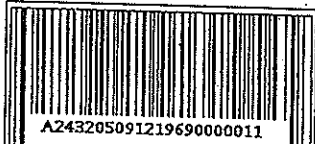


FREEDOM:

The Insight, Rage & Fury of
Political Prisoner Sean Swain

PART II



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ABOUT SEAN SWAIN

Sean Swain has been held captive by the State of Ohio since 1991 for the self-defense stabbing of a court official's relative in Sean's own home. He was subjected to two unfair and politically-motivated trials in Erie County, Ohio. He is the only son of a retired auto worker and stay-home mom. He has renounced his high school diploma (Anchor Bay High School), his Associate of Arts (Ashland University), and his Honorable Discharge (U.S. Army). Sean has worked as a newspaper columnist and as a union organizer.

His written works include *Maldoon*, *Last Act of the Circus Animals*, *BOMB THREAT: The Revolutionary Politics of Liberation* (which comprised his platform while running for Governor of Ohio in 2006), and several collections of his prison writings. He has published several articles in newsletters and indymedia websites. He is currently working on a novel-length manuscript tentatively entitled, *Though the Heavens Fall*.

His memberships have included Amnesty International; The Freedom Writers' Network; International Campaign for Tibet; Pax Christi, USA; The Communist Party, USA; and CURE-Ohio. He has been a supporter of the United Farm Workers and the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) in southern Mexico.

If Sean survives captivity, he intends to seek political asylum in Brazil, Argentina, Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia, or the Zapatista-controlled areas of southern Mexico, where he can write freely and continue the struggle against the oppressive forces of international capital.

His next eligible release date from the State's fascist control system is November 2011.

Sean Swain A243-205

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**GET INVOLVED IN GETTING
SEAN SWAIN FREE!****Contact:**

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Freedom.

Sean Swain

November 14, 2007

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OTHER WORKS BY SEAN SWAIN:

Last Act of the Circus Animals, Travis Washington and Sean Swain
BOMB THREAT: The Revolutionary Politics of Liberation
The People in Control Are Your Enemies
Sean Swain Sampler
Kicking in the Darkness
Application of Anarchist Theory to the Modern-Day Prison Struggle
Shotgun in Your Face
Interview #3, Each One Teach One (Double Interview), with Anthony Rayson

Available from South Chicago ABC Zine Distro
 And wherever quality revolutionary works are sold.

Sean Swain

PART 2**THE WRETCHED OF THE EARTH**

I was born in freedom's graveyard
 'neath a tombstone where my name scarred
 the edifice, stone-cold and bone-hard,
 wrapped was I in burning flag.

An empty stomach, angry, held tight
 another hand to clutch the long night
 another head fixed 'twixt the gunsight
 just one more toe to tag.

Raised by ashes in dirt and dust
 cutting teeth then flesh on rust
 they come to teach me what is just—
 the oppressors' fists to kiss me.

And when I drink their awful wrath
 kicked down that darkly chosen path
 I'll see it boils down to math—
 how many I take with me.

A FEW GOOD REASONS WHY PEOPLE MIGHT GET PISSED ENOUGH TO FLY PLANES INTO OUR BUILDINGS

After listening to the talking heads and empty heads and helmet heads in the wake of the worst terrorist attack to hit the United States, I came to really despise haters of freedom who dedicate their lives to the destruction of child-like innocence and vibrant culture and human lives. I vowed to stand, symbolically as it is, behind the good guys who strike at the hearts of terrorists and human rights violators and war criminals.

One particularly heinous bunch involved in our present conflict used depleted uranium on their own people during the Gulf War and then tried to cover it up. Yes, they scattered radioactive materials, breathed by their own fighters, and then denied it. The same evil band of maggots illegally targeted water treatment facilities in violation of international law, Geneva Accords, and United Nations standards. In their complete disregard for human right and the rule of law, they covertly targeted civilians, leading to the deaths of more than half a million children under the age of six in one small area of the world in about a decade's time. This rogue group has overtly supported dozens of tyrants worldwide, suppressing democracy, supporting torture and murder. In the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, they have supported wholesale genocide against innocent people.

The world community should oppose this evil. And they do. They oppose it quietly and in fear but most won't take action. Since they won't out of cowardice or self-interest, Osama bin Laden apparently did.

Oh, wait. When I mentioned the "heinous bunch" that used depleted uranium, targeted water treatment facilities, murdered half a million children under six, supported tyrants, and sponsored wholesale genocide, you thought I meant *them*? Oh. No. I was talking about us. We did that. The United States. Land of the free, home of the brave.

In the conflict that made Colin Powell a celebrity, we dropped bombs containing radioactive materials on areas where unsuspecting American soldiers thought they defended freedom and democracy. Since then, our government has lied in order to deny justified compensation to war veterans who served their country, now debilitated by their own government's unthinkable acts.

