

# EARTH LIBERATION

## A READER ON THE E.L.F.

A Shorter History of a  
Northwest E.L.F. Cell

/

Eulogy for Avalon

/

The Telescope or the Kaleidoscope:  
A Critique of the E.L.F.

/

An Incomplete Timeline  
of E.L.F. Actions

# AGAINST CIVILIZATION

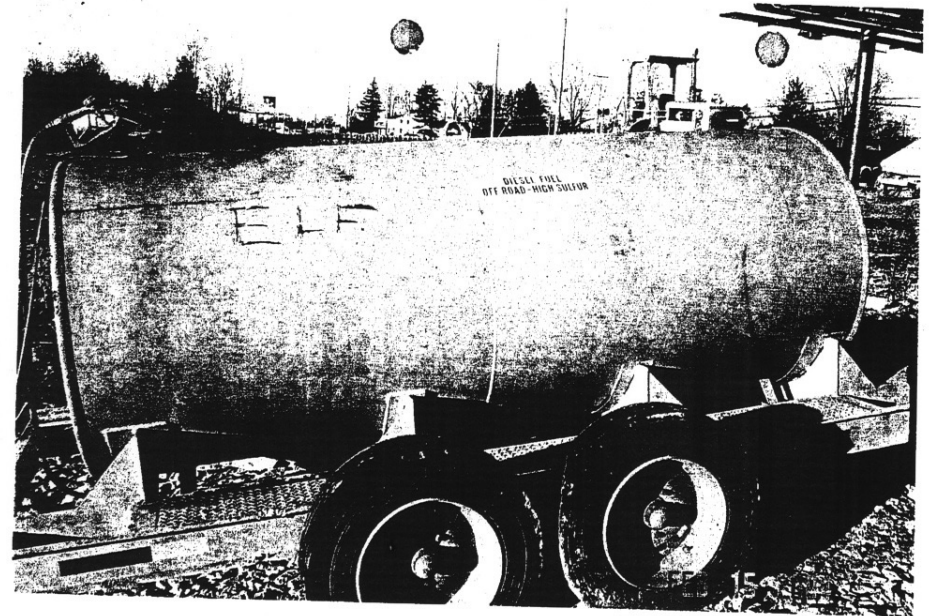


# **EARTH LIBERATION AGAINST CIVILIZATION**

**A reader on the E.L.F.**



Type set in Dico. Second edition summer 2025, Montréal.  
[mossyoak.noblogs.org](http://mossyoak.noblogs.org)





**April 5, Moscow, Russia:**

An excavator was destroyed by fire at the highway construction site that cuts through forests of the region.

**April 9, Moscow, Russia:**

Urban guerillas claim responsibility for the torching of a large excavator at a condominium construction site near the Bitcevski forest. The condominium is being built in part by the Russian Military Intelligence Service.

**April 11, Moscow, Russia:**

A workers' shed at a tree-cut site in Bitcevski forest is torched.

**May 4, Moscow, Russia:**

ELF claims: "*We sneaked upon another tree harvester and torched it, using the heavy rain as cover. 15 minutes later it exploded (we suspect fire in hydraulics to be the cause)*".

**May 6 & 10, Moscow, Russia:**

Construction equipment and geologists' measurement posts are destroyed, in the glades of Butovskiy forest.

**May 11, Moscow, Russia:**

ELF communiqué reads: "*we broke into yet another underground service booth and put to fire all the digital and analog devices and tools inside. We dedicate these attacks to Marius Mason and Eric McDavid.*"

## Table of Contents

|                                                                                                                 |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| A Shorter History of a Northwest E.L.F. Cell .....                                                              | 5  |
| Originally published in <i>Tides of Flame</i> (2011), foreword from<br>the reprint in <i>Return Fire</i> (2016) |    |
| Eulogy for Avalon .....                                                                                         | 31 |
| First published in <i>Earth First!</i> (2007)                                                                   |    |
| The Telescope or the Kaleidoscope: A Critique of<br>the E.L.F. ....                                             | 35 |
| Distroed by War on Society (2012)                                                                               |    |
| An Incomplete Timeline of E.L.F. Actions .....                                                                  | 51 |





---

## 2008

---

### **3 March, Seattle, WA:**

Explosive devices set fire to 4 multimillion-dollar houses on the Street of Dreams. Spray-painted in red letters: "Built Green? Nope black! McMansions in RCDs r not green. ELF." Damages: \$7 million.

### **25-28 November, Mexico City, Mexico:**

Eco-anarquista por el ataque directo (Eco-anarchist cell for direct attack) claims responsibility for a number of recent actions, including: half a dozen Molotov cocktails thrown at tren férreo (metro rail), Incendiary sabotage against Telmex, a Molotov cocktail thrown at a Banamex ATM, "as a form of 'protest'

*against the construction of a new rail line; already because of its construction many trees were cut down, entire families evicted and land expropriated with large hectares of green areas subsequently deforested."*

### **29 January, Mexico City, Mexico:**

Fire set in the College of Sciences and Humanities at Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) and to a construction crane, in response to the university building on top of an ecological reserve.

### **22 March, Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico:**

Fire set to construction equipment, and a local bank's windows are smashed.

---

## 2010

---

### **July 17, Moscow, Russia:**

A tracked tree transporter was torched at the road construction site near Sheremetjevo airport in Khimki forest.

---

## 2011

---

### **January 1, Moscow, Russia:**

Torching of construction equipment in the forests outside Moscow.

### **January 6, Moscow, Russia:**

*"We torched electrical measuring and control devices in 2 underground service booths of a water communication system that brings hot water to a military intelligence site in Butovskiy forest. We also spiked the road they use for maintaining the system."*

---

## 2005

---

**7 February, Sutter Creek, CA:**

Arson of the new Pinewoods apartment complex. Graffiti found nearby reads: "We will win - ELF."

**27 July Whatcom County, WA:**

2 luxury houses under construction arsoned. Damages: \$100,000.

**11 September, West Old Town, MN:**

Landfill site and machines monkeywrenched. Damages: tens of thousands.

**19 November, Hagerstown, MD:**

4 fires erupt in newly constructed unoccupied houses. E-mail from tree\_beard1234@yahoo.com :*"Last night we, the ELF, put the torch to a development of Ryan Homes in Hagerstown, Maryland. We did so to strike at the bottom line of this country's most notorious serial land rapist... We warn all developers that the people*

*of the Earth are prepared to defend what remains of the wild and the green...We encourage all who watch with sadness while developers sell out the future of us and our children to join us in resisting them in any and every possible way...The Ents are going to war."* Damages: \$300,000.

**25 & 29 November, Bothell, WA:**

Construction equipment is burned. Damages: \$100,000+.

**December, Kenmore, WA:**

Pieces of excavation equipment are burned on two separate nights at a housing development. Damages: \$240,000

## A Shorter History of a Northwest E.L.F. Cell

### Foreword

Here we present a tale that was first serialised in the now-defunct Seattle periodical 'Tides of Flame', not long after documentary-makers had released a longer film called 'If a Tree Falls...' about the rise and fall of one Earth Liberation Front (E.L.F.) group active in the '90s and '00s. Whereas that production came off as somewhat victimistic and defeatist (not to mention giving snitches and investigators themselves an inordinate amount of airtime), what we liked about this series was their placement of these events into the social context from which they arose; including more general activity across 'North America' from Vancouver to Mexico City, by the E.L.F. and others. Ordinarily, we would never read stories like this in print. The tragic part, of course, is that this amount of detail is publicly-known only because of the betrayal at the heart of the saga of Operation Backfire, the largest domestic terrorism investigation in the history of the U.S.

Doubtless, this raises the question of what end 'biography'-type accounts serve; but despite the danger of creating 'celebs' of the struggle, and them transforming from life-sized to larger-than-life, we have found it inspiring and empowering in our own time to come across such narratives. More than anything, what made us want to share this is the fact that rather than only cheerleading

---

## 2006

---

**17 January, Camano Island, WA:**

Arson of a nearly completed 9,600-square-foot trophy house. Damages: \$3 million.

**31 January, Guelph, Ontario, Canada:**

A fire destroys a partially constructed house. ELF email reads: "A STRIKE AGAINST DEVELOPERS, FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY" *"in the memory of William C. Rodgers 'Avalon'."*

**27 June, Guelph, Ontario, Canada:**

A fire destroys a partially constructed house. Damages: \$200,000.

(though there may be an element of that at times!), we have here a very human telling of lives that merged, strengthened, but then split, fell apart, and dispersed – a common experience of those who enter environments of struggle. The recent renewal of excitement over the novel ‘Letters of Insurgents’ is for good reason partly because of such an aspect being portrayed so heart-breakingly powerfully. Here, too, we have the people who change, drift apart, who keep struggling and who don’t, who enter the frustrations (and potential pitfalls) of ‘wanting to go further’ or who just fall apart under pressure. Certainly not all of these E.L.F.’ers were anarchists, but these aspects their stories will resonate with many of us within that space; regardless of whether the ‘urban guerrilla cell’ was a method we see (or have lived) as our own.

The critiques – those of interest to us at least – leveled at the E.L.F. model at the time (such as that the radical environmentalist or animal liberation discourse ‘specialised’ these struggles by failing to tie them into capitalism or civilisation more generally, such as that for all that the occasional communique might have referred to other other “isms” that the perpetrators were concerned about, these were called into existence as a list of single issues, “a broad liberal program that has taken on extreme tactics”), or those since (such as the worthwhile essay ‘The Telescope or the Kaleidoscope’, critical amongst other things of the founding principles of the model such as non-violence) won’t be discussed here. Suffice to say that we find the inclusion of the Mexican and Russian groups significant in the text, in that this charts the drift from a more leftist, eco-activist discourse to an anarchist, anti-civilisation and insurrectional one that the E.L.F. has seen internationally, even as the (former) fighters described below languish in prison, on the run, or in the worst cases under the protection of their new-found Father State for their services. Both the struggle mentioned below in Khimki forest, and the eco-radical scene in Mexico which has since splintered into various directions (not all of them anarchist), on a practical level have eschewed non-violence (as you will see from the early E.L.F. Mexico action claim we have included to end on); and despite occasional uninvited interventions of the survivors of the North American E.L.F. Press Office still talking in terms

---

## 2003

---

### 1 January, Girard, PA:

Arson at Bob Ferrando Ford Lincoln Mercury. Damages: \$90,000.

### 20 January, Seattle, WA:

Arson at a McDonald’s. Damages: \$5,000.

### 21 March, Superior Township, MI:

2 luxury houses arsoned. Damages: \$400,000.

### 28 March, Montgomery, Alabama:

5 government vehicles are vandalized and 1 truck is torched at a Naval Recruitment Headquarters. Graffiti reads: *“Stop the War - Stop killing - Leave Iraq - ELF”*.

### April, Santa Cruz, CA:

Over 70 SUVs vandalized.

### 4 June, Macomb County, MI:

Fire to 2 luxury houses in a housing development. Graffiti reads *“Stop sprawl - ELF”*. Damages: \$700,000.

### 1 August, San Diego, CA:

A 206-unit condominium under construction is burnt down. Banner reads “If you build it,

we will burn it - The E.L.F.s are mad.” Damages: \$50 million.

