has the potential to become one. You have to keep reminding yourself that it's not because of you, it's because you're expressing something.

"But I think there's a definite need in this drab environmental movement for people who can cause some kind of excitement," he added in a lighter tone. "There have always been shamans in society."

Doug Scott was less charitable toward the charismatic megafauna phenomenon. He lumped Foreman together with two of his main adversaries in the environmental movement, Brock Evans and David Brower. These white boys with their sensible running shoes made unlikely Savonarolas. But within their own arena they used the power of speech to unleash the collective unconscious. Since the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt—not to mention Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini—black preachers had cornered the market on the oral tradition. It required bravery to take on this role in the white-bread environmental movement. To be a powerful speaker wasn't seemly. It didn't fit the WASP mold. It meant you weren't serious enough. It might even be dangerous. Certainly Doug Scott felt a deep distrust of mob psychology. He despised the effects of mass adulation on his fellow environmental leaders. "When you start getting a standing ovation *before* you speak, you should retire," Scott usually responded when the name David Brower came up. Scott gave Foreman a little more credit. He seemed to believe that Foreman's own ideals had led him astray.

"If you scratch Dave very deep, what you've got is an old wilderness activist who believed his own rhetoric a little too strongly," said Scott.

I'm no mean public speaker myself. Dave Brower only gives one speech. I know two people who are *mesmerizing* public performers. One is Brock Evans. And the other is Dave Fore-

man. And I know both of them well enough and have talked to them candidly well enough to understand, I believe I understand, that they don't fully understand what that power that they have is. And Brock has said the same to me.

It is possible to have that kind of power and to be very self-indulgent with it. Self-indulgence, that's the word I attach to the Earth First! phenomenon more than anything. . . . Now, you get this whole horseshit history of Earth First! about how Dave went to Washington and was a Washington lobbyist par excellence and then walked away from that because it didn't work.

Dave was not very good at it. He gave it about a year's time . . . He had no mentor. . . . Dave went and tried being a lobbyist, wasn't very good at it, didn't think deeply about it. Doesn't have a strategic mind that matches the parliamentary procedures of the Congress. Dave and Tim Mahoney and Debbie were housemates for a long time. Fascinating to think about that. Tim has the best strategic mind I ever saw. Dave doesn't . . . Dave has this magic. The magic is not backed up by a very strong background in that particular kind of politics.

What I've always thought was kind of tragic was that we didn't have one creature who had a little bit of Tim and Doug and a little bit of Dave and Brock all in the same thing, who became—in the aftermath of Zahniser, because there had been no one since then—Brower got wrapped up in his own ego too much—he could have done it. And I wish I could have been it. I feel very badly that it was not in me to be it either. Who could mesmerize people to believe that our political system works.

Sadly for both Doug Scott and the environmental movement, he was right. No John Kennedy was emerging from the ranks. Neither the Yale-trained lobbyists nor any of a score of Patagonia-clad Berkeley individualists could unite the movement. Even a redneck from New Mexico couldn't do it. In fact, that wasn't his goal. Foreman

didn't believe that the system worked, and he sure as hell wasn't going to try to convince people that it did. Foreman thought Scott's pre-Vietnam, pre-Watergate sensibility was mere nostalgia. Brock Evans, who was older than Scott, thought it was something else, but he wasn't sure what. Evans was confounded by Scott's near-worship of Howard Zahniser. Not only had Zahniser died before Scott had a chance to meet him, but Scott's own political victories came at a time when the piecemeal Zahniser approach was already becoming obsolete.

Scott's vision may have been a trifle narrow, but he wasn't far off the mark when it came to Foreman. In 1986, Foreman still tended to believe his own rhetoric a bit too wholeheartedly. "I think Earth First! steps out of the traditional spectrum," he told a reporter. "People are rebelling against technocracy, the anthropocentric imperialism of Western civilization. Earth First! is made up of people who are really trying to get back to their roots as a tribal civilization. When you're trying to do something that radical, outside of civilization, it's going to flower in a lot of different ways.

"The majority of the people in Earth First! are of the sixties generation, but there are some very respectable older people. That's the thing I love the most, is when I give a speech and old people, like this old clodhopper at the Texas Pow Wow, come up to me afterwards and tell me how much they liked it." Rednecks, middle-class people, backwoods hippies, and young wanna-be hippies "with their wooden bowls and chopsticks and . . . their soggy vegetables" were all part of the tribe, said Foreman, preaching a tolerance he didn't feel in his heart. What he neglected to mention were the real misfits who were attracted to Earth First! Documentary filmmaker Jessica Abbe, who shot footage of the group in the early 1980s, characterized Earth First!'s founders as "brilliant" but said that many of their followers were "one step up from street people."