Our government illegally targeted water treatment facilities, purposely destroying Iraq's capability to provide drinking water to civilians. As a foreseen and planned result, children died from dehydration and disease at unbelievable rates that bewilder civilized nations. These acts violated international law and made our government leaders war criminals.

Despite the claims by empty heads and talking heads and helmet heads that we represent democracy all over the globe, nothing could be further from the truth. In the western hemisphere alone, we supported Trujillo, Somoza, Pinochet, Batista, Noriega, and a string of corrupt hacks in Mexico. We also supported Diem, the Shah of Iran, Saddam Hussein, the precursor of the Taliban of Afghanistan during the war with the Soviets, and a gaggle of relatively minor despots in smaller places like the Philippines and East Timor. For every instance where somebody could legitimately demonstrate our country supporting democracy and freedom, I could give you ten instances where we suppressed it with lawyers, guns and money.

Particularly in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, we provide millions in funding to a top-five human rights abuser that has unlawfully usurped Palestinian lands. We support Israel while it provides each Palestinian half of the water rations it provides each Jew; while it denies hospital care to Palestinians while providing it for Jews. And the U.S. walks out of conferences that condemn the obvious and blatant apartheid in Israel while turning a blind eye to the slaughter of Palestinians, the bullets bought with American dollars.

I hate terrorists and war criminals and human rights violators, so it troubled me when those hijacked planes brought up the death toll in a conflict in which our nation has engaged for decades. Now there will be American casualties, and our empty heads and talking heads and helmet heads can no longer kill swarthy children a million miles away with the bravado of untouchability. I find this sad—sad

And revolution is contagious. Look at what you have inspired. You can take credit for inspiring Coyote and he can take responsibility for inspiring the Conditions Factory. The Conditions Factory is linking up with other Ohio-based collectives and revolutionaries who are serious—serious!—and we hope this effort inspires others, awakens others.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez once said that a revolutionary is like a man who plows the ocean. I like that image. The ocean is utterly endless. But the important key to that is that the man is *plowing*. That's the key. Revolutionaries *do*. If you're not doing, if you're not putting your hand to the plow, you haven't yet made the choice to be relevant.

If self-proclaimed revolutionaries cannot pull their own weight or chop their own wood, then we don't need them. They just don't have the constitution for this kind of work.

From my perspective—I'm just speaking for myself—I've been fighting the State for years. It declared war on me in 1991 and began its low-intensity combat. It never sleeps. So I don't know about you, but I don't need somebody willing to provide lip-service to the cause. I need genuine articles. True believers.

The story goes that Fidel Castro landed with 22 men and a yacht. I don't know if that's accurate. But in conversations with others, when someone dreams of amassing the participation of hundreds, I dismiss that. I tell them: 22 men and a yacht. Just 22. I'd rather have 22 true believers than a hundred fair-weather revolutionaries.

Sixteen years the State has had me under attack. Sixteen years I have been under continuous assault and there is no end in sight. My sentence was extended for 6 years for strictly political considerations.

But I'm still here and the dogs and the birds haven't eaten me yet. I'm still in good shape. The State isn't. I think I'm just coming into my prime and the State seems to be slipping, losing a step or 2.

I'm going to keep fighting and I know you are too. For my part, I don't see my own small resistance as fighting for myself; I think of myself as fighting for everyone else too paralyzed by fear or too pacified by bread and circuses, or those who have simply not awakened yet.

The ocean is vast.

As for the so-called Anarchists and revolutionaries who stand idly by while the future of all of us hangs in the balance, who excuse themselves from the real work performed by others in far more desperate straights than themselves, who opt for Anarchism without the Anarchy and revolution without the revolt—they can sit back and watch, then.

I only hope they know the odds for the rest of us, that they have weighed their inaction and they have no qualms about their choice not to pick up the pen or the sword. Personally, I know my odds. Just off the top of my head, consider these heroes of mine: Abbie Hoffman, Che Guevara, Rosa Luxemburg, Huey P. Newton, Crazyhorse, Voltairine DeCleyre, Emiliano Zapata, Stephen Biko, George Jackson, and Malcolm X. They all have something in common.

They're all dead.

I'm alive and kicking—kicking a dent in this motherfucker—and I know you're kicking too, that you're dedicated to kicking the darkness until it bleeds daylight. And if that doesn't inspire the lukewarm revolutionaries, I don't know what will.

If our so-called fellow revolutionaries and Anarchists cannot find it within themselves to lighten your burden and carry part of the load, and if they cannot lift a finger in an effort to extend my life in struggle, then perhaps when the State gets done kicking my ass in *their* absence, they can be moved to get out and away from the hustle and bustle and find a secluded, peaceful spot where they can see the sunset, and they can do me one courtesy.