### 22 August, West Covina, CA:

Several car dealerships attacked: 1 warehouse torched, 125+ SUVs vandalized. Damages: \$2.3 million.

### 19 September, San Diego, CA:

3 separate construction sites are attacked and vandalized. Damages: \$1 million

### 22 September, Martiny, MI:

Incendiary devices which failed to ignite are discovered by maintenance workers at an Ice Mountain Spring Water Company (subsidiary of Nestle) pumping station.

### 6 October, Jemez Mountains, NM:

US Forest Construction equipment monkeywrenched.

### October, Portland, ME:

Boise Cascade company equipment monkeywrenched by the Acadian Green Brigade of the ELF.

### 24 October, Martinsville, IN:

Wal-Mart construction site monkeywrenched.

---

## 2004

---

### 7 February, Charlottesville, VI:

Fire severely damages a large scale commercial and residential development site. Banner reads *“Your construction = long term destruction - ELF.”* Damages: \$30,000.

### 20 April 2004, Snohomish, WA:

2 houses are burnt down, and unignited devices are found at other housing developments. Damages: \$1 million.

### August 3, Spokane, WA:

3 hummers torched at George Gee Hummer dealership

**26 January, St. Paul, MI:**

Arson at University of Minnesota Microbial and Plant Genomics Research Center. Damages: \$630,000.

**29 January, Fairfield, ME:**

Sabotage of a Biotech Park claimed in a communiqué:  
*"We [...] put a sand/quickcrete mix in the engines, gas, and hydraulics of an excavator and a roller. These were the only machines there, plowing up the land, building bridges over creeks. So we left no trace so when the operators came to work the machines would run and then seize, costing big bucks. Now, we are letting the people know...[...] They grow mice with human ears there! How sick! These people want the park to be an incubator to bring more biotechnology into Maine [...] Biotechnology is one more tool by the ruling class to control our lives and make more money. Only the rich can produce biotechnology and even if that wasn't so, we would want no part of it because it sees the wild as incomplete, or as lacking, needing manipulation. Our ancestors lived in harmony on this planet for a long time, now all of humanity's progress is making us sick. And we're gonna trust those that gave us cancer to create new technologies to cure it. No way! We want to be left alone. No more development. We enjoy life here and are sick of business men coming in and trying to dupe us into trading the good life for their wage slavery. People!!! Take action!!!"*

**24 March, Erie, PA:**

Hundreds of trees spiked, a crane, generators, and pumps torched, other equipment monkeywrenched. Damages: \$500,000.

**11 August, Irvine, PA:**

Arson of of the Northeast Research Station in the Allegheny National Forest. "In pursuit of justice, freedom, and equal consideration for all innocent life across the board, segments of this global revolutionary movement are no longer limiting their revolutionary potential by adhering to a flawed, inconsistent 'non-violent' ideology. While innocent life will never be harmed in any action we undertake, where it is necessary, we will no longer hesitate to pick up the gun to implement justice, and provide the needed protection for our planet that decades of legal battles, protest, and economic sabotage have failed so drastically to achieve. The diverse efforts of this revolutionary force cannot be contained, and will only continue to intensify as we are brought face to face with the oppressor in inevitable, violent confrontation. We will stand up and fight for our lives against this iniquitous civilization until its reign of terror is forced to an end- by any means necessary. In defense of all life." Damages: \$700,000.

**November 26, Harborcreek, PA:**

A barn belonging to Mindek Brothers Fur Farm is burned to the ground. Joint ALF/ELF claim.

of 'environmental justice' and the like, the generation of E.L.F. that exists today whose actions they reference would seem to have largely moved beyond such incoherent arguments, targeting all domination.

We publish this in solidarity with many earth-defenders of the world, whatever name they do or don't use. Whatever one makes of claiming actions under an acronym such as the E.L.F., it is inspiring to know of the high-impact actions that these people regularly carried out in these past decades – without fetishising the level of material damages above other considerations, it seems that those of even humble means can devastate the facilities and infrastructures that surround us, and that is a tale worth telling. But this is also a cautionary tale; and not just of what is at stake in terms of repression (sadly, since this was written two of the four fugitives – Rebecca Rubin [see Return Fire vol.2 pg73] and Justin Solondz – have been jailed) and the potential for today's comrade to become tomorrow's traitor to the State. Nathan Block and Joyanna Zacher, two who did not snitch and who served their sentences with apparent dignity, have since release been outed as 'anti-modern' fascists and white separatists by longtime E.L.F. prisoner supporters and their former comrades. To us, as well as various strains of eco-radicalism in both Russia and Mexico also having gone in differently disgusting directions at times, this renews the importance of never separating 'ecology' or 'animal liberation' from our broader anarchist ideas, or making 'marriages of convenience' with such characters; rightists, leftists or the so-called 'apolitical', always distanced from our anti-politics.

***A Shorter History of a Northwest E.L.F. Cell***

Sunshine. A hippy name, dark hair, fierce eyes. Josephine Sunshine Overaker. She went out one night with her boyfriend in the woods of Oregon, put bombs under a

US Forest Service truck and on the roof of the Ranger station.

She spray-painted a circle-A on the side of the building along with the words "STOP RAPING OUR FORESTS." She laughed hysterically as she fled into the woods, the flames dancing behind her in the darkness, a demon beside her, and the future filled with fires and shadows. Over the next ten years, Josephine would transform from a free woman into an exile, living an anonymous life and outrunning her past. We do not know where she is, nor what she is doing, but she has eluded the clutches of the police, this person with the name Sunshine.

She and two other men launched the first attacks of a fledgling Earth Liberation Front (ELF) cell in the Pacific Northwest. The arson described above took place on October 28th, 1996, in Detroit, Oregon. Two days later in Lane County, Overaker and her group of three burned down the Oakridge Ranger Station. All of them had been involved in peaceful protests to stop the devastation of old growth forests in Oregon. They had seen these tactics fail endlessly and had seen Forest Service Rangers brutalize and imprison their friends who were attempting to defend the earth. When these arsons took place, many environmental activists did not know what to think. The most lucid of them were happy, understanding that their opponent had been attacked. Unfortunately, some activists were afraid and wanted to distance themselves from what had happened. They had no idea of what would come next in the summer of 1997.

It is not known why Overaker did not participate. What is known is that her group had grown and six of them burnt down a horse slaughterhouse in rural Oregon on July 21, 1997. The Cavel West slaughterhouse bought wild horses that had been captured by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and turned them into meat. The massive fire they lit completely destroyed the plant. It never opened again. For months peaceful protesters had written letters and children had held signs outside saying "DON'T KILL HORSES," all to no avail. The ELF managed to destroy a despicable company that murdered the last remaining wild horses in Oregon. The ELF destroyed it in one night and with one action.

site. "[Developers] have turned what was once forested land into parking lots, luxury houses for rich scum and expanded roads." Damages: \$75,000.

#### **June, Bloomington, IN:**

Spiking of hundreds of trees in Brown County and Monroe County.

#### **20 July, Rhinelander, WI:**

Thousands of experimental trees are destroyed, mostly poplars, and vehicles at a U.S. Forest Service research station are vandalised. Damages: \$1 million.

#### **18 October, Shoals, IN:**

Monkeywrenching of 4 pieces of heavy logging equipment in the Martin State Forest. Graffiti reads: "Earth Raper - Go Cut in Hell - ELF." Damages: \$55,000.

#### **27 November, Niwot, CO:**

Arson of a luxury home under construction. Damages: \$2.5 million.

#### **9, 19 & 29 December, New York, NY:**

Arson of luxury houses under construction. "An unbounded war on urban sprawl." Graffiti reads "If you build it we will burn it." Damages: \$410,000.

---

## 2001

---

#### **January 1, Glendale, OR:**

Arson of the offices of Superior Lumber, the largest contract holder of the Bureau of Land Management. Damages: \$800,000.

#### **February 20, Visalia, CA:**

Arson of the biotech company Delta & Pine Land Co. "We chose this warehouse because it contained massive quantities of transgenic cotton seeds. After cutting through a padlock on a door to get into the warehouse, we placed 4 five-gallon buckets and half diesel in strategic locations. Windows were broken to provide the fire with oxygen and timers were set."

#### **March, Eugene, OR:**

Spiking of trees set to be sold in the Judie Timber Sale.

#### **March 30, Eugene, OR:**

36 luxury SUVs torched at Joe Romania Chevrolet dealership.

#### **April 15, Portland, OR:**

Two cement trucks torched at the Ross Island Sand and Gravel. Damages: \$210,000.

#### **May, Moscow, ID:**

Arson at the University of Idaho Biootechnology building.

#### **21 May, Seattle, WA:**

Firebomb at the University of Washington's Center for Urban Horticulture. Damages: \$7 million.

#### **July 16, Macomb County, MI:**

Fire destroys the first floor of the headquarters for Spencer Oil Co.

#### **August 21, Long Island, NY:**

Vandalism at the biotech building of the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratories.

#### **November, ID:**

Spiking of trees set to be sold in the Otter Wing Timber Sale, in the Nez Perce National Forest.

---

## 1998

---

### **2 June 1998, Olympia, WA:**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal Damage Control building and another U.S. Department of Agriculture wildlife station burn down. Joint ALF/ELF claim. Damages: \$1.9 million.

### **3 July, Middleton, WI:**

Break-in and release of 171 mink and 310 ferrets from United Vaccines laboratory. Equipment and windows are destroyed. Graffiti reads "*Independence Day for Fur Farm Prisoners*". Joint ALF/ELF claim.

### **10 October, Rock Springs, WY:**

40-100 wild horses are freed from a BLM corral. Failed incendiary devices are found next to a pickup truck and a building. Joint ALF/ELF claim.

### **19 October, Vail, CO:**

Arson of 5 buildings and 4 chair lifts at the Vail Mountain ski resort. Damages: \$12 million. Fires were set "on behalf of the lynx".

### **26 December 1998, Medford, OR :**

Fire ravages the headquarters of U.S. Forest Industries. "One Foggy night after Christmas when everyone was digesting their turkey and pie, Santa's ELFs dropped two five-gallon buckets of diesel/unleaded mix and a gallon jug with cigarette delays; which proved to be more than enough to get this party started. This was in retribution for all the wild forests and animals lost to feed the wallets of greedy fucks". Damages: \$700,000.

On November 30th, 1997, Overaker, her boyfriend, and three others burnt down a Bureau of Land Management wild horse corral in south-western Oregon. Before burning down the facility, the group freed 400 horses back into the wild. Whereas the previous year the cell had focused its attention on the Forest Service, their activity in 1997 was dedicated to freeing wild animals that were being imprisoned and slaughtered. The members of the group proved themselves to be against anyone who wished to destroy the wild earth, whether it be a private company or a government agency.

In 1997, different ELF cells that did not know each other carried out attacks in Utah against a fur-breeding plantation and at UC Davis in California against their still under-construction Center for Comparative Medicine. Both of these targets suffered arson attacks for their practices of enslaving, torturing, and murdering animals. At the time, the action against UC Davis was seen as an insane act against a benevolent institution. Now, with everyone obsessed with free-range chicken and green technology, many people might not view the arson with the same outrage expressed in 1997.