There was another, perhaps related, drawback to the group's laissez-faire attitude that Foreman was only beginning to recognize. Early in 1986, someone sabotaged a timber sale in Montana. Foreman claimed that the saboteurs were not affiliated with Earth First!, al-

though they had hung an Earth First! banner at the scene. Worse than that, Foreman thought that the unaffiliated monkeywrenchers had picked the wrong target.

"What happened in Montana was that some idiot went out and spiked some trees and trashed a piece of equipment, then hung up an Earth First! banner," Foreman said, his twang growing broader with each angry syllable. "They did it to a small local logger. He wasn't running a bad logging operation, not something we would have a problem with, and it really hurt the Montana group."

Although the Montana incident made him angry, there hadn't been enough of these incidents yet to temper Foreman's pride in Earth First!'s miraculous growth. The group's anarchistic makeup had helped it spread around the country like a weed. Earth First! had reached Texas, where a group of swinging nudist Austinites were staging sit-ins to stop the extinction of endangered cave bugs. California was riddled with Earth First! groups. Even New England was getting into the act.

"We just roughed it out on the Mexico trip," Foreman said in the late spring of 1986. "I think we had the self-restraint to let Earth First! develop itself. It's hard to let go and trust other people, to say, 'OK, start a local Earth First! movement. Go for it. Here are some ideas, but use your creativity.' Other environmental groups are terrified to do it."

Despite these words, by summer Foreman was having serious doubts about the movement, which seemed to be taking on a life of its own. Foreman's Frankenstein fantasies surfaced only occasionally, usually when he was with a close friend like Jim Eaton. At the California Rendezvous, Foreman and Eaton perched up on a hill surveying the scene they had helped create. It was time for the day's mass consensus meeting. Foreman and Eaton watched as the California Earth First!ers sat in a circle, arguing. They couldn't hear what was being said, but they could imagine it. Vegetarianism had become a hot topic. Discussions about it had a navel-gazing quality, featuring such questions as Do you eat meat or not? How do you feel about it? Sometimes the women complained that they had to act too pushy

to get a spot singing around the campfire. They didn't want to act aggressive because that would be buying into the male paradigm. So could the men be more considerate? At other times, complaints would be made about such important policy issues as excessive midnight howling, sloppy beer drinking, or loose dogs. Consensus would eventually be reached on these important issues, but it could take hours. Policy decisions on environmental issues were reached the same way, with predictable results:

Neither Eaton nor Foreman said much, but each could guess what the other was thinking. Foreman was getting the idea that Earth First! might turn into yet another remake of the movie *Little Shop of Horrors*. It would be offbeat casting, but could Foreman be playing the mild-mannered clerk who stumbles across a man-eating plant? At first the clerk enjoys the fame that the plant's tremendous size brings him. He tries to control its nasty appetite for blood. When that fails, he becomes a one-man Red Cross. But it's not enough for the plant. It gets hungrier. It begins eating people. The plant racks up quite a score before it attacks the clerk's girlfriend, a bleached-blond Brooklyn broad with a heart of gold, and he musters up the courage to dispatch it to houseplant hell.

Grim thoughts like these silently hung in the air as the two men looked out over the baked California hills and off into the Pacific Ocean. Finally, Foreman half-jokingly suggested they go into town for a politically incorrect cheeseburger.

Later that night, Eaton, Foreman, and a few others sat around the campfire getting drunk and telling war stories. A few members of the younger generation stood or crouched behind them, cradling beers and listening. Several hundred feet away, a second group sat in a circle in a grassy meadow trying to figure out how to create a new culture. Jim Eaton remembers thinking how different the two groups seemed. Foreman felt it, too. The ex-anthropology major from the University of New Mexico still liked the *idea* of creating a tribe. But when it came right down to it, Doug Scott was right. Foreman was an old wilderness activist at heart. This was not his tribe.

Still, there were compensations. Foreman liked being famous, or

at least semifamous. In his childhood, he had often heard Skip tell stories about famous war heroes. Invariably these anecdotes ended with Skip gaining the upper hand. It was odd that the tight-lipped Air Force pilot would reveal this minor sign of insecurity. But not so odd that his high-achieving son, the recovering nerd, would exhibit the same impressionable nature. In the late 1980s, Foreman began moving in celebrity circles. It was very seductive when he realized that his reputation had preceded him. He couldn't help letting you know that he had just had a chat with Wendell Berry or thinking that a coffee-shop waitress recognized him when she really just thought he sounded like John Wayne. But he protested that he was just a regular guy, "a middle-aged, middle-class suburbanite." Occasionally he even said—not too loudly—that he was thinking of pulling back from Earth First!