It isn't like they can leave my carcass there for the dogs and birds to eat. So if they cannot be moved to pick up a pen or pick up a sword, perhaps they can be moved to pick up a shovel...

Maybe they can find the time to dig my grave.

every disadvantage militarily. And yet, the Viet Cong prevailed. The United States had its ass handed to it.

We're all Viet Cong. We are all occupied and subjugated and invaded and under attack in fundamental ways. We just have to start *acting like we're Viet Cong*.

I think we underestimate the potential of the individual, the insurgent, the small group. Read Robert Faber's *War of the Flea* if you haven't already. We are the fleas upon the back of a powerful pit bull. This pit has powerful jaws and sharp teeth and claws that slice through any other competitor out there. It is big and bulky and vicious and arrogant, and no other dog around can compete with it.

We're just fleas. We feast off of the pit bull's back, drinking our fill, and then we hop away, avoiding the sharp claws and teeth of the pit. We feed off of him to stay alive, taking what we need, contributing nothing in return, and then we hop away to survive.

Each day that we awaken and we're alive, it's another victory. Our duty as fleas is not to destroy the pit bull but simply to live another day. Time is on our side. Each day one of us stays alive, there is the increased chance that our forces will multiply.

As for the pit bull, if he kills 99 out of 100 fleas, he has suffered defeat. One flea is an infestation. One will inevitably become 5 and 10 and 20 and 100. Victory is not possible for the enemy unless he kills all of us. And he has the pit bull's disadvantages. He is big and bulky and his teeth and claws are designed to tear into other creatures just as big and bulky—not into fleas. He has too much of his back to defend. He is not equipped to fight us, to kill us.

So we feed on him and we multiply and we stay alive. We avoid his powerful weapons and we continue to take what we need out of his hide. We provoke him with every bite we take and he madly digs in with his claws and teeth in fear and frustration and retaliation, but he only tears his own flesh.

The longer it goes, the more the infestation grows. Every day the pit bull becomes more demoralized, more distracted. Then, when the drain on this dumb, muscle-bound mutt gets too much and the infestation proves too widespread to defeat, he simply gets tired and lays down and goes to sleep.

The mighty pit bull has succumbed to the flea. He goes out, not with a bang but with a whimper.

Small groups and individuals. Guerrilla method, guerrilla philosophy is geared to small groups and individuals outnumbered and outgunned by better trained and technologically-advanced governments capable of brutal repression. Because we have the guerrilla's advantages and disadvantages, we should employ ourselves in the kinds of resistance that make our small numbers our greatest asset.

See, I disagree with another revolutionary who sees himself as a vanguardist and has related that we must engage in mass organization in order to prepare the masses—the bulk of society—for insurrectionary revolution. He foresees a rising up of the majority in an organized way in response to some revolutionary spark. That seems untenable to me.

I see a benefit to some degree of mass-mobilization, particularly within a framework of a catalytic vanguard (one that shares broadly the methods of self-organizing and mutual aid; a kind of vanguard that organizes itself out of a job). But I think that history bears out that revolutions arise slowly in the consciousness of the vast numbers of the population and it is the active participation of a significantly small number and their persistent attacks upon the system that inspire the multitude of small and otherwise-insignificant acts of the workers and marginalized who play their part in throwing monkey wrenches into the machinery.

Momentum builds as revolution becomes more fashionable, as the guerrilla's message spreads more broadly and finds receptive ears, as his actions benefit the people and win them over while the State's repression alienates them.

If you read Crane Brinton's *Anatomy of Revolution*, his analysis of the English, French, American and Russian revolutions demonstrates that revolutions involve the direct participation of small numbers of the populace until the final stages when the collapse of the existing regime has already become a foregone conclusion.

that terrorists and war criminals and human rights violators must be opposed with violence, but it seems to be the only thing we understand.

Americans have died. When more than half a million Iraqi children under the age of six died in less than a decade, many Americans argued that the fault lay with the Iraqi people because they failed to remove Saddam Hussein. So, they bear responsibility for their own political failure.

If that argument applied then, it applies now. Victims at the Pentagon and World Trade Center died because they failed to oppose murderous policies that spurred the hatred and resolve of sympathizers who saw too many Palestinian and Iraqi children die at the hands of thoughtless Americans. If you think about it, these cold and dismissive arguments apply more fairly to us than to Iraqis; as citizens of a representative republic, we accept a portion of our nation's power—more so than repressed and uninformed citizens of totalitarian societies.

By our own arguments over the last decade, we had this coming. Not that I support terrorism, mind you, or justify the terrorist attacks. But our past arguments blaming Iraqis for their own dead children do.