In Olympia on June 21st, 1998, the group launched a new offensive on the US Department of Agriculture, the greedy overlords of the forests. But on the day before the attack, Overaker was caught shoplifting items needed in the planned arson. After being released from jail, she was told she could not participate in the action. Knowing this was true, she decided to establish a firm alibi while her friends continue onward. The next morning, four members of her cell burnt down a US Department of Agriculture building.

Simultaneously, a separate ELF cell burned down another Department building in a different part of town. On one day, the entire Puget Sound area saw fires burning in the capitol.

Despite being far ahead of most people around them (who were busy loving Clinton and "prosperity"), these groups were pursued by the FBI, labeled as terrorists and vilified by large segments of the environmental movement. Groups like the Sierra Club publicly denounced the ELF and applauded the government's efforts. Nevertheless, true to

---

## 1999

---

### **25 December, Monmouth, OR:**

Fire destroys the main office of the Boise Cascade logging company. Damages: \$1 million.

### **31 December, East Lansing, MI:**

Arson of research offices on genetically modified crops at Michigan State University. Damages: \$1 million.

---

## 2000

---

### **23 January, Bloomington, IN:**

Arson destroys a partially built luxury home. Graffiti reads: "*No Sprawl - ELF*." Damages: \$200,000.

### **9 February, Saint Paul, MI:**

University of Minnesota, research crops are destroyed. Damages: \$1,000+.

### **24 March, Minneapolis, MI:**

Sabotage of Highway 55 reroute construction equipment. Damages: \$500,000.

### **30 April, Bloomington, IN:**

6 pieces of logging and heavy construction equipment are sabotaged and a trailer is set ablaze at a road construction

themselves and their ideas, this Pacific Northwest cell of the ELF proceeded to scope out a ski resort in Vail, Colorado, make their plans, climb up a mountain and burn down a multi-million dollar project that would ravaged the ecosystem around it. On October 19th, 1998, everyone watching the nightly news saw images of a giant ski lodge burning atop a snow covered hill. The arsonists had the remarkable experience of enjoying the true splendor of a mountain before burning a structure that ensured that same mountain's destruction.

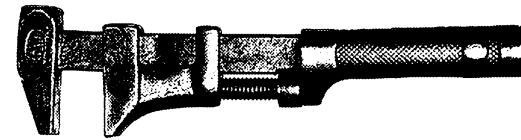
This was the high moment of the group. It appeared as if they could do no wrong, that the tide would turn, and that people would rise up and escape the stupor of the late nineties. We have focused our narrative around Josephine Sunshine Overaker for a simple reason: she is one of the few who did not betray their friends, renounce their beliefs, or go to jail. She is one of the few who remained free. The saddest part of the story is far off, so for now, please take comfort in the fact that she is free, that not all was lost, and that the struggle continues to this day across the same planet she fought to protect.

On the FBI wanted poster, where she is described as a terrorist, it lists Overaker's possible professions as a firefighter, a midwife, a sheep tender, or a masseuse. This is the type of person they fear and seek to destroy.

Just before Christmas in December of 1998, the northwest Earth Liberation Front cell decided to strike the headquarters of US Forest Industries in Medford, Oregon. At the time, the group was based largely in Eugene and it was from here that they planned their attack. The members of the group who decided to carry out this particular action were Jacob Ferguson, Kevin Tubbs, and Kendall Tankersley. After deciding on a date, the three decided they needed a fourth member, and so Kevin Tubbs asked his friend Rebecca Rubin, another member of the group, to help them.

They drove down to Medford, placed an incendiary device near the building and left. But the next morning there was no news of any arson. After scouting out the headquarters, Jacob Ferguson saw that the device was still there in plain sight having failed to ignite. He contacted Kendall Tankersley and asked her to retrieve the device

## An Incomplete Timeline of E.L.F. Actions<sup>1</sup>




---

**1997**

---

### **11 March, Sandy, UT:**

A series of pipe bombs and one firebomb claimed jointly by the ALF/ELF destroys 4 trucks and leveled the offices of the Agricultural Fur Breeders Co-Op, Damages: \$1 million.

### **21 July, Redmond, OR :**

Arson attack on the Cavel West meat packing plant. The plant was slaughtering wild horses to be sold as meat in Europe. Damages: over \$1 million. The plant was never rebuilt. Joint ALF/ELF claim.

### **14 March, Eugene, OR:**

Tree spiking at Robinson-Scott timber harvest site in the McKenzie River watershed, Willamette National Forest. Joint ALF/ELF claim.

### **29 November 1997, Burns, OR:**

Fire at the Bureau of Land Management Wild Horse Corrals. A horse barn, chutes, pens and equipment are destroyed, and 400 horses are released. Joint ALF/ELF claim. Damages: \$474,000.

### **18 March, Davis, CA:**

The "Bay Area Cell of the Earth X ALF" sets fire to the University of California, Davis, Center for Comparative Medicine facility under construction.

---

1. Sources: Wikipedia.org ; Earthfirst.uk ; earthfirstjournal.news,  
Retrieved May 2025, *Burning Rage of a Dying Planet* by Craig Rosebraugh.





while he drove on to Sacramento to be with his mother for Christmas. When Tankersley drove back to Medford with an anonymous person who knew nothing of her task, she decided to not risk returning to the building.

After Christmas, Ferguson and Tankerley arranged to meet in Ashland, just south of Medford. Ferguson had his young son with him and the three returned to the headquarters. Ferguson got out of the car, made a new ignition device, and then drove with Kendall and his son to Dunsmuir, California where they rented a hotel room. The next morning they learned on the news that their arson had been successful. The entire headquarters of US Forest Industries was destroyed for a loss of \$900,000. In the communique that was released in the middle of January, 1999, the group wrote, "This was done in retribution for all the wild forests and animals lost to feed the wallets of greedy fucks like Jerry Bramwell, U.S.F.I. President. This action is payback and it is a warning to all others responsible that we do not sleep and we won't quit. For the future generations we will fight back." This last line is significant, given that Ferguson's young son was in the car and the fact that we are writing about them now, thirteen years later [when published].

In May of that year, different members of the group reconvened to plan another attack. Their next target was to be a meat company in Eugene. On May 9th, Jacob Ferguson, Stanislas Meyerhoff, Kevin Tubbs, Chelsea Gerlach, Josephine Overaker and (presumably) Joseph Dibee set out to burn down the Childers Meat Company. After Overaker and Dibee cut the fence, others placed and lit an incendiary device near a gas line in the building. As they were all driving away, they heard on their scanner that the fire had been reported. By the next morning, the building had been totally destroyed. In their communique released shortly after, the group wrote, "As long as companies continue to operate and profit off of Mother Earth and Her [sic] sentient beings, the Animal Liberation Front will continue to target these operations and their insurance companies until they are all out of business." Rather than claim this action as the ELF, they claimed it as the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), a sister international group.

Over the course of 1999, the group did not commit any other large actions. After having grown to be over a dozen strong, the members navigated and agitated inside the growing links between the anti-globalization movement and the environmental movement. At the time, the potential for a mass revolt against global capitalism seemed possible. All across the world were millions of outraged people attempting to fight against the de-regulation of the global market and the destruction of their traditional ways of life. For the members of the ELF, this was their chance to bring the fight to capitalism itself. They did not want a more humane capitalism as did their contemporaries, instead they wanted its complete destruction and an end to its war on the natural world.

Their opportunity for displaying their views in a more social manner arrived in the form of the planned protests against the WTO [ed. – World Trade Organisation] conference in Seattle in the fall of 1999. Several of the original members of the cell attended the protests. Amongst them were other young people who had been brought up in the environmental movements and the struggle to save the Pacific Northwest forests. Daniel McGowan, Joyanna Zacher, Nathan Block and Susan Savoie were all to become members of the ELF cell and all contributed to the anarchist effort to directly attack the storefronts of businesses and banks, bypassing representation and moving directly into action. The now infamous Black Bloc began its corporate property destruction after the SPD [ed. – Seattle Police Department] had begun to pepper-spray and assault peaceful protesters blocking WTO delegates from their meeting. Despite this very clear sequencing, large segments of the unionists, mainstream environmentalists, and anti-globalization protesters were tricked into blaming the anarchists for the violence of the police.

The smashed windows of the banks in downtown Seattle have until recently been regarded as the most heinous crime, oftentimes overshadowing the brutality of the police during those fall days. By the end of the WTO conference, the SPD had established a nightly curfew and invaded Capitol Hill. To the current and future ELF members present for the chaos, these experiences only cemented their conviction that the system they were fighting destroyed not only the natural world, but also human freedom, life,

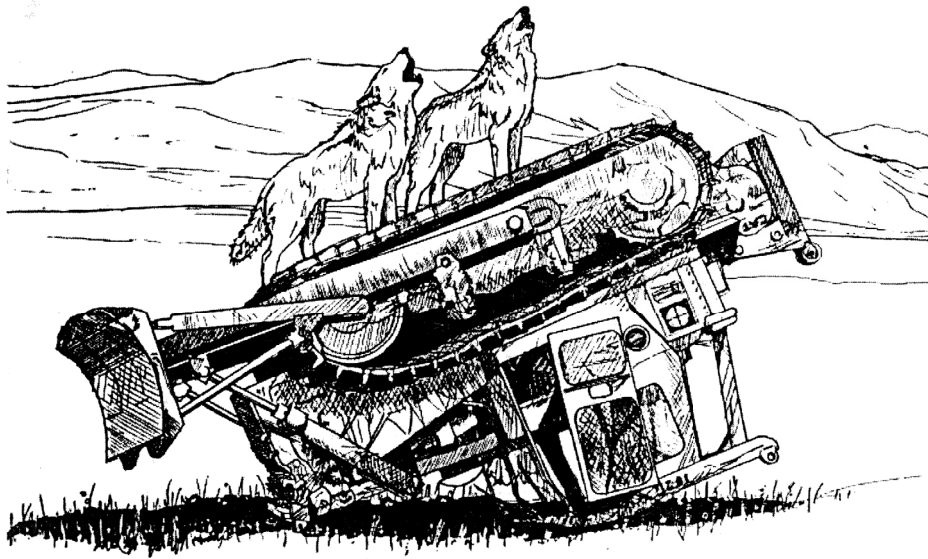
## *Beltane, 1997*

*Welcome to the struggle of all species to be free. We are the burning rage of this dying planet. The war of greed ravages the earth and species dies out every day. ELF works to speed up the collapse of industry, to scare the rich, and to undermine the foundations of the state. We embrace social and deep ecology as a practical resistance movement. We have to show the enemy that we are serious about defending what is sacred. Together we have teeth and claws to match our dreams. Our greatest weapons are imagination and the ability to strike when least expected.*

*Since 1992 a series of earth nights and Halloween smashes has mushroomed around the world. 1000's of bulldozers, powerlines, computer systems, buildings and valuable equipment have been composted. Many ELF actions have been censored to prevent our bravery from inciting others to take action.*

*We take inspiration from Luddites, Levellers, Diggers, the Autonome squatter movement, the ALF, the Zapatistas, and the little people—those mischievous elves of lore. Authorities can't see us because they don't believe in elves. We are practically invisible. We have no command structure, no spokespersons, no office, just many small groups working separately, seeking vulnerable targets and practicing our craft.*

*Many elves are moving to the Pacific Northwest and other sacred areas. Some elves will leave surprises as they go. Find your family! And let's dance as we make ruins of the corporate money system...*



and joy. They knew the state would crush even the most minimal sign of disobedience.