If fame was a source of ambivalence to Foreman, it was both a danger and an opportunity for Earth First! The group was starting to attract a frightening amount of press coverage in 1986. *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* both ran articles on Earth First! which focused on the Oregon timber wars. *U.S. News and World Report* ran a piece on eco-radicals in general. *Mother Jones* ran a short piece on Earth First! and a larger story on the future of the environmental movement by social critic Kirkpatrick Sale. The following year, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Newsweek*, *Esquire*, and *The Nation* all published feature stories about this strange bunch of westerners.

Attention from the print media was gratifying, but not ground breaking. For an environmental group to land on TV, now *that* was radical. So it was only appropriate for the most radical environmental group in the United States to wind up on television. (Sea Shepherd, the maverick Greenpeace offshoot, was wilder, but because it operated outside the twelve-mile limit—in more ways than one—and was far smaller, it tended to get less publicity.) The group was on TV everywhere, from *Good Morning America* and the NBC national news to local coverage in Houston, Tucson, Salt Lake City, Portland, Seattle, and a string of other mid-sized cities. Getting on TV made everyone feel great, as if they were really accomplishing something. Hardly any-

body thought about whether a group of people who were routinely breaking the law really wanted this attention. Hardly anybody except Ed Abbey. In 1982, Abbey got curious about whether he had been subversive enough to earn an FBI file. When he used the Freedom of Information Act to find out, he discovered that the FBI had been watching him since 1947, when he was a student at the Indiana State Teachers College in Indiana, Pennsylvania. He had posted a signed notice on a bulletin board that urged men to protest the draft, arguing that the arms race and peacetime draft would lead to World War III. The notice was classic Abbey. "Send your draft card with an explanatory letter to the president," it helpfully suggested. "He'll appreciate it, I'm sure." Although Abbey was just twenty—he had received his honorable discharge from the U.S. Army only months before—his tone wouldn't sound very different in the 1970s or 1980s, at least when the subject was authority.

There was more to the story. In Abbey's case, life seemed to imitate art and vice versa with uncanny frequency. Although Abbey didn't know at the time that the bulletin board incident had earned him a spot on the FBI's 100,000 "Sort of Wanted" list, the fate of Jack Burns, *The Brave Cowboy's* protagonist, turns on a similar incident. Jack Burns has an FBI record, too. The police chief who must hunt Burns discovers that the cowboy was wounded in World War II and briefly attended the State University in "Duke City, New Mex." where he was "known to have attended secret meetings of so-called Anarchist group. . . .

"In March 1946 was one of five signers of document posted on University bulletin boards advocating so-called Civil Disobedience to Selective Service and other Federal activities," the fictional report goes on to state.

Burns's politics are his undoing. It is only after his anarchist background becomes known that Burns's escape attracts attention. If the political element had never surfaced, Burns would have quietly faded into the pockets and folds of the canyon country. Instead, he is brought down by the evil, machine-worshipping General Desalius and the reluctant, gum-chewing sheriff, Morey Johnson. Burns literally is

cornered and killed by the Machine—an out-of-control truck driven by a man completely out of touch with the land or his own body. When Burns dies, so does the quintessentially American idea of freedom that he embodies.

The Brave Cowboy was published in 1956, only two years after Congress censured red-baiting Senator Joe McCarthy. The McCarthyesque repression that hammered down on Abbey's fictional hero, Jack Burns, and his friend Paul Bondi in *The Brave Cowboy* is more dramatic than what Abbey experienced—in Abbey's case, the FBI's busiest period was ten months of scrambling after him while he was working as a clerk-typist for the U.S. Geological Survey in 1952, supporting himself while he finished *Jonathan Troy*. The FBI kept trying to find out if he was a communist but failed to turn up enough evidence to get him fired. He wasn't exactly a communist, of course; he was something even more subversive—an anarchist. The FBI says its investigation of Abbey ended in 1967, when Abbey was working in Death Valley as a school-bus driver.⁵

When he received his files, Abbey wasn't at all surprised to find that the FBI had been keeping an eye on him, said Clarke Cartwright, his widow. Abbey believed that First Amendment rights are frequently disregarded "if you speak out against your government," she said. He also didn't believe that the investigation had ended. "We assumed all along that our telephone was tapped and perhaps there was even a bug in the house," said Cartwright.