Now, it seems, if you listen to the empty heads and talking heads and helmet heads, we should engage in a knee-jerk, reactionary response, stomping through the global neighborhood like an incensed bully holding his bloody nose, looking to slap the first kid who laughs. We shouldn't stop to wonder why people acted with such conviction that they sacrificed themselves (instead, we should talk about them as "those people" not like us who have "no regard for life," and we should accept the bigoted portrayal of them as brainwashed radicals dying for a militant Allah). We should never question whether we did something to provoke this response, just like most stomping bullies never question it; other kids are just jealous. It has nothing to do with us taking their milk money.

We should rally behind the illegitimate buffoon who took the fraudulency by force, blindly supporting his compassionate conservatism and his know-nothing foreign policyism, while he burps and belches and stammers and blunders along. He perfectly embodies the ideal of our bloody-nosed bully, fueled along by his entourage of white-haired helmet heads, leading us into the same sinkhole where the Soviets buried an entire generation of people and an entire military. Besides turning so many American fighting kids into Afghani mulch, we stand to lower the unemployment rate and provide our sluggish economy the artificial boost that unnecessary bloodletting always provides, particularly when sending the poor and minorities to the slaughter.

And we can fuel a whole new cycle of violence and aggression that created this last terrorist attack. Not that I'm trying to justify the terrorists.

But at the end of the second paragraph, I bet *you* did.

DAYS OF POPTARTS AND BOMBS

Picture the scene. An Oklahoma dustbowl family surviving in any way they can, parked along the roadside of Route 66 with everything they own on their backs. They light a fire outside a temporary shelter, one of hundreds burning along the road during the Great Depression. Their kids need bathing, the little girl with smudges of dirt on her face and the little boy with holes in the knees of his trousers. They hunger and they long for California, the place where everybody will find work.

Then a giant box of Poptarts lands on their shack and crushes half the family.

Okay, so they weren't really from Oklahoma, but from Hurat. And it didn't happen during the Great Depression when American refugees fled hunger, but it happened when Afghan refugees fled U.S. bombs and hunger. But the rest of it happened just like that: We crushed the Afghan Joad family, an Islamic Tom Joad and kin, with a giant box of Poptarts. The label on the packages that lay strewn across those poor people's living space said, "A gift from the people of the United States."

Yup. I bet they like us a lot better now.

Before we started dropping bombs on their hospitals and mosques (and Poptarts on everything else), international relief agencies had already begun tackling the overwhelming problem of hunger and starvation in Afghanistan, a problem made more urgent by the impending winter. But after we started

dropping bombs on hospitals and mosques (and Poptarts on everything else) the relief workers could not continue. After all, who wants to trade in their old age for a closed-casket funeral, committed to the dust while smelling oddly of strawberry fruit-filling and sugar frosting?

The U.S. government replaced hunger relief with comic relief, and the food we dropped on inhabited areas probably did more damage than the bombs we dropped on vacated training facilities we built for Osama Bin Laden and the al Qaeda network back when we put them together. This may be the first time in history that breakfast pastries have been used as ordinance and the world community may have to get together and amend the Geneva Convention in order to ban the use of breakfast foods against civilian populations.

The international relief agencies didn't destroy homes with boxes of food falling from the sky back when they attempted to feed the Afghan people: They delivered food the boring way, unloading it from the back of a truck. But we can't do things the international way. With military enlistment decreasing greatly, we still had not reached one group: The "drop-ice-cubes-on-peoples'-heads-while-leaning-over-the-rail-at-the-mall" kids. Now our food drop has even inspired them. Several teens who used to shoot straw-loads of Slurpy at unsuspecting shoppers passing below have joined Junior ROTC and dream of the day when they can drop giant boxes of Poptarts on unsuspecting refugees.

The American way of doing things has proven quite successful. Unless, of course, you measure success by how many people got fed and how many people continue to starve while we waste millions of dollars in bombs to flatten seventy-five cents worth of straw shelters. If you raise the issue of starving people, then our relief efforts are a miserable failure. But we're fun to watch.

Still, we got to feel good about ourselves. As we get up in the morning and turn on the tube to find out the only information our government wants us to know, we can reach up in the cupboard and be reminded that somewhere, thousands of miles away, poor refugees sit down to eat the same thing we do. If it didn't land on them and kill them, of course.

And that's what really matters: That we feel good about it. We aren't a collective bully, bombing some weak country into the Stone Age for no good purpose other than to vent our rage at a guy engaging in solutions we know won't work; we aren't allowing thousands and thousands of Afghans to starve while naively mimicking that famous dead chick who lived during the French Revolution: "Let them eat Poptarts."

We can smile and nod as the Fraudulent burps and belches into the microphone, and we can pretend to believe him. But our foreign policy has taken on a new symbol, one that combines air superiority with unfettered capitalism, catchy packaging, and very little healthy substance.