To usher in the millennium, Jacob Ferguson, Stanislas Meyerhoff, Josephine Overaker and Chelsea Gerlach decided to burn down the Boise Cascade lumber company regional headquarters in Monmouth, a town less than a hundred miles south of Portland. On Christmas Eve, 1999, the group completely torched the headquarters of the company, causing them a loss of \$1,600,000. In their communique, the group said it targeted the company for its ravaging of the Northwest and its intention to set up operations in the forests of Chile. Their communique ended, "Let this be a lesson to all greedy multinational corporations who don't respect their ecosystems. The elves are watching. Earth Liberation Front."

And then, on New Year's Eve, the same four members hoped to trigger the type of Y2K panic that the capitalist media had been predicting. They drove out to the plains near Bend, Oregon and took down an electrical pylon for the power grid. As the tower began to fall, electricity arced across the sky and dust flew into the air. However, there was no disruption because the power was rerouted. North America continued to party as the 20th century became the 21st. There was no communique released by the group. On the morning of January first, this old crew of accomplices awoke to the future, unaware of what the next few years would bring.

The Northwest ELF cell whose exploits we have been narrating transmitted their plans to each other by attending what they called "book clubs." A given book, such as *The Dispossessed* by Ursula K. LeGuin, would serve as the text in which the cell would decode their plans. With a key that read something like LINE 5, LETTER 26, the cell would assemble whole sentences until they had received their instructions and targets. In this way, they resembled the Red Army Faction of the 1970's who used *Moby Dick* as their transmission device. This is just one of the ways in which the ELF cell maintained their secrecy and were able to remain free from incarceration for as long as they were active.

After their actions during the turn of the century, the cell was inactive until September of 2000. They chose

the West University Public Safety [police] Substation in Eugene, Oregon, as their next target. After months of repression by local authorities against the anarchist and environmental movements, the cell believed that the radical community of Eugene would welcome a blow inflicted on the same police that had brutalized and jailed many of their friends. On the night of September 6th, Stanislas Meyerhoff, Kevin Tubbs, and Chelsea Gerlach placed two incendiary devices beside the substation. One device failed to explode while the other, placed on a bicycle locked near the substation, tipped over and caused only minimal damage to the substation. The group did not issue a communique, given the relative failure of their action.

The cell struck again on January 2nd, 2001, this time with two new, younger members. Daniel McGowan and Susan Savoie accompanied Jacob Ferguson, Stanislas Meyerhoff, and Kevin Tubbs on a journey from Eugene to Glendale, Oregon. Their target was the Superior Lumber Company, a purchaser and processor of the felled woods of Oregon. The two new members served as lookouts while the other three placed two incendiary devices in the headquarters of the company. Once they were done, the group returned to Eugene. McGowan and Savoie were entrusted to write the communique. The two traveled north to Portland where they wrote the following words: "What happened should shock no one. This year, 2001, we hope to see an escalation in tactics against capitalism and industry. While Superior Lumber says, 'Make few items, and do it better than anyone else,' we say, 'choose an earth raper, and destroy them.'" During the whole of 2001, various ELF cells struck targets such as the University of Idaho Biotechnology building, various Bank of New York branches and an Old Navy on Long Island, a Nike outlet in Minnesota, and a genetically-modified cotton plant in California. In addition to this, a separate Northwest cell was spiking trees across Oregon, rendering entire portions of land purchases un-loggable. The actions and methods of the ELF were on the ascent, with the new cells proliferating at a quickening rate. However, there began to be signs of some impending calamity, some change in the weather.

In 2000, a man named Jeff Luers torched three SUVs at a dealership in Eugene. Unfortunately, he was being followed by undercover agents and was arrested shortly after his

This piece is dedicated to:

- Conspiracy Cells of Fire
- The Informal Anarchist Federation
- The International Revolutionary Front (Chile, Italy and elsewhere)
- The Black International
- Tortuga
- Individualists Tending Toward the Wild
- The eco-prisoners of the United States

Suggested Reading:

- FAQ page on the ELF press office web page – [www.animalliberationfront.com](http://www.animalliberationfront.com)
- Points of ELF pamphlet
- A few topical question concerning anarchist and others – [sysiphus-angrynewsfromaroundtheworld.blogspot.com](http://sysiphus-angrynewsfromaroundtheworld.blogspot.com)
- Call from the Conspiracy of Cells of Fire – Commando Horst Fantazzini for an International Network of Action and Solidarity – Informal Anarchist Federation
- Our lives of a Burning Vision Escalation #1
- Igniting a Revolution – Earth Liberation Front (2 part movie) – [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)
- Resistance Magazine

to it, nor waiting for some crisis in capitalism to strike a group of people and then trying to push the iceberg out of the water. These situations and points do have certain social implications to act within, and provide an opportunity to generalize anarchist methods and illegal practices on a much more social scale that is not isolated to any specific group. But the offensive position is not always social; while the actions themselves may have a social resonance to a specific situation, they can come from an anti-social place of offensive attack, one that is not predetermined nor understood as such a reaction to the state or capital. An attack that is made instead by studying (through the use of different anonymous research technologies – phone books, computers, etc) of the already-existing networks of exploitation and domination in which one or a group of individuals can select a decisive point to hit. This is where the use of the ELF as a method comes in: small cells with an interest in attacking aspects of the civilized order, on the basis of a common hatred of civilization, not based on a common ideology. In its practical sense this means sabotaging railroad lines, destroying electricity infrastructure (telecommunication lines, fiber optics, electrical power lines, cell phone towers or any other unsecured electrical target left open), [burning] government buildings or companies that are identified as targets by our individual research.

With this offensive position we must also have the strength and courage to carry on in our individual motivations and intentions. Even if we are carrying on alone, and desire to do so. Understanding when and where to attack our enemies (whether physical or psychological) within the places they reside. To put it another way, this is when we are able to put down the telescope and our limitations based on ideological containers, and open up our field of vision to the colorful world of the kaleidoscope, where the expansive potential of possibilities arise.

action. In March, the ELF cell decided to avenge his pending conviction. Stanislas Meyerhoff, Kevin Tubbs, and William Rodgers planned with another two new members to torch ten times more cars than Luers. It was decided that everyone participating in this action should not be Eugene residents. The two new members, Nathan Block and Joyanna Zacher, were involved in the environmental and metal scenes in Olympia and had met William Rodgers there. The group of five proceeded to the [same] Romania Chevrolet Truck Center in Eugene and torched 35 SUVs. In reference to Jeff Luers, the cell wrote in their communique, "The techno-industrial state thinks it can stop the growing resistance by jailing some of us, but they cannot jail the spirit of those who know another world is possible."

Shortly after this, ten members of the cells decided to stage a double hit against two targets in different states on May 21st, 2001. One would be the Jefferson Poplar Farm in Clatskanie, Oregon, while the other would be the UW Horticultural Center in Seattle. The former was chosen because it was believed that genetically modified trees were being grown there. The latter was chosen because a specific professor had his offices in the building and because he conducted genetic research on poplar trees.

Meyerhoff and the four new members, Savoie, McGowan, Block, and Zacher traveled south to the poplar farm. A separate team of five composed of Rodgers and four other new members traveled north to Seattle. The new members were Justin Solondz, Briana Waters, Jennifer Kolar, and Lacey Phillabaum. Before embarking on their journeys, the cell utilized Olympia as its home base and used the houses of their friends to make their incendiary devices. At the poplar farm in Oregon, the first group set two structures and eighteen vehicles on fire. They also tagged the words ELF and YOU CANNOT TAME WHAT IS WILD on the wall of a nearby barn. The damage from this action caused nearly \$1,000,000 in damage. The communique issued for this action stated that the group "torched Jefferson Poplar because hybrid poplars are an ecological nightmare threatening native biodiversity in the ecosystem. Our forests are being liquidated and replaced with mono-cultured tree farms so greedy, earth raping corporations can make more money."

The Seattle arson completely destroyed Merrill Hall at UW [and 13 SUVs], resulting in over \$3,000,000 worth of damage. The group of five waited nearby, listening to their scanners, and did not leave until they heard confirmation that their fires were raging. The group then returned to Olympia. Shortly after the simultaneous attacks against these producers of genetically modified plants, it was discovered that neither establishment was actively engaged in genetic modification at the time [ed. – since this has been proved untrue; the University of Washington's own website cited the professor whose research was targeted as "just one of many UW professors using genetic modification in their research", with a grant from the timber industry]. For several of the cell members, this was a terrible shock and caused Daniel McGowan, Brianna Waters and several others to leave the group.

And then September 11th happened. Already considered domestic terrorists, the ELF cell now had to be even more careful in the new climate of fear. Despite this and the problems with the previous action, a group composed of mostly old members decided to return to its roots and destroy another wild horse corral. In the summer of 2001, Joseph Dibee and Chelsea Gerlach had done reconnaissance of a Bureau of Land Management wild horse corral in Northern California. After choosing to attack this specific corral, Dibee asked Kevin Tubbs, one of the founders of the cell, to participate. Next, he asked Darren Thurston and Rebecca Rubin to be involved. Once they agreed, he picked up the two Canadian citizens after they illegally crossed the border and brought them to his house in Seattle.

Tubbs and Meyerhoff soon joined the three and they began making their incendiary devices. After making the last of their preparation, the group traveled to Olympia where they joined up with several unknown individuals. From there, they traveled to Eugene to pick up Tubbs before finally arriving near the corral on October 14th, 2001. Shortly after midnight on October 15th, the group let the horses out of the corral and then placed their incendiary devices throughout the structure. With the fire burning behind them and the horses running wild, the group returned to Olympia. Dibee, Thurston and Rubin continued north to Seattle. On October 16th, Jenifer Kolar returned Thurston and Rubin to their border crossing and the pair

for themselves. Choosing the most critical targets of the existing order.

### *From defensive to offensive: A metaphysics of refusal and attack*

*"As our desire to create our lives as we see fit, to realize ourselves to the fullest extent, to reappropriate the conditions of our existence, develops into a real project of revolt against all domination and oppression, we begin to encounter the world with a more penetrating eye."*

– Wolfi L.

With this in mind, we as human beings are also vessels, political vessels, conscious and always evolving in the plane of war against the existing world of capital, state and civilization. To negate the cause and effect of our surroundings is to limit oneself to a life of misery as a commodity, to the subjugation of all life, to the domination of time by a sedentary existence, to a society that needs one more human cog to speed itself up, to a civilization that imposes the domination of capital within all social relations. To say we are political vessels is to not just stroke a pen upon paper, but to acknowledge that our everyday lives are a melding of ideas with practices and practices with ideas. To put it another way, to experiment with the hypothesis and wager of what is called life.