In 1986, Abbey predicted that the stiff sentence meted out to Howie Wolke was only the overture for a campaign of government repression against Earth First! He called Foreman and the other Buckaroos "heroes." "I think they're risking very much for what they believe in. It's likely that they will be in some sort of serious trouble sooner or later," he said.

It was all part of a struggle that was growing more intense as resources dwindled. In the 1960s and 1970s, environmentalists were successful in mounting what Abbey called "a delaying action." But in the 1980s, they found themselves increasingly unable to hold the line. Abbey said he had always been willing to sacrifice a political point for

the sake of a good story—or a cheap gag. But cheap gags were getting harder to come by. “More and more of us feel we have our backs against the wall. It’s getting harder to make a comedy of it,” said Abbey.⁶

Foreman also occasionally thought about the possibility of reprisal. “It’s real easy to get paranoid and think everybody is a cop,” Foreman said in 1986. “The simple fact is, if you’re gonna get somebody, you’re gonna get them, whether it’s Karen Silkwood getting run off the road or someone planting dope in my wood stove. But worrying doesn’t help.”

The bigger the movement got, the more danger Foreman was in. Foreman knew it. But as he later admitted, he knew it in his head, not his gut. It was that same old virus, the nothing-can-happen-to-me syndrome. When he did fantasize about something bad coming down, Foreman imagined a shoot-out in the Old West. He would go out in a blaze of gory glory. It would have to be that way. In true romantic fashion, Foreman had pledged himself to fight to the death. At least that’s how the speech went. “Aldo Leopold said, ‘Of what value are forty freedoms without a blank spot on the map?’” Foreman reminded people at the 1989 California Wilderness Conference. “He talked about those who loved wild things and sunsets. And for me, I agree with Leopold. I do not care to be a domesticated animal. So I can do no less than to look at the next twenty-five years and pledge my life, my fortune—meager as it is—and my sacred honor to try to restore ecological wilderness to the United States and to this planet and I think that’s the new crusade that the entire environmental movement must embark on.”

But Foreman hadn’t been much more than a toddler during the McCarthy era. In the days of COINTELPRO—the FBI’s covert campaign against the antiwar movement and the Black Panthers—Foreman had been, however briefly, a Marine. His sense of government persecution was an unrealistic combination of abstract intellectualizing and his melodramatic imagination.

In fact, Howie Wolke’s heavy sentence was a bad sign. The idea of monkeywrenching alone was enough to give Earth First! a bad

name among most of the people who lived in the rural communities surrounding national forests. But a specific kind of monkeywrenching—tree spiking—made them positively livid. The threat of violence was a wild card. It made Earth First! famous. But it led even some environmentalists to regard them as traitors. “If Earth First! didn’t exist, the oil companies would have invented it,” was a typical comment. Even Foreman was unable to make up his mind about whether monkeywrenching did Earth First! more harm than good. But unlike Mike Roselle, he was honest enough to admit that, yeah, someone could get hurt. He was prepared to take the risk.

“As far as hard-core physical nonviolence goes, it’s life denying,” he said. “You corner anything and it’s going to fight.”

Foreman and most other Earth First!ers had the sense of crisis that is the common denominator for all radical action. Ed Abbey had cast the mold in his “Foreward!” to Foreman’s book *Ecodefense*. “If a stranger batters your door down with an axe, threatens your family and yourself with deadly weapons, and proceeds to loot your home of whatever he wants, he is committing what is universally recognized—by law and morality—as a crime. In such a situation the householder has both the right and the obligation to defend himself, his family, and his property by whatever means are necessary. . . . The American wilderness, what little remains, is now undergoing exactly such an assault.” As for monkeywrenching, Foreman’s bottom line was this: “You’re basing it on an ethic. It’s not just mindless, angry vandalism. We minimize any possible danger, but when it comes down to it, I’m not philosophically nonviolent. These guys don’t have to be cutting trees. They’re doing it to make a buck.”

Them’s fightin’ words. If the goal of Earth First! was to become “the forest defending itself” as Australian Earth First!er John Seed phrased it, then the group was succeeding. In the guise of the Buckaroos and their soggy hippie supporters, the forest wasn’t just defending itself; it was rioting.