Don't let the official briefings rot your teeth.

OPEN LETTER TO SECRETARY OF DEFENSE DONALD RUMSFELD

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld
U.S. Department of Defense
Washington, DC 20520

Bastille Day, 2004

Dear Secretary Rumsfeld:

I served in the U.S. Army from 1987-1989. I received Basic Training at Ft. Knox, Kentucky; Advanced Training at Ft. Lee, Virginia; and I was stationed for permanent duty at Ft. Benning, Georgia, at D Company, 4th Battalion, 30th Infantry (D/4-30). My service number was 371-96-7170. My End of Time in Service was November 3, 1989, and I received an Honorable Discharge under Honorable Conditions.

So we have to show them that we want to give them something. We want to share a better world with them, one where they are really free, one where their human needs are met, where they feel safe and loved and valuable, where they are appreciated as human beings, where nobody compels them or distorts them or exploits them, where there is no fear of punishment and no imposed program at the end of a rifle, no nagging suspicions and sneaking questions and no lurking idea that something is very, very wrong.

We have to persuade people that it is in their best interests to turn their backs on this slavocracy and fascism and embrace something better, something fulfilling, something free and practical and perfectly natural.

We don't want them to give something up. We want them to join us the way kids run away and join the circus. We want them to accept something we're giving away like cotton-candy. A world with no masters and no slaves—and a plan on how we can make it happen.

This last question is more personal. A huge source of frustration for me is trying to get other Anarchists more involved in prisoner support work, writing, printing, outreach—things you would think pretty much define what an Anarchist should be all about! Any suggestions?

Yeah, I've got a suggestion: Fuck them.

I hope I don't sound too rash or impatient or rude or belligerent, but I mean that. I'm so sick of complacency. I see that here. Here! People complacent in chains. It kills me.

Who is it that pats you on the back every day and says, "Let's go, Anthony. We need you on the team..."? Who is it that gives you the pep talk to keep you going? Who is it that had to persuade you to continue doing prisoner support work so that it would become necessary for you to keep working in a job you hate and not retire? Nobody does that. Nobody has to. You get it. You see it.

This isn't some big, cosmic riddle. We live in Nazi Germany, 1936—only worse. The bad guys ruin everything and there is no counterbalance, no opposition powers. So if it comes down to a situation where the people you're talking to—people who consider themselves Anarchists, no less—if they need pie charts and bar graphs and a fucking power-point presentation in order to demonstrate to them that the fascists have taken over and have invaded everyone, then you're wasting valuable time. And the pie charts and bar graphs in the world won't snap them awake if they can't see what's happening.

I'm not somebody who sees a need for large numbers of people jumping on the bandwagon for it to get rolling. I read somewhere that only 5% of the population fought in the American Revolution. Fidel Castro landed on Cuba with a handful of guerrillas, only 22 of whom survived the beach landing. He took power something like 18 months later. Rosa Parks didn't weigh 120 pounds but she was the end of the segregated South.

Small groups and individuals change history.

The world is full of people who talk a good game but don't do much about it. We're surrounded by people who hug their own chains... even as they claim to be revolutionary or defiant. A lot of people simply want to blow off steam by being part of the revolution and in blowing off steam, that makes their days lugging stones up the side of the pyramid a little more tolerable.

Revolution gives them a different pie-in-the-sky than religion does. They may even have the best of intentions, but those intentions won't materialize because they have their revolution-fix to get them through their mundane lives.

Do we really need them on the team?

I don't see the small number of committed and active revolutionaries as something discouraging. We represent the guerrillas, those who become aware and recognize the oppression before most and we are shaped by those reactionary forces pushing down on us. We don't need an army. We don't need millions flocking to the cause. Look at the U.S. experience in Vietnam. The U.S. had advanced technology; the U.S. had vastly superior numbers of trained, fighting troops; the U.S. had nearly unlimited economic power and resources. The Viet Cong were outnumbered and outgunned and had

Sean Swain

In every encounter I have had with the fascists, in every instance where I felt fear, I have remembered the words of Che Guevara on that dirt floor and I have repeated them to myself as a mantra: "You're only killing a man... You're only killing a man..."

So it is up to each of us to cultivate the guerrilla in all of us, to purge fear, to recognize the truth of our harsh reality. It is up to us to find others and dig down through the layers of interference and lies to discover the Che Guevara dormant in others, their capacity to be free and fearless, and awaken that vision of how things *can* be.

That is a profound act of love.

There is only one great question in human existence that has ever mattered, that ever amounted to anything. Only one question that makes us dangerous, makes the rulers tremble:

"What the fuck can we *do* about it?"