Attacking from an offensive position means actions should be rehearsed, understood and gone through many times so that if a plan goes wrong, a group or cell would have the ability to change its movements and tactics very efficiently and quickly.

An offensive position does not wait for our enemies to make a move before attacking them. This means not waiting for someone to be killed by the police and then reacting

Through all the critiques I have tried to flesh out specifically about the ELF as a loose network of cells, I would like to make an open proposal to all anarchists critical of the ways anarchists currently engage in North America who desire to see the current world of Capitalism, the State and Civilization destroyed immediately on an international level.

As anarchists, especially the individualist tendency of this milieu, conscious of our own decisions to partake in a practice of refusal and continued attack, we have every method at our disposal. We have the use of different kinds of weapons: fake ids, improvised explosives, guns, disguises, accomplices, safe houses, robberies, etc etc. (manuals for all of which are readily available online).

It is not very easy to take a step in this direction or realm of actually living in an unchained and free way, and it has not been seen in sometime in the North American context. It is a great leap, but a leap nonetheless, for which some may be ready, but others may not. This should not deter solidarity and support in the most specific ways possible towards those who choose to this path.

This proposal is to be an immediate wager on an offensive in the continual war that surrounds every one of us, individually and collectively, whether we consider ourselves anarchists or not. We are part of the existing order; a giant prison with loose and open cells surrounding us. We make conscious choices to continue amid this miserable life (work, school, family, etc) of alienation and imposed exploitation on an international scale.

This proposal is not for a "front" of the organized masses, but for a diffused and open network of cells across North America and internationally. Cells that are not fighting on a militarist front nor see themselves as the "people's army". This has nothing to do with the masses being on one's side, but with the ability for conscious individuals to activate themselves on a plane of existence that is continually practiced in all its composed elements. Similar to the FAI-IRF (Informal Anarchist Federation – International Revolutionary Front), an open network that is anarchist and anti-authoritarian in nature, except without a name. Communiques only released on an as-needed basis when it is necessary to do so, with actions that speak

re-entered Canada. There, Thurstston issued the communique for the action.

And so it was that the various members of the once powerful ELF cell returned to their respective towns of Eugene, Olympia, Seattle and Vancouver. The arson of the horse coral was to be their final action and the hysteria of 9/11 only cemented their conviction to cease their activities. Some wanted to continue attacking, even going so far as to suggest committing targeted assassinations against high capitalists and leaders of industry. Ultimately, however, the group freed one last group of wild horses and then scattered themselves across the Northwest. Other cells continued to act in the region, but this particular group of people moved on to different projects. No one suspected them, nor could anyone imagine they had lit up the nights with fire and caused a panic in the timber industries of the the Pacific Northwest. Their lives from hereon out were varied and complex...

After the disbanding of the cell, the arsonists and saboteurs dispersed into their new lives, scattering themselves across the country. We do not have the means to narrate the stories of each person who participated in the ELF actions nor what they did once the cell came to an end. Nevertheless, we will provide a few stories about some of the people we respect. As you will find out next, not all of the people who participated in the assault against capitalism remained loyal to each other.

Joseph Dibee lived in Seattle after having participated in three arsons, including the synchronized attacks against two targets in Olympia. Oddly enough, he found employment with Microsoft and eventually contributed much technical expertise to the Internet Explorer browser. His work became his life and he sometimes spent 100 hours in the office. The same feverish personality that led him from a life of activism to urban guerrilla warfare seemed to still burn inside him even while he worked for one of the two major computer companies. Outside of work he went on hikes, kayaked, flew planes, scuba-dived, and explored the natural world he loved and had striven to protect. He was well-liked by his friends and co-workers. Apparently, his services were much appreciated by Microsoft as well.

Daniel McGowan, the young man who wandered into the Pacific Northwest and fell in love with the remnants of untamed nature, eventually returned his birthplace: New York City. He had grown up in a Catholic family and his father had worked as a cop for the NYPD. After rejecting a life in business, something his father frowned upon, Daniel had chosen the life of an activist. When he returned home, he eventually found employment with WomanLaw.org, a nonprofit group that helps victims of domestic violence avoid the traps and pitfalls of the judicial system. He met a woman named Jennifer and eventually married her, his new life becoming simple and increasingly removed from his previous one as an urban guerrilla.

Nathan Block and Joyanna Zacker remained close to the world they came from. They were in the Olympia metal scene and lived as a couple in a small house in the woods on Delphi Road. Nathan eventually began growing pot and soon had forty plants with which he could support himself. He and Joyanna were well-liked and well-known amongst their friends. Even their landlord described them as very nice people.

Justin Solondz remained in Olympia for a while after the cell disbanded. At the time he was dating Brianna Waters, another member of the cell. Both of them had attended the Evergreen State College and together they fought to save a forest in Oregon, working with the townspeople and making a film of the popular struggle against the logging companies. We have limited access to the facts, but it is known that at some point he and Brianna Waters separated and in 2005 he traveled to Europe to begin a life of wandering.

While living these new lives, the world became increasingly bleak. The invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq took place, the public became infected with patriotic hysteria, and the housing bubble continued to bloom, creating new profits and expanding the market recklessly. It seemed as if everything that they had been fighting for had turned to nothing. All of the forests were coming down to build new developments on land that was once wild. The public was swept away into the netherworld, electing the overtly-fascist Bush administration for another term in 2004. Pockets of rebellion survived in some major cities

relationships that are trusted, understood and long-lasting (the topic of security is left out here because it is such a complex subject, maybe to be visited at another time), rather than political relationships built on an assumed affinity and polite platitudes. These friendships come together and are shaped by mutually-developed histories, individual aims, and intentions. This does not mean one has to act with the same four people all the time, but that there are many relationships one can share which have the ability to come together to act.

Attacking different institutions and mechanisms of power is a leap, one that must be taken if one is interested in seeing this world destroyed. Each attack can be easily played out in one's head and their physical capacity to act in the most immediate sense, but this leap is a constant evaluation. A question of how to do such things in each instant, a collection of experiences of acting within differing situations that help one gain confidence and courage. Again, these are specific experiences, experiments and practices such as setting fires, throwing rocks through windows, building barricades, scouting for exit and entrance routes, the location of the police, doing research on the placement of different targets within a geographical area, etc.

### *Opening up an illegal plane of existence*

*"My daughter raises the smooth  
brass kaleidoscope  
and watches  
as coloured glass slivers  
conspire together.  
New worlds create themselves before her  
eyes."*

– Anonymous



consideration the war we find ourselves amidst, nor does it consider the positions that others like our enemies, "the people", etc, take in relation to our position against them. We have to consider that there will be casualties at some point, and have already been casualties. We have many enemies (the judges, lumber companies, the police, scientists, politicians, biotechnologists, the left, the right, etc.) and to not harm them would be due to our own pacification.

If and when we choose to act violently (as defined by the state), we will be called terrorists. There is not doubt about it and it is part of the state's larger strategy of isolating groups and individuals that oppose it, to fabricate a hostility and an 'other'. The state creates an enemy of "the people," the community, or whatever massified term the state uses to distinguish itself and those who identify with it from others.

### *The Conscious Individual and Self-Motivation*

"Courage to never yield or submit"

– Arthur Schopenhauer

Anarchists at times fall into a very limited view of acting upon their ideas. They build an organization by constantly waiting for this or that moment, yet when its capacity to act is finally reached, what each individual wants is largely misunderstood. Federations, collectives, organizations, and any other large formations are structured in such a way that individuals give up their own agency and desires for a set of guidelines or an ideology. Anarchist individual self-motivation is the ability to consciously understand one's own desires, intentions, and motivations for acting. Rather than under the banner of a large formation or ideology, actions are taken on one's own or with other individuals with an informal group who know what they want and why they desire to act together during a certain time period. This requires friendships and

but the fight against capitalism entered a low period in the US, and a sense of defeat hung heavy in the air.

Though it may not be widely recognized as such, everyone in this country experienced a fascist coup following the attacks of September 11th. A small group of people took power and drastically altered the entire social landscape, first by providing cheap housing and easy credit to the public and then by cashing out, leaving everyone else to fend for themselves. In Chile, on September 11th, 1973, another group of fascists seized power and proceeded to turn the entire country into an experiment from which a small group of people could extract profits and then vanish.

The former members of the ELF cell lived through the rising fascism as best they could, always aware of the gravity their past actions held in the current political climate. Rather than see an uprising against the world system that was killing the planet, our protagonists beheld a public that continued to willingly plunge into its own destruction. All of them grew apart, numbing themselves to the horror unfolding around them, learning to live inside of it and survive as best as possible.

We do not know what the exiled ELF fighters would have gone on to do had they not been caught, but based on appearances they did not engage in clandestine struggle ever again and many of them permanently renounced their former tactics. When they were apprehended, the most hidden and rotten parts of the former fighters came to the surface. Only the strongest held onto themselves through the hell that we will describe...

After the final actions of the Northwest ELF cell in 2002, the strength of the national environmental began to fade. The tactical and theoretical unity of the anti-globalization era no longer kept people together and working for a common purpose. The majority of the mainstream support that had once bolstered the larger environmental network was slowly absorbed into green capitalism, becoming infatuated with corn-based fuels, windmills, and soy products.

Simultaneously, the effort to discredit the data regarding global warming reached a disturbing high and was accompanied by the overt fascism being stoked by

the Bush administration. It was in the midst of this counter-revolution, with the forces of order and reaction destroying the gains of the anti-globalization movement, that the FBI began what was to become known as the Green Scare.<sup>1</sup>

It started simply enough. The FBI had a small lead and one suspect. His name was Jacob Ferguson, the young man who had also helped start the ELF cell. The FBI brought him in for questioning, threatened to put him in jail, and told him he would not see his son for decades. Although they only suspected him of a few minor acts of arson and doubted they could even connect him to them, the fearful Ferguson quickly revealed everything he knew about the activities of the cell. Much to the surprise of the FBI, this young man had participated in nearly every attack carried out by the cell. Totally consumed by fear, Ferguson agreed to act as an informant.

In 2005, Ferguson wore a wire and went on an FBI-funded trip across the country to meet up with his former comrades. He went to New York City and recorded a conversation with Daniel McGowan in which he was able to manipulate his old friend into admitting guilt to several arsons. When Ferguson brought up the possibility of someone becoming an informant, McGowan replied that it would be "some Judas shit." Ferguson conducted similar operations against Stan Meyerhoff, Kevin Tubbs, and William Rogers, otherwise known as Avalon. With the information that Ferguson collected, the FBI began to organize the logistics for taking down the entire cell.