On May 8, 1987, a twenty-three-year-old timber worker in Cloverdale, California, was rushed to the hospital. His name was George

Alexander and his face looked like confetti. Alexander had been standing near a head-rig band saw at a Louisiana-Pacific lumber mill when its blade hit a sixty-penny nail. *Brrr. Contact.* A twelve-foot piece of steel flew through the air. It struck Alexander's face, shattering the Lexan face shield that hung down from his hard hat. It fractured his jawbone, severed his jugular vein, broke his upper and lower front teeth, and caused "multiple lacerations."

Nothing was ever the same for Earth First!

The story of Alexander's maiming was published in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on May 9. As the story was picked up by other publications, odd details began surfacing. Odd, that is, if you knew anything about Earth First! For instance, the log that was spiked came from a second-growth redwood tree. But usually Earth First!ers only cared about first growth—primeval forest, ancient forest, old growth. Then company loggers reported that a decapitated, skinned dog carcass was found on a tractor in the woods near the trees that had been spiked. Bad craziness.

When they heard the news on the radio, Mike Roselle and Karen Pickett were on their way up north to visit Karen's sister. They stopped at an environmental center in Garberville to try to find out what had happened. The rumor was that the culprit was a right-wing crackpot who owned land adjacent to the property where the trees were being cut. Later, a Marxist carpenter-turned-Earth First!er named Judi Bari said she found out that the accident had occurred because the mill's band-saw blade was old and unsafe. Even if these rumors were correct, it was too late. By the time Roselle's denial reached print, the damage was done. Press coverage of Earth First! took a radical turn to the right.

"Terrorists for nature proclaim Earth First!" ran the headline on the *Chicago Tribune* story. "Earth First! 'Fanatics' Try to Keep Things Wild" trumpeted the *Los Angeles Times*. What had gone wrong? What happened to the good-humored outlaws of *Outside* magazine's "Real Monkeywrench Gang"?

Herb Chao Gunther thinks he knows. Gunther is the resident boy genius at the Public Media Center, the politically correct advertising

think tank in San Francisco where Jerry Mander eventually landed. To Gunther, part of the problem was the "accidental" nature of Earth First!'s development.

"A lot of other organizations—the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, the Sierra Club—very consciously planned their development, and they controlled the phases a little bit more," said Gunther. "Earth First! didn't. Early on the monkeywrenching gave them a boost because it got them attention that they would never have gotten otherwise. But then it started working against them."

Gunther, a round-faced man who is a nonstop talker and a powerful figure in progressive politics, believes political movements go through several phases. In the first phase, the movement consists of a small circle of people. This is the creative period, the era of Victorio's monument, Dave Foreman's memos, the first Rendezvous. The group is still defining itself.

In the second phase, the group begins to get attention. They crack the Glen Canyon Dam. "The media becomes fascinated with an unknown organization that claims to do radical direct action. As a small organization, it's not caught up in a lot of contradictions or controversies. They're easier to define. They're easier to project. It's a more elegant institution to write about or talk about."

In the third phase, the group becomes romanticized. Stewart McBride dubs them "The Real Monkeywrench Gang" in hip, macho *Outside* magazine. "In the growth of Earth First!, the movement, when it's defined in very romantic terms, there's not a lot of fact. There's no track record to speak of, no contradictions, no controversies, no real leadership struggles, no issues of policy. It's very easy to be an eco-warrior without ever having gone to war around anything." In this phase, there is a "mad rush" of people who have read about Earth First! in left-wing or obscure publications. They come to hear Dave Foreman or Mike Roselle speak. They attend a few Earth First! meetings. Maybe they join the road blockades in Oregon. The media's heavy artillery is wheeled out. Earth First! gets big-time attention, but the tone is still relatively uncritical. The organization attracts a lot more people. Real political debates begin.

By the time the fourth phase rolls around, the honeymoon is over. "All the illusions are gone and the media begins to take a harsh look," said Gunther. "People step back and say, 'Boy, these people are dangerous. They're crazy. They're eccentric. They're weird. I wouldn't want my daughter to go out with one of them . . .'"

"Then the realization sets in that Earth First! really doesn't count for much in terms of actual change. It's symbolic."

Far from making it irrelevant, Earth First!'s symbolism is the reason Gunther thinks it's important. In 1986, Gunther offered to mount a direct-mail campaign for Earth First! He said he was motivated by a belief that the "raging debate" provoked by Earth First! is a necessary prerequisite for social change, both inside and outside the environmental movement.