That's the question. And it's dangerous for a few reasons. First, "we." It implies that you know you're not alone. You're not isolated. You're part of something bigger than "I" or "me." You're part of a class of people and they feel like you do. Second, "do." That means you're ready to take action and so is the rest of "we." And third, just by asking the question, it reveals that you and the rest of "we" have already come to the conclusion that there *must* be something you *can* do about it. In other words, all that's left to decide is the right course of action, but action *will* be taken. It implies an understanding that you know that power resides in you and in all of us who are part of "we" and the potential to change things also lies in us.

That question gives birth to the guerrilla.

The guerrilla is the United States' biggest fear. It spends more money on trying to prevent the emergence of the guerrilla than on anything else. Anything. Having spent 18 months at Ft. Benning, home of the School of the Americas, the central training center for counter-insurgency, I know that the guerrilla is the biggest fear of the empire and that counter-insurgency is the biggest lie ever told. *There is no way to defeat the guerrilla.*

The U.S. simply won't admit that.

I know. George Jackson knew. And they know too. Che Guevara is coming back. Again and again and again.

Che Guevara is here. He's everywhere. And the oppressor has every right to be scared. Sins of the past always make up for lost time.

In terms of energizing the sheeple on the outs, I'd have to say there are no "outs." There are only larger cages. You're in a cage now, Anthony. You're in a cage and you're forced to lug stones up the side of this pyramid. The difference is, you're awake and you see it. You know that you're in a cage and that your cage is simply bigger than mine.

Look at me: White privilege, honorable discharge, college, no criminal record. Piles of merit badges from my scouting days. But all of that goes out the window if the drunken nephew of a court official kicks in your door. The illusion of freedom is torn away. You didn't know your place.

You are me and so is everyone out there on the "outs." That's not something we all want to face because that means we're helpless and at any time, the Nazis can come and take us away. That's troubling. That's something that, if you accept it as true, you can't just let it go. You have to do something about it.

It used to be that people would say, "They can't do that." Now they say, "Well, they won't do it to me."

I'm suggesting that everyone acts in what they think are their own self-interests and they do what they think is best for themselves. Most people believe it is best to go along with the program and drag stones up the side of the pyramid and suppress all those ugly, nagging questions, those suspicions that something is very, very wrong.

In order to awaken people and get them to take action on their own behalf, we have to be able to show them that we're not trying to trick them into giving anything up. We're not. See, people don't want to give up what they've worked for.

Sean Swain

I would very much like to renounce my discharge; I would like to renounce any and all benefits due to me as a veteran; if possible, I would like to renounce even my act of military service so that any connection between myself and the U.S. military is wiped clean, as if the U.S. Army and I never even met.

I realize that such a request, such an act of renunciation, however symbolic, will not wash from my hands the blood of the poor, oppressed, and subjugated that have been used as fodder for the death machine of the U.S. empire. I know that my sins of participation in the military conquest of the new McWorld, a military conquest ordered ultimately by capitalist corporations, the enemies of all humankind, are not purged by my renunciation of your reactionary, endless war for oil and market expansion.

My renunciation will not bring back innocent nuns raped and butchered in El Salvador by U.S. School of the Americas graduates, trained with U.S. tax dollars to torture and kill enemies of dictators and despots. It will not raise to life Colombian union organizers struck down by American bullets for their desire to earn a fair wage and feed their children without participating in the cocaine trade. My renunciation will not erase the graves of more than half a million children under the age of six purposely murdered by U.S. sanctions imposed by U.S. forces, or the children purposely murdered when U.S. forces purposely targeted water treatment facilities and engaged in other unprosecuted crimes against humanity in the bombing of Iraq in 1991.

This renunciation will not restore to health my friends and fellow soldiers, some of whom I trained, some of whom I armed, who returned from the Gulf War with an undiagnosed disorder, a disorder directly linked to this deceitful government's use of depleted uranium in conventional armaments. My renunciation will not compensate them for their suffering while the U.S. government lied and buried medical evidence, denying justice and compensation to thousands of suffering Gulf War veterans who were used, damaged, and absently tossed onto the trash heap of U.S. history.

No, my renunciation will never serve to right any of those grievous wrongs, no matter how much I wish it did.

I can only hope and pray that my renunciation will find its way into the hands of starry-eyed recruits who otherwise would have blindly stepped into the meat grinder, who would have killed for corporate profits, who would have carried out orders and defended the flag and the freedom that your market-rulers secretly mock. And maybe one, just one, will see the truth and will refuse to serve cowards, profiteers, and traitors. Maybe one, just one, will make a beginning of withstanding tyranny on behalf of the poor and the exploited and oppressed upon whose backs you intend to build the new McWorld. Maybe one—just one—will pass this letter on, and before you know it, the troops might point their rifles in the right direction for a change, pointing them at their true enemy—the enemy of all humankind, and all wars for power and greed will end, and the Enemies of the People will have nowhere to run.