On December 7th, 2005, the FBI arrested seven people in different locations across the country. Just over a month later, three more people were arrested in what the FBI called Operation Backfire. Josephine Overaker, Rebecca Rubin, Joseph Dibee, and Justin Solodnz were able to escape apprehension. When the captured members of the cell learned the extent of Ferguson's treachery, the same fear that possessed him began to infect their minds. Having left behind their guerrilla activity, many of the former

---

1. Named in reference to the 'Red Scare' of the 1940's and '50s, which also saw legal and extralegal action by the U.S. government (against those accused of communist or anarchist sympathies or activity), aiming to harshly punish a few individuals in order to repress many more.

in which they give examples of other kinds of actions individuals and groups have taken throughout history. In this point they lack a critical assessment of these different groups, their motivations, and the intentions of their actions. The Boston Tea Party, Suffragette Movement and Gandhi did what they did on the basis of a certain interest to change the existing order through illegal means in some hope for positive change. Essentially these references reinforce an interest tending toward social change, an interest in altering the existing order, not destroying it in its entirety. This position is leftist, not anarchist. Again they constantly referred to this in their referential use of abolish, rather than destroy.<sup>8</sup>

Violence is a necessary tool for anarchists, one that must be constantly thought about and processed, especially for revolutionary individualist anarchists taking an offensive position aimed at the destruction of the current world and its existent order. This violent methodology should not be blind to a critical eye, rather it should be honed in through various actions, inflicted directly or indirectly against an enemy. This means that one cannot just go out right and say that one "wants to ensure that all of the time life will be taken into consideration". This statement in and of itself does not take into

---

*today. Some factories were forced to shut down and others agreed to stop running the industrialized machines due to the Luddite activity and threat.*

*"In the abolitionist movement in the United States, there are numerous accounts of slaves sabotaging the property of their "masters" and engaging in various tactics to disrupt the flow of commerce in the slave system. Slave revolts were fairly rare, but even one would create a chilling threat that actually forced some slave owners to give up the practice.*

*"The suffragette movement, particularly in England, used sabotage in addition to other tactics to successfully gain rights for women. One example occurred in February 1913, when Emmeline Pankhurst, the founder of England's suffragette movement, bombed the villa of the Chancellor of the Exchequer David Lloyd George in Surrey. Pankhurst accepted responsibility for the event and described it as 'guerrilla warfare.'*

*"In the United States, most everyone has heard of the Boston Tea Party which consisted of bands of men boarding English ships in Boston Harbor (among others) and dumping British tea into the water. Seldom is this referred to as economic sabotage, but that is indeed an accurate description of it." – ELF FAQs*

8. *"The only way to stop the symptoms of the problem is to identify the main root cause and directly work to abolish it... The ELF understands that this legal structure is part of the same system of government and now Westernized world domination that is causing the death of all life. It can never be trusted and ultimately needs to be abolished." – ELF FAQs*

pretexts and send in infiltrators to groups who try to establish long-term relationships. Although they don't know whose entirely involved these practices can eventually lead them to identify suspects.

There is no panacea to repression – it will exist as long as action is taken against the current world. It is only a matter of how deep relationships are rooted in commitment, honesty, and revolutionary courage between those who are partaking in different actions, which will directly correlate to refusal to cooperate with the state. It is worth noting that the ELF as a whole did not consider itself anarchist or revolutionary; it originally spawned from the environmental group Earth First!.

With this in mind, what if a group decided to not give itself a name? Making it harder for the cartographers of power to draw maps, where the longitude and latitude were unable to be connected, diffused and multifarious actions constituted themselves as a thing. Rather than one decisive group with a name, similar to the cellular structure proposed by the ELF, but on the basis of revolutionary activity against the current world.

## *Violence and Terrorism?*

The ELF is critical of the use of violence and harming individuals.<sup>6</sup> They state this in their FAQs<sup>7</sup> section,

6. "3) To take all necessary precautions against harming life" – ELF FAQs

7. "The British government understood Gandhi's tactics and knew what broadly to expect from him. The more militant sector of the movement posed a far greater threat to the government simply due to the reality of the British not knowing what to expect or what might result if the road to India's independence was not traveled down. In fact, Gandhi himself was released from prison on at least one occasion only on the direct order from the British that he would try to calm the more militant sector of the movement. Both the nonviolence tactics employed by Gandhi and his followers and the threat of more severe tactics from the militant sector brought about India's eventual independence.

"Most schooling systems also do not teach and educate students about the Luddites. Perhaps one of the earliest (if not the first) groups to target the Industrial Revolution and its effects was the Luddites. From 1811 to 1816, the Luddites caused extreme economic damage to the weaver industry in England. Angry at the threat to life and culture that the new machines of the industrialized revolution posed, the Luddites fought back using tactics very similar to those performed by the ELF

fighters had grown used to the comforts of a normal and affluent life. It was the fear of losing this that drove the majority of the cell to begin testifying against each other.

The worst casualty of this betrayal was Avalon. Once he learned that most of his comrades were going to collaborate against each other, he wrote a simple goodbye note that read: "To my friends and supporters to help them make sense of all these events that have happened so quickly: Certain human cultures have been waging war against the Earth for millennia. I chose to fight on the side of bears, mountain lions, skunks, bats, saguaros, cliff rose and all things wild. I am just the most recent casualty in that war. But tonight I have made a jail break – I am returning home, to the Earth, to the place of my origins. Bill, 12/21/05 (the winter solstice.)" After writing this note, Avalon put a plastic bag over his head and killed himself inside his prison cell.

By the end of Operation Backfire, only Daniel McGowan, Jonathan Paul, Joyanna Zacher, and Nathan Block refused to testify against any of their former comrades or each other. All of the others made selfish and cowardly deals in order to preserve the privileges and comforts they had come to value over the earth they once fought to protect. Whether they betrayed each other or not, each convicted member of the cell generally received 4–7 years each. Except for Jacob Ferguson. He received no jail time.

Despite this, multiple other ELF cells continued to operate in the greater Puget Sound area during this time. On April 13th, 2005, an ELF cell burnt down a house that was part of a new golf course subdivision in Sammamish. They left a message painted on a bed sheet that read "Where are all the trees? Burn, rapist, burn. E.L.F." Between July 27th and July 29th, another cell burnt down two [uninhabited] homes built in what had once been forests in Whatcom County. Starting on November 25th and lasting until the end of January, 2006, the ELF burnt down houses and construction equipment in Bothell, Kenmore, and Camano Island every week and half. While there is no direct confirmation, this offensive could be seen as retaliation for the arrests taking place during this time period.

Just as Briana Waters was being sentenced for her role in the infamous UW arson in March, 2008, another ELF cell burnt down four multimillion dollar Street of Dreams houses in Woodinville. This was to be the biggest environmental arson in the Puget Sound area and served as a reminder that the fight to save the planet still had life left in it. Law enforcement who responded to the inferno found a bed sheet nearby with these words painted on it: "Built Green? Nope black! McMansions in rural cluster developments are not green. ELF."

We will conclude the story of the Northwest ELF. For now, take comfort in the fact that the dream some of them once had survived repression, suicide, betrayal, and entrapment. It lives on still in dozens of cells across the planet, fighting for the health and continuity of the earth.

While the Green Scare of 2006 may have been the end for one particular cell, the repression certainly did not stop the idea and concept of the ELF from growing. In the immediate aftermath of the arrests, multiple new houses were burnt by cells in Guelph, Ontario. The communiques issued after these arsons contained language against unrestrained development and were dedicated to the memory of Avalon, a member of the Northwest cell who killed himself while imprisoned by the state.

And then, in the last days of 2008, a group calling itself Eco-Anarchist Cell For Direct Attack decided to go on a spree in Mexico City (DF). First they threw multiple Molotov cocktails at the facilities for the new metro line, the construction of which had already resulted in evictions and tree clearing. Then the group destroyed a large telephone wire box belonging to Telmex,<sup>2</sup>

2. As comrades of those lands noted, "Telmex is a company that not only promotes bullfights, damages and destroys the planet with its telephone antennas, promotes massive lazy stupidity with its internet cables, and gives people cancer with its telephones and telephone antennas; Telmex also builds private prisons and prisons with private-federal investors in Mexico. Carlos Slim, the owner of this Mexican monster is also owner and co-owner of other companies that participate in megaprojects of urbanization, gentrification and environmental destruction, companies such as ICA, for example. [...] In this scenario of attack, Telmex has always been a target of anarchists and other groups fighting for animal or earth liberation, and we see no reason why today, when Telmex is acquiring another major role as a prison-building company that supports the idea of prison, it should stop being one. Evidence of the attacks against this company is the fact that, from 2001 to 2012,

## *A Name: Calling oneself a thing?*

*"We wear the mask that grins and lies, It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes, —"*

— Anonymous

The ELF is referred to by the Department of Homeland Security<sup>5</sup>, as an organization, which classifies them as a thing with a name or single like-minded identity. In a time of widespread revolt or flourishing milieu it can be useful to have a name in order to communicate why an action was taken and tie it to the continued presence of a certain group or set of ideas, especially to differentiate amongst many tendencies existing within a specific context. However, by taking on a name, a group becomes an organization and becomes reified. It begins to be understood as a thing, an entity in and of itself. This further facilitates identification by authorities who begin to chart and map the movements of an organization or group in order to see where and how it moves, how it functions, what language it uses (environmental, anarchist, communist, etc). Not all investigations are carried out in this way (for example, in the Bombs Case in Chile and the Marini Trials in Italy, anarchists were framed as members of fictitious clandestine organizations), but the naming of oneself as a thing does make it easier for the state to repress the milieu as a whole. It's easy for the state to comb through the different groups that exist or existed at a determined period of time and go through arrest documents or do outright surveillance (the surveillance and subsequent arrest of the members of Direct Action in Canada can be a perfect example of this). Inevitably they find those who are more above ground and interrogate them about those specific activities, hold them under false

5. "ALF and its sister organization ELF are considered to be the most active, the most dangerous, and the largest domestic terrorist groups in the United States." — Eco-terrorism: Environmental and Animal-Rights Militants in the United States United States Department of Homeland Security.

*"The organization is an environmental group but also one that realizes the true cause of murder and destruction of life." — ELF FAQs*

accordance with that ideology, weighing the rights and wrongs of a certain course of action. This can be seen in the mentality of leftists, Christians, Catholics, vegans and anyone who adheres to an ideology through belief or action.

There is no ethical equation toward the understanding of how “we as society need to change capitalism”, where by acting in accordance with the state and one’s morals we see how things can become equal within the sphere of exploitation. To play within the ethical debate is to place oneself in a position of making compromises with the state and capital, using ethical and moral positions. This can be seen in this quote from the ELF’s facts:

*“Anyone seeking to create actual positive social and political change must reflect on past attempts throughout history to learn what worked, what didn’t, and what can be taken to aid in the current pursuit. A refusal to make this reflection is also a refusal to make an honest life commitment to the cause of justice and protection of life on this planet.”*

What and where is this “justice” coming from? Is it justice we are actually seeking? Justice implies a universal morality that everyone shares. Is it instead a matter of vengeance against civilization for denying one the ability to live a life one chooses?