Gunther met with Mike Roselle and Dave Foreman. He found himself in the unaccustomed role of trying to convince Earth First! to sign on with the Public Media Center. Usually environmental groups came to him for help. After all, Gunther's partner, Jerry Mander, had produced the famous ads that helped keep dams out of the Grand Canyon. With direct-mail honcho Richard Parker, whom Gunther jokingly calls "the Richard Viguerie of the Left," Gunther himself had helped create the incredibly lucrative Greenpeace direct-mail campaign featuring cute baby harp seals that were being clubbed to death for their pelts: "Kiss this baby goodbye" read the copy, beneath the heartrending photo of the white, furry harp seal, the environmental equivalent of big-eyed children painted on velvet. This 1976 campaign, which was light years more successful than anyone anticipated, had put direct mail on the map as an environmental tool and turned Greenpeace into a behemoth. With this track record and the low prices he was able to maintain because of Public Media Center's nonprofit status, Gunther rarely had to beg for clients. But this time, he was the one pitching.

"We sat down and said, 'Look, we helped create Greenpeace. We're disappointed in what Greenpeace has become. You guys are basically where the fire needs to be,'" said Gunther.

"We thought at the time . . . with *The Monkey Wrench Gang* and with the growing frustration with government not doing what it needed to do on the environment, that there would be the level of national support. The cynicism had grown to the point where people would support real, honest, authentic direct action. Earth First! would have been the Greenpeace of the eighties."

Herb Gunther may have been right. But he never found out. The Earth Firsters responded to Gunther fairly quickly. They said no.

"They came back to us and said, 'We can't do a direct mail because it's inconsistent with what we're about.' Because of the trees, and the paper. And we looked at them and we said, 'Well, we're not surprised by that decision. We'd like to argue with you about that. Sometimes there are higher and better uses for trees. If it doesn't go into direct mail, it goes in as toilet paper or in printing *The New York Times*."

" 'We think we can convince you that recruiting support for Earth First! so we can go out and save the planet is a higher and better use of those trees.'"

"They just looked at us and said, 'No, we're just not going to get into it.'"

Impractical? Maybe. But Earth First! had been founded as an antidote to groups like Defenders of Wildlife, which spent 34 percent of its 1991 budget on overhead, including a hefty direct-mail campaign.⁷ It wasn't just money but identity that was at stake. Mike Roselle was the lone dissenter. He wanted to make Earth First! a mass movement, a desire that set him apart from the movement's founding Buckaroos. Later, he would work with Gunther on small-scale media campaigns for California Earth First! But he was outvoted on the big question.

Herb Gunther was impressed with the integrity shown by Foreman and the others. Impressed, but . . . rueful. Gunther remains convinced that Earth First! could have had an even bigger constituency than the Sierra Club or the Wilderness Society. "Earth First! *does* things. It's visible. It also has a name and a face," said Gunther. Gun-

ther still believes that if Dave Foreman had accepted his offer in 1986, he could have made him a star. Instead, 1987 came along and so did George Alexander.

Earth First! had already begun devouring itself. Tree spiking and other rowdy Earth First! habits had caused nasty internal rifts. Mountain climber Mike Jakubal had shown up in Corvallis, Oregon, where he rapidly became the local bad boy. He joined the Cathedral Forest Action Group, where civil disobedience activist Mary Beth Nearing was playing den mother to a bunch of weedy, overaged, eternal students and conscience-ridden community activists. Jakubal's antics soon got him kicked out of the group. He hadn't done much, just the standard tree-sit and a few slightly more in-your-face moves, like throwing sawdust on a Forest Service honcho's desk. All in all, he had gotten arrested more than a dozen times. If Corvallis had a "Ten Most Wanted List" he would have been at the top. It was a small town, after all.

After Jakubal's ouster, the Cathedral Forest Action Group (also known as CFAG, pronounced *See-Fag*) took a nonviolence pledge. No more monkeywrenching. Definitely no tree spiking. Bad juju. Bad press. Jakubal promptly went off and got himself arrested for sawing down a billboard with a reporter from a national magazine along to record the event for posterity.

Oregon home girls like Nearing weren't the only ones to decide that monkeywrenching didn't cut it. The 1988 Drug Omnibus Act, with its funny little rider about tree spiking, had taken the fun out of things. Suddenly this age-old tactic of Luddites and hard-ass union organizers had been declared a felony. Civil disobedience was also attracting unwelcome attention. Back in 1982, the Bisti badlands demonstration had caused little more than confusion. Five years later, Earth First!ers protesting at a Grand Canyon uranium mine were greeted by helicopters and police. Twenty-one people were arrested, including two who had chained themselves to the mine's head rig in the now-classic "Buggis Maneuver."