If that day ever comes, won't it suck to be you?

In Solidarity with the Poor of the World
That Your War Machine Crushes,

Sean Swain

SUPPORTING THE TROOPS... WHO FRAG

Even if you don't support the war, you have to support the troops. That's what people keep telling me. They've been telling me that for years, and I've been telling them they're nuts. I was never sold on the idea. To me, it sounded like imperial lackey clap-trap designed to pull dissenters onto the other side of the barricades.

Think about it. Imagine instead of something like war, you took a moral stand against something important, like football. Say you took a moral position against the game because it leads to injuries of

EVEN IF YOU DON'T SUPPORT THE *FRAGGING*...
YOU GOTTA SUPPORT THE *FRAGGER!*



A mine owner had Pinkerton guards with shotguns aimed at striking mine workers. The strike leader walked up to the mine owner and told him, "You can shoot me to death... but you can't shoot me back to work."

It's that simple. They can shoot us to death. They can club us to death. They can Supermax us to death. But they cannot shoot us or club us or Supermax us back to work if we resolve we are no longer slaves.

Fear is a control tool. Fear keeps everyone in their places. That's why just one Rosa Parks is so fucking dangerous; everyone sees that one little woman can stand up to a giant, evil machine... and the machine will blink.

The machine will blink. Every time. Every fuckin' time.

You have to purge fear because fear and freedom cannot coexist. You have to choose fear or freedom. Cowards are never free.

We have to confront the things that scare us. When the fascists found out I was the one who contacted senators, for example, I knew what was coming. I was afraid. But I couldn't cave-in. So the first time they framed me on bogus shit and—as part of their plausibly-deniable Dirty War—tossed me in the hole, I was afraid. But I wasn't alone. I wasn't abandoned. I endured what they did to me and that strengthened my confidence.

The first time I laid on the floor in protest and refused to walk to the hole, they kicked and beat me and I was afraid; every concussion, every separated shoulder from pigs carrying me by my cuffs, every hole ground into my face—there were times I didn't know if I would survive and I was scared and had to make provisions for others to get messages out in case I died.

When they left me 15 days in the suicide cell to break me—naked, nothing but a bench to sleep on, a toilet and a sink; no toilet paper, no toothpaste, nothing—and when they transferred me without telling me where I was going (leading me to believe I was on my way to the Supermax) I ended up in the prison nuthouse, afraid they would dope me up and ruin my mind. I had to find a way to get my writings out and into safe hands—to Patrick, now at Liberty ABC.

I feel fear now. I know very well that by answering your questions honestly and telling the truth, the Department of Retribution and Corruption could very well send me off to their Supermax facility and distort me for years and years, never letting me go, keeping me out of spite even though I never committed a crime in the first place.

But fear is what you feel when the bad guys are in power and the truth is outlawed and courage is despised and justice is a process to get cheap labor. So they can kill me, but they can only kill *me* once. It comes down, I guess, to a decision of how many times you intend to die for these rat bastards. Cowards die every day, over and over, with every stone they drag up the side of this thing! I'm not built that way.

When Che Guevara was captured in Bolivia, he was held in a dirt-floor school house in La Higuera ("Fig Tree," in English). The executioner walked in with his rifle and Che looked him in the eye and said: "I know you've come to kill me so shoot, coward. You're only killing a man."

You're only killing a man. You cannot kill freedom. You cannot kill justice or revolution or the future. You can't. Che Guevara was only a man but once they killed him he was more than that. He became a symbol. When just a man, Che Guevara was in a fixed place and he could be contained; dead, his enemies see him everywhere.

They cut off his hands and put them in a formaldehyde jar so his fingers could be printed and no one could say that Che Guevara was still alive and sighted here or there. But if you ask the poor and oppressed, the hungry struggling to be free, why the oppressor chopped off Che's hands, they will gaze directly into your eyes and solemnly tell you: "They chopped off his hands because they are afraid of what he will do when he comes back..."

He comes back, Anthony. He comes back again and again, a million brush fires, a million Vietnams, a million guerrillas shaped and formed by the boot heel of the tyrant, the billy-club of the cop, the rifle of the hired thug.

resolved to no longer be slaves we would no longer be slaves, then the slavemaster has a fucking problem. Just one of us wide awake who sees the scam, and the slavemaster's gig is up.

One at a time, we wake up others and we talk and we share ideas and we start small groups, organizing, planning. Humans have done it for 3 million years. We know what we're doing. We grouped ourselves into tribes so the lion wouldn't be able to eat us. Well, now, we're defending ourselves against the State. We'll prevent the State from eating us. It's that simple.