We return to the use of methods rather than an ideology. A method can be defined as “a procedure, technique, or way of doing something, especially in accordance with a definite plan.” Hence one does not submit to an ideology of protecting the earth, but sees ways and courses to attack what surrounds them – these being the technique or practice. Once an individual or a group can become unhinged from the trap of ideological thinking and self-justification, their desires become in accordance with the interests and aims.

rendering over 100 lines useless. In addition to this, they completely destroyed eight telephone booths owned by the same company. Finally, the group burnt an ATM at a Banamex bank. The communique claiming this action ends, “How beautiful it is to see revenge of the exploited and the oppressors squeezed! How beautiful is the fire that frees! How beautiful is the abolitionist fire of the anti-

---

696 attacks were carried out – of those that were recorded – against Telmex properties around the country (attacks that consisted of the destruction or disabling of telephone booths, destruction of telephone and internet control boxes, burning of company trucks, burning telephone towers, a bomb threat at Carlos Slim’s Plaza Delta Mall, an arson attack at a Telmex collections office), actions carried out from various perspectives and motives, but always with the intent to sabotage the communications monster. The most recent actions reported were the burning of a company truck in January 2016 and the disabling of 13 telephones in Ciudad Nez, State of Mexico, on June 17, 2016. Sabotaging this company isn’t as difficult as people think. According to what we’ve seen, the majority have been sabotages easily reproduced by anyone, such as disabling payphones. Some have been burned, others destroyed with a firework set off with a cigarette embedded on the wick as a timer, and many more sealed with rubber cement and paperclips. In the best cases, disabling telephone and internet control boxes have been done with rudimentary incendiary devices or with acid sprinkled on the cables inside the box, or simply cutting the small cable lines. Against telephone poles (not cell towers) some have opted to knock them down or have simply cut the wiring. Against trucks belonging to this ecocidal company, rudimentary incendiary devices have done their jobs well. But above all it is the creativity that materializes from our desires for the spread of sabotage and its replicability. There is no difference between big or small sabotage, they are all indispensable in the process of insurrection. We are not for “striking a blow at the heart of the state,” as along with this claim being part of the logic of the taking of power, it otherwise would delimit the insurrectionary goal into a centralized attack when part of the goal is that sabotage spreads and is not a single attack every now and then carried out by a group of professionals, but rather many daily attacks against a world that stifles freedom, carried out by those who want to, as every attack is liberating. Nor are we for “hitting where it hurts,” as along with this claim smacking of the quantitative, it delimits the insurrectional goal into attacks against a single structure within the pillar of domination, when part of the goal is the generalization of revolt, that the attacks be against all aspects of domination or that the goal be to attack, from the largest to the smallest, at an individual or affinity group level. Besides, hitting where it hurts, does the occasional – due to the need for specialization – attack really hurt? Why settle for what hurts the system? Why not destroy it? For us, revolt and insurrection are daily acts that take place within ourselves and are externalized from us as strikes against power. We are in favor of an anarchy that understands attack as multiform and daily, carried out by those who desire to be free in the here and now, far from all specialization and professionalization (of the pen and the act). We understand anarchy as a tension with what exists, as a project for the destruction of power, and we are fighting to build a reality of struggle and true confrontation with domination. Telmex is just one of the pillars that sustain power, the state and capitalism. Telmex has many branches ready to receive an attack from those freedom-seeking individuals” .

authoritarians! No to metro line 12! Stop the deforestation and the displacement of entire families! For every eviction or abuse of power... fire in the streets!"

Although not officially claimed by the ELF, this group operated in the same manner and their action signaled the beginning of a new offensive against the destroyers of the earth. A few months later, the Frente de Liberación de la Tierra (ELF) burnt a construction machine that was being used to build a new campus at the National Autonomous University of Mexico in DF. They also destroyed the new administrative offices in the campus.

In the beginning of their communique they write, "We were informed that the university had been destroying a large part of the ecological reserve where a so-called 'education' center is being built. Several varieties of trees and diverse plants were cut down, considered to be in the way of their ability to expand their facilities and their mastery over nature. The progress and education that they extol in their classrooms is always based on domination and anthropocentrism. In this act by the UNAM, it is more than clear that not only do they wish to dominate and mold the minds of students, they also seek to expand the same control over the land and the animals that inhabit her [sic]."

Over the course of 2009, ELF cells across Mexico began attacking targets in a diffuse offensive. Telmex remained one of their primary targets, as did the practice and spectacle of bullfighting. Multiple groups and cells set barricades aflame in the middle of highways, burnt construction equipment, burnt police stations, and freed abused horses. In 2011, an ELF cell aligned with the Informal Anarchist Federation [ed. – see Return Fire vol.3 pg80] bombed a police station in Coacalco. One month later, a different ELF cell burnt facilities belonging to the National Institute of Forestry, Agricultural, and Livestock Research in Texcoco. These facilities were used to do genetic research on plants. The attacks in Mexico continue to this day.

In Russia, the ELF has also found rich soil. In 2011 alone, there were dozens of instances of arson and sabotage committed by the ELF, the first of which was the torching of construction equipment in the forests outside

Since they put the Earth before their decision as conscious individuals,<sup>4</sup> a psychosis, a martyrdom complex for the Earth, begins to develop. This is similar to how most of the left today functions, by feeding a psychological need for self-justification in everyday life. When for example activists put so much energy into certain types of actions (petitions, lock downs, passive sit ins, etc.), for all the right and justified reasons for doing so and not seeing the desired results, they become hopeless in their own actions. I think it is important to have a sense of individual intention and self-motivation, rather than becoming blind to reasons for acting against the world around oneself. By blind I mean not having the ability to not see beyond the ways one is making decisions upon what actions to take and see the cause and effect of those actions. This blindness constructs a martyrdom complex similar to that of Sisyphus, who rolled the rock up a mountain day after day. This tunnel vision is caused by focusing solely on the theater of political affairs while neglecting the rest of life.

Having this type of perception about one's own reality can create something similar to what is called a "single issue campaign". Only in this case instead of doing tree sits like Earth First!, an individual or a group is setting incendiary devices to call upon the "unjust actions" of some company. When the company itself has no interest to change the reasons that it exists, it purely becomes a moral battle between the "just" and "unjust" – speaking truth to power when power has no interest in listening. This becomes an endless pursuit for some sad form of change.

The ELF in its FAQ's claims to not follow a leadership or central hierarchy, but an ideology. I would question the use of an ideology, instead proposing the use of a particular methodology that is anarchist in practice. Once an individual begins to believe in an ideology they put it – the ideology – above themselves, acting only in

---

4 "Anyone seeking to create actual positive social and political change must reflect on past attempts throughout history to learn what worked, what didn't, and what can be taken to aid in the current pursuit. A refusal to make this reflection is also a refusal to make an honest life commitment to the cause of justice and protection of life on this planet." – ELF FAQs

## *An Ideology: Single issue and lobbying with dynamite.*

*"The gods had condemned Sisyphus to ceaselessly rolling a rock to the top of a mountain, whence the stone would fall back of its own weight. They had thought with some reason that there is no more dreadful punishment than futile and hopeless labor."*

– Albert Camus, "The Myth of Sisyphus"

The reasons that the ELF proposes for doing actions is something I would like to question. These guidelines state:

- "1. To cause maximum economic damage to a given entity that is profiting off the destruction of the natural environment.*
- 2. To educate the public on the atrocities committed against the environment and life.*
- 3. To take all necessary precautions against harming life."*

The guidelines are very similar to the goals of the ELF with one major exception. The third of three guidelines states that one must take all necessary precautions against harming life. The ELF considers itself a nonviolent organization as no physical harm has come to a human as a result of the group's actions. This is by no means a sheer coincidence but in fact a commitment to the guidelines. Individuals interested in becoming active in the ELF need to follow the above guidelines and create their own close knit anonymous cell made up of trustworthy and sincere people. Remember the ELF and each cell within it is anonymous not only to one another but also to the general public. So there is not a realistic chance of becoming active in an already existing cell. Take initiative, form your own cell and do what needs to be done to protect all life on the planet!

Moscow on New Year's Eve. Most of the activity centered around the defense of the Khimki forest, one of the few remaining wild places in the Moscow area.

The government and developers had plans to destroy it, put in a large freeway, and build housing and strip malls. In a rare development, the ELF and the general public had united in their efforts to stop development and had forced President Medvedev to halt the project in the summer of 2010. A communique for an action in July of that year reads, "On July 17 2010 a tracked tree transporter was torched by a group of ELF activists. The action took place at the road construction site near Sheremetjevo airport in Khimki forest, North of Moscow, Russia. We support local activists in their fight against deforestation campaign of Moscow authorities, although we disapprove of their half-hearted liberal tactics."

The battle for the Khimki forests has still not ended, but it represented a new era for the ELF. Unlike the schisms and splits that had occurred in the US between the environmental movement and the ELF guerrillas, the two sides in Russia were able to work together in their fight against Moscow and the international development companies. When suddenly the president himself suspended the project, it was as if the endless circle of history had been broken and for once, a group of humans using a diversity of tactics was united against the exploitation of the earth.

The last action [at time of writing] related to the defense of the forest took place on July 21st, 2012.<sup>3</sup> The full communique reads, "After having received news of new tree-cutting activity in Khimki forest, we decided to visit the workers. We aimed for 2 trucks and excavator parked on the clear cut. They were completely destroyed. Our solidarity goes out to eco-activists who broke the arm of private guard who was guarding the clear cut (this piece we learned from news). Enough of pseudo-legalism! Do like us, do better than us."

The rulers of the world will never succeed in wiping out any of these groups, including the ELF. While the cell

3. See Special Hydraulic Fracture for more recent action around the Khimki defence. Earlier, workers' sheds had been molotoved, and 12mm carbine weapons fired on site machinery.

in the Northwest may have been arrested and neutralized, their efforts and examples live on from Indonesia to Mexico, from Russia to Chile. We wish everyone good luck, especially you.

## *Appendix 'By The Light Of The Moon'*

Last night, November 4th [2009], we went out among friends by the light of the moon in order to sabotage companies that destroy the environment.

This time it was CARSO's turn, a firm linked to CICSA, one of whose owners is the bastard son of Carlos Slim; it is also one of the companies that, together with ICA and ALSTOM, is currently destroying large portions of ecosystems with the construction of a new metro line in Mexico City, imposing their damned progress on animal species and different types of trees.

A construction site belonging to CARSO was found on the outskirts of the outer Mexican expressway network in Mexico State by crossing the expressway and a sewage canal. The terrain was perfect; many trees covered our dark shadows.

Armed with our backpacks, masked up and full of resolve, we crossed the lanes with automobiles passing by at high speed, jumped the small barbed wire fence, and then cut the wires in order to make our escape easier; previously we had made a path in order to go down the hill covered by grass and weeds growing around the banks of the canal, so we followed the path and found ourselves behind a tree, where we divided our equipment and split up.

Some comrades went to the left and others went to the right; the signal to start attacking was the flash from a Molotov, which sadly was not what we expected, but the menacing fire that illuminated the walled-in CARSO construction site began, followed by a shower of stones, bottles, and acid bombs (made with marbles and small metal objects). Federal Police (PF) inside the site started to

## *The Telescope or the Kaleidoscope:*

### *A Critique of the E.L.F.*

### *A critical individual's proposal for a diffused offensive attack*

*"Our lives are at stake and we will not  
renounce any weapon that we can use as our  
own."*

– Anonymous

In regards to the brief history of the Earth Liberation Front (ELF), an organization which has brought much inspiration to the North American context and drawn significant media attention, I would like to present a few points in order to critique, clarify and highlight the ways the ELF can be understood as a methodology instead of as an ideology. At the end of this piece, a proposal is drawn out for anarchists to develop their own actions separately in cells, groups or any informal structure they see fit whether or not these are aligned with the "ELF guidelines".