Earth First!'s actions had become so nettlesome to the timber industry that when a disputed old-growth stand called Millennium

Grove was left unattended for a few days in 1985, the president of Willamette Industries, Inc., took advantage of the lull to chop down thousand-year-old trees in record time, calling his decision a matter of "principle."⁸

Then there were the SLAPP suits—Strategic Lawsuits to Avoid Public Participation. In 1987, the Maxxam Corporation sued Northern California Earth First!ers for \$42,000, claiming that a group of about 100 had "trespassed maliciously and to oppress" the company. This oppression consisted of six women dancing on a pile of redwood logs and a handful of tree sitters. The following year, six Earth First!ers who had chained themselves to a ninety-two-foot-tall yarder, a machine that helps remove trees from a logging site, also were SLAPPED. Even though the protesters had stopped work at a Kalmiopsis forest logging site for only a day, they were sued by the Medford Timber Corporation (MEDCO). The company, which had recently been taken over by a corporate raider, won \$58,000 in civil damages against the environmentalists, who were dubbed "the Sapphire Six." The name came from the stretch of forest that they were trying to save. It certainly had nothing to do with jewelry—a private investigator hired by the company discovered that collecting on the judgment would be next to impossible. The activists didn't own anything, earn anything, or save anything besides trees.⁹ Even that was debatable. Although Earth First! supporters from Mike Roselle to *Green Rage* author Christopher Manes argue that monkeywrenching has resulted in the cancellation of federal timber sales, nobody has ever been able to prove it. It's likely that a few sales have quietly died as a result of a combination of monkeywrenching and public outcry. But as the Millennium Grove incident proved, tree spiking could backfire. The overall effectiveness of monkeywrenching is practically impossible to assess. Certainly the Forest Service—like the Iran-Contra cowboys of the Reagan administration—would never admit that they had caved in to "terrorism."

In any case, Herb Gunther was probably right when he said that the significance of Earth First! was not in the number of trees it saved but in the debate it provoked. By 1987,⁴ the group's own internal

debate was becoming toxic. At the Rendezvous, which was held that year at the Grand Canyon, Ed Abbey was surrounded by a group of people criticizing his stands on immigration and feminism—or what they perceived his stands to be. The old lion held his ground, but the event left an unpleasant taste in Foreman's mouth. Since the California Rendezvous the year before, he had been increasingly uncomfortable with Earth First! His anger over the incident grew as Abbey became ill in early 1989. For nearly ten years Abbey had been walking around with a disease called esophageal varices, which is common among alcoholics. Abbey got it after a thrombosis clogged his portal vein. Smaller veins grew around the damaged portal vein but they were too close to his esophagus and were prone to bursting. The fact that Abbey, a man whose literary voice had been so controversial, would be struck in the throat seemed to be not just an irony, but a gloomy defeat.

For several years, Abbey ignored the illness. Finally, he agreed to go to the doctor. After that doctor's visit, he quit drinking—or nearly did—because it aggravated his condition. For a long time he stayed in fairly good health. But each time his wife, Clarke, sent him off on a trip—Abbey still did solo hikes across the Cabeza Prieta lava flows and up in the Colorado Plateau—she knew that his blood vessels could give way and he could die alone on a bajada or up a steep mountain slope. Wisely, she tried not to think about it. As it turned out, the land that Abbey loved didn't betray him. The end was slower. In 1988 the Loefflers and the Abbeys spent Christmas together. Over the holidays Ed Abbey and Jack Loeffler planned a trip. Abbey wanted to go camping on his birthday, January 29. But when Loeffler arrived at Abbey's comfortable old house in the Tucson mountains with his bedroll and cookstove, Abbey said he didn't feel well enough to go out. Abbey "gave me the strangest look," said Loeffler. "I said, 'What's happening, Ed?' He said, 'It's getting close.' I said, 'Come on, man. We have millions of miles to walk.' He said, 'Yeah, God damn it, we do.' But we didn't."

Abbey and Loeffler postponed their trip until March. On March 6, Loeffler returned to Tucson. The two men went out to eat. They

talked about where they would go on their camping trip. It would be a place they knew well, where black lava was stacked like the fortified walls of a medieval town and bighorn sheep were the only creatures surefooted enough to run. "I knew that he was planning on dying," said Loeffler. "The idea had originally been that he and I would go camping and he'd die."

But the two men never made it out of town. Clarke came to Loeffler in the middle of the night. Ed was sick; he was really sick. Loeffler bundled Abbey up and took him to the hospital. For a while it looked as though he would die there. But he insisted on going home.