To give you an example, if Ohio prisoners laid on their bunks for 30 days, we wouldn't get just \$286 a month. We'd get whatever in the hell we asked for.

Here's the reality of it. Ohio has a balanced budget clause in its Constitution. That means it can't spend what it ain't got. So, once Ohio's money runs dry, it's game over. And Ohio has had money problems as it is, even with our full cooperation. That's why they've been cutting back on your serving sizes and gouging you on the phones and food boxes where they get kick-backs. Ohio's having checkbook problems.

On top of that, the forces Ohio relies upon to keep you in order are the Ohio National Guard. During the Lucasville Riot, it was the Ohio National Guard crashing its helicopters and waving around rifles to scare the hell out of prisoners. They get called in to terrorize us on the cheap.

They ain't here. They're in Afghanistan and Iraq. So that means if 49,000 slaves refuse to pick the cotton, Ohio has to hire thugs to terrorize us at union-scale wages, time-and-a-half hazard pay. No shit. They have to hire people at union-scale wages to make our food. And think of this: If you were getting paid by the hour in a temporary job and you got time and a half past 8 hours, how long do you think it would take you to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich?

Cha-ching!

It goes like this: Within 30 days, we'd spend the State's entire budget for the year. The whole deal. Every dime. Prisons, schools, roads, payroll, everything. No more paychecks for anybody working for Ohio for the rest of the year. So, they'd have to have an emergency session of the legislature and raise taxes—radically raise taxes.

Major businesses would bail and lay people off. They would head to states with a lower tax burden. So unemployment would spike and property values would go in the toilet. Nobody would be able to sell their homes because nobody would want to move to a state where half of your paycheck gets sucked up in taxes. The poor and the marginalized would refuse to take any more shit than they've already been served and they would take to the streets. You'd have massive economic and political instability. The social fabric would start to unravel. Cuyahoga Falls would look like Rwanda.

Just 30 days of Ohio prisoners laying on our bunks and Ohio would go into a tailspin and wouldn't recover for a decade.

They would cut off electricity, heat, water. They'd smash our property. They'd transfer some of us around. They'd beat us up. Might even kill some of us.

Fascists are ruthless. Absolutely ruthless. They have no regard for life. They aren't normal people like you and me.

But if we endured, after 30 days the State would be on the verge of collapse because it lost control of its slaves. If Ohio just had a Spartacus to impart this kind of wisdom and inspire other slaves in the method of effective revolt (laying around for a month), the whole thing would fall apart.

And, really, the whole thing deserves to fall apart. It's built on exploitation. It's built on slavery. It's built on the presumption that we'll just keep acting like cowards and picking the cotton. So, they can either get right or they can get lost.

You ask, "What can we do?" The answer is simple: Conquer fear.

It's not the enemy's guns that keep us slaves, not his billy-clubs or his supermaxes or any of the punishments this big, ugly jerk can level at us. It is our *fear* of those things. Our fear.

Without our fear, the scrawny shit in a monkey suit is cooked. We outnumber him. He would give us orders and we would say, "No. Do it yourself."

young athletes, it pulls resources from school budgets, it promotes hyper-competitiveness, and it instills an unhealthy desire for excellence that sometimes translates into steroid use or the abuse of other performance-enhancing drugs. However it works, we'll say you've taken the position that football is evil.

But on the verge of the big game, your best friend tells you, "Even if you oppose football, you've still got to support the *team*. You have to support the *players*." And your best friend persuades you to buy tickets and eat a hotdog and sport a jersey with the name and number of one of the neighborhood kids on it...

You can see where that goes. You got tricked. You oppose football on moral grounds and yet there you sit, materially supporting football with your ticket stub and hotdog and jersey. You can't support the team or support the players without supporting football. You just can't.

And you can't support the troops without supporting the war.

Or so I thought. Then I read about Ward Churchill, the embattled Colorado professor who has made a bad habit of spouting the truth out in public. Churchill apparently said something to war opposition in Portland that they have to consider what their position is regarding soldiers who 'frag' their commanding officers.

See, some soldiers with obvious psychological dysfunction tire of shooting complete strangers who have done nothing to them while they take orders and lick the boots of malicious tyrants who have ordered their friends into situations where they died for no reason. Some delusional soldiers think their superiors would be put to better use as organ donors, and believe that the imperial machinery is using them as fodder, and they turn their rifles around in the other direction and put a couple of rounds through the brain pan of the sadistic shit cramming the soldiers into a giant, profit-driven meat-grinder.

I'm not sure, but I think those are the troops I can support. And I should. I kept asking friends who want me to support the troops (even if I don't support the war) which of the troops I ought to support. My friends said *all* of the troops deserve my support because they *all* are doing what they think is right. *All* of them are defending what America stands for in their own way. Some point their rifles *