Obviously this is something that is difficult, because on the one hand the ELF does exist as an organization but is also made up of many dispersed cells and individuals. So the critique will follow the ELF guidelines and not critique the individuals themselves.



So when I think of Avalon, I don't believe the hype spewed by aggressive and narrow prosecutors. No, I think of a soft-spoken, caring person who would give you the shirt off his back or carry a snake off the road; an avid, even obsessive recycler; someone who supported indigenous struggles and really got the connection between Earth-based cultures and ecological action. I knew Avalon was involved in the struggle against the Mount Graham telescope, but only after his death did I find out that he and his infoshop, The Catalyst, supported the campaign to protect the San Francisco Peaks (see Earth First! Journal May-June 2005).

When snitch Jacob Ferguson recorded a conversation with me through a wiretap in 2005, I asked him how Avalon was. He lied to me (big shock!) and told me that Avalon was happy and lived in an intentional community in Canada. I remember being really happy for him and hoping to run into him again one day, but for different reasons than why we last saw each other.

Avalon has been gone two years now, and yet it still isn't real to me. Since I haven't seen him for years, I can't really take it all in without getting upset. Yes, one of our own betrayed us, and that action caused the death of my friend. How do I reconcile the truth? I don't have a good answer except to say that we need to talk about these things and confront death in our movement. We need to grieve for our friends. Most of all, we cannot forget. This is my contribution to never forgetting William Rodgers: radical environmentalist, ELF activist, cave lover and sweet, kind man. I miss you, buddy.

Daniel McGowan

come out in order to see who was attacking them, but they were unsuccessful, because after something was thrown we took cover behind the trees and branches. When our escape began, the police could not come over to stop us because the sewage canal separated us from them, and they had no path or bridge by which to cross it. Before leaving the terrain, we flung explosives made from dynamite, paper, and a fuse, combined with metal objects for greater destructive power. These weapons exploded, leaving an echo in the middle of the night and alerting the wicked Federal Police.

This attack was not only against a construction site that is destroying the environment, it was also against the police, as we demonstrate that we can be strong if we intend to and if we fight for what we want.

Solidarity with the prisoners and people under investigation in Guadalajara, Mexico City, León, Mexico State, and the world!

Because we all have something of Barry [Horne] in us whenever we leave words behind and start acting, we remember him with this action!

Earth Liberation Front



I try to avoid: Could Avalon have stemmed the tide of informing? Would he have been the person who, having known some of the snitches for much longer than I, could really reach them – beyond their fears and to their core? I'll never know these answers, but I do know this: Avalon would rather die and make a jailbreak than cooperate in any way with this immoral and unjust process.

The prosecution, knowing only hierarchy and bureaucracy, cannot conceive of a group without a leader, a pecking order and strict rules. Without Bill around to protest and because he was older than all of us, they found their puppet master. Suddenly the so-called "book club" was his invention and was deemed a "training school for arson." Meyerhoff and Gerlach, grand quislings that they are, had the audacity to say with a straight face that Avalon pretty much did the Vail arson all by himself. Just reading about the ski resort's geography, the large amount of fuel that was used and Bill's slight stature made me laugh bitterly to myself about these lies. On some level, it's the way the game is played for snitches. The government tells them what it wants to hear, and the cooperating witnesses jump through hoops like the well-trained pets that they are. To be clear, everyone involved with these actions and the "book club" are people like you and me. We have skills – some of us excel at one thing, others of us at another. However, there was no formalized hierarchy as suggested by the prosecution, and William Rodgers was no kingpin or leader of the ELF.

Avalon, like all of us, had his flaws and made mistakes, both personally and politically, in the way he lived his life and how he resisted environmental destruction. Our group attempted to deal with one of these areas – an accusation of sexual misconduct – and I'm sorry to say that we failed, due to not being equipped with the right ideas and strategies. It is all too easy to assuage our guilt about our own shortcomings by attacking others. I think it's a better idea to focus on what we are doing in this world, rather than criticizing people who are not here to defend themselves. I thought of this often in court when I looked at my family, seeing the pained looks on their faces as they listened to attacks on me. Bill's family and partner have had to endure a lot of grief in the last two years.

the younger people in the case, who did get involved on their own. Snitches in the case have used his inability to respond to dramatically maximize his role in certain actions in an attempt to lessen the consequences of their own actions. One person went so far as submitting to the judge video evidence and testimony that has not been made public because it was deemed too personal for public consumption. Others on the margins have chosen to focus on Avalon's flaws by spreading rumors or even by talking to the private investigators hired by the snitches.

I first met Avalon in the months leading up to the World Trade Organization (WTO) protests in Seattle in late 1999 and developed a friendship with him instantly. His sly grin, easygoing and warm personality and humility impressed me, and I was happy to see that this quiet, older enviro was up to more than attending the EF! gatherings at which I first saw him. His rationality and quick thinking prevented disaster for our affinity group during the Seattle protests (I'm proud to say we took part in the Black Bloc). I distinctly remember getting ready to leave Seattle, and hearing his suggestion to "keep in touch." Well, we did keep in touch. Much has been said of what we did in the years after that, but that will be told elsewhere.

Like so many of us, Avalon suffered from depression and despair, fueled by the realization of what our species is doing the planet. Living underground, juggling details of planned actions and double lives, and eschewing many of the things that our movement allies had access to is stressful. I know because I did it, and yet Avalon's experience in that underground life dwarfed mine. I can't help but think that this isolation and despair were major factors in his suicide. We moved on, and yet the cruel hand of the past – in the form of old friends and a Joint Terrorism Task Force – pulled us all back into our secret histories. Maybe for Avalon, it was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back. We will never know for sure. I remember seeing his name in a list of arrestees in a New York Times article while sitting in a New York City jail. It gave me some hope – I thought we could all fight these charges together, as a group of people who had lifelong solidarity with each other, as people who honored the oaths we made to each other. Sometimes, I lie there at night asking the questions







## *Eulogy for Avalon*



December 21st, 2007,

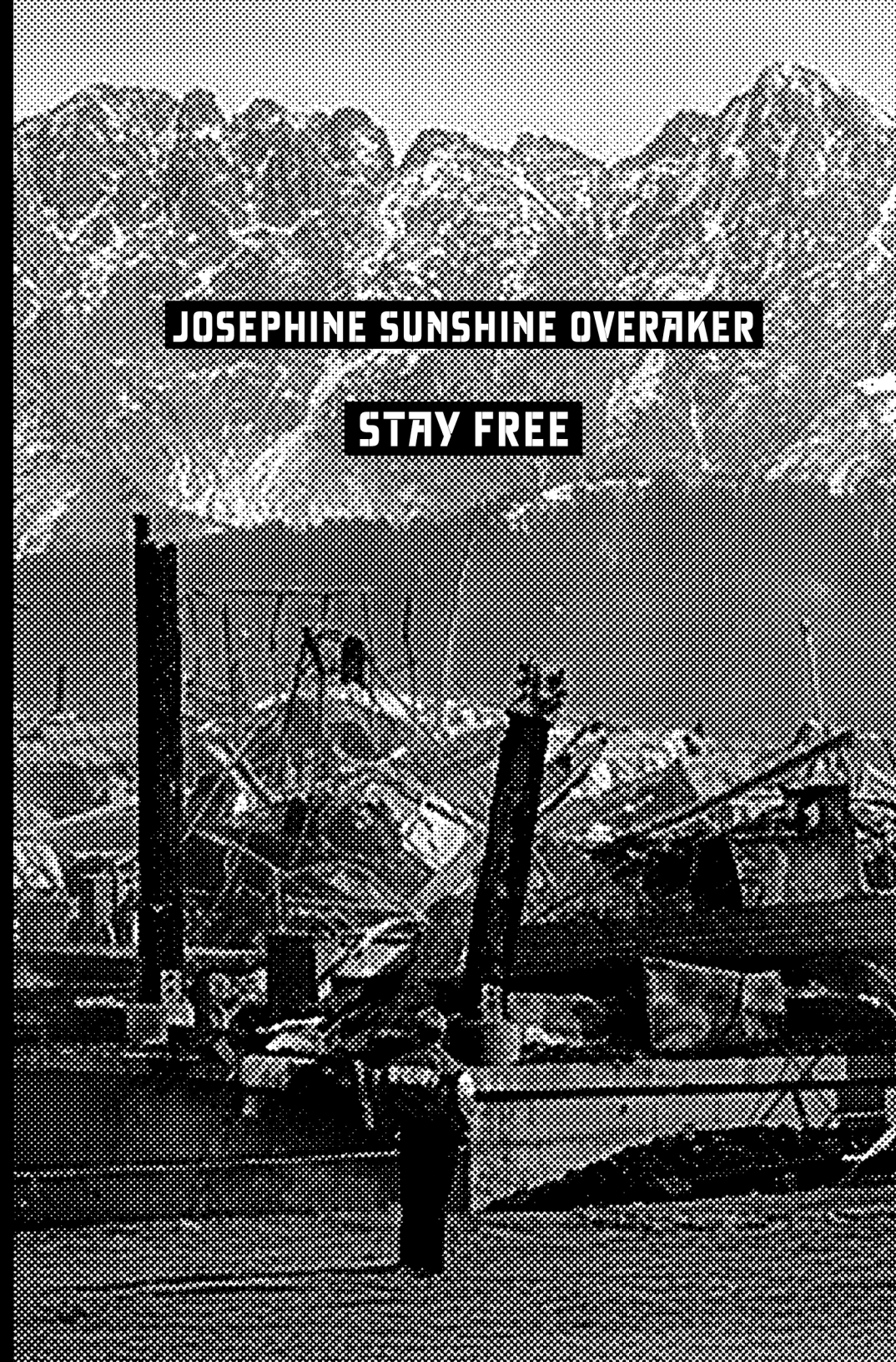
This is a eulogy, two years too late, for my friend William Rodgers – known to friends, family and the movement as Avalon. Avalon took his life on December 21, 2005. This was just two weeks after our arrests in the Operation Backfire case and, by no coincidence, the Winter Solstice. In his absence, much has been made of his role in our Earth Liberation Front (ELF) group. Not surprisingly, the prosecutors in the case have painted him as a leader who recruited young, impressionable activists to do his bidding. This is not only false, but also insulting to

CERTAIN HUMAN CULTURES HAVE  
BEEN WAGING WAR AGAINST THE  
EARTH FOR MILLENNIA. I CHOSE  
TO FIGHT ON THE SIDE OF BEARS  
MOUNTAIN LIONS SKUNKS BATS  
SAGUAROS CLIFF ROSE AND ALL  
THINGS WILD. I AM JUST THE  
MOST RECENT CASUALTY IN  
THAT WAR. BUT TONIGHT I  
HAVE MADE A JAIL  
BREAK —I AM



RETURNING  
EARTH TO  
OF MY

HOME TO THE  
THE PLACE  
ORIGINS. - AVALON



**JOSEPHINE SUNSHINE OVERAKER**

**STAY FREE**





YOU CANNOT  
CONTROL WHAT IS  
WILD!

ELF