Not too many days later, Dave Foreman and Nancy Morton were called on a similar errand. Loeffler had gone back to Santa Fe. Ed had to go to the hospital and he didn't want an ambulance. He was too weak to get into the car and Clarke wasn't strong enough to carry him. Nancy and Dave took him to the hospital, Nancy monitoring his blood pressure. Clarke followed in another car with Doug Peacock while Lisa Peacock stayed with the children.

Once again, Abbey was treated and taken home. That was where he died.

That spring, a photocopy of Ed Abbey's handwritten letter to his wife, Clarke, circulated among some of their friends. It said:

CLARKE:—*Funeral instructions:* transported in bed of pickup truck and body to be buried as soon as possible after death, in a hole dug on our private property somewhere (along Green R., up in La Sals, or at Cliff Dwellers). No undertakers wanted; no embalming (for godsake!); no coffin. Just a plain pine box hammered together by a friend; or an old sleeping-bag, or tarp, will do. If site selected is too rocky for burial, then pile on sand and a pile of stones sufficient to keep coyotes from dismembering and scattering my bones. Wrap body in my anarchist flag. But bury if possible; I want my body to help fertilize the growth of a cactus, or cliffrose, or sagebrush, or tree, etc. Ceremony? GUNFIRE! And—A little music—

please: Jack Loeffler and his trumpet; the Riverine String Band, if available [this later got a line drawn through it] maybe a few readings from Thoreau, Whitman, Twain (something funny), Jeffers, and/or Abbey, etc: that should be sufficient. No speeches desired, tho' the deceased will not interfere if someone feels the urge. But keep it all simple and brief. Then—a *wake*! More music, lots of gay & lively music—bag-pipes! drums & flutes! the Riverine String Band playing jigs, reels, country swing and polkas; I want dancing! and a flood of beer and booze! a bonfire! and lots of food—meat! corn on the cob! beans & chiles! cake & pie & ice cream & soda pop for the kids! gifts for all my friends & all who come—books, record albums, curios & keepsakes. No formal mourning, please—lots of singing, dancing, talking, hollering, laughing, and love-making instead. And I want my widow to take a new man as quick as she can find one good enough—for her. [Along the sides of the page he wrote:] (Disregard all state laws re burials.) (Hang a windbell nearby.) (Invite everybody! (we like))

Almost everyone who read the letter smiled through parts of it and cried through others. Abbey's death affected people deeply, even if they had only known him slightly. "Ed was the most individuated person I have ever known," said Jack Loeffler. Most people who knew him felt the same way.

A few years before, Abbey had taken up William Randolph Hearst III on his offer to be the *San Francisco Examiner's* writer in residence. The old farm boy had gone to a sophisticated bar in San Francisco—it sounds like Tosca—where he was "served something hot, smooth, sweet, insidious," he wrote. "The decibel level is deafening; a roar of chatter comes from every side, violent music rises from the floor, from the walls, but all about me are the most distinguished-looking women I have ever seen—tall, blond, Nordic, elegantly dressed—not pretty but *handsome*—engaged in drowned, mute, but brilliant conversations.

"Perhaps it's all a mime, a dumbshow," Abbey writes. "Whatever

the case, I am struck once again by the painful realization that there are worlds out there I shall never know, pleasures and refinements I could never understand. Not in Moab, Utah; not in Oracle, Arizona; not in a hundred years."

Yet he had spoken at Harvard. He had published a dozen books. He had revealed to people parts of themselves that they might otherwise never have known. He had shown them their place in the variegated river that links two continents, the human and the natural. He had shown them that "the wilderness is a valuable thing for its own sake. It also has a lot of symbolic value from a human point of view. It can mean freedom, liberty, spontaneity, the unplanned, un-plannable progress of life. Wilderness also symbolizes, in my mind, the world that lies under the human world . . . and encloses it."

He had changed their lives.

Dave Foreman was flying home from a bird-watching vacation in Belize. He was standing at a phone booth at the Houston airport when he heard the news. For twenty-four hours, he cried. Then he went to the wake at Saguaro National Monument. In the green, surreal, underwater landscape of the saguaro desert outside Tucson, he cried some more. He mourned Ed Abbey and his own youth and then he made some decisions about his life.

Four hours north of Tucson, in the mile-high town of Prescott, Arizona, another man reacted to the news. Ronald Kermit Frazier noted the event in the diary he had been keeping for the FBI. "Abbey dead," he wrote. "Hooray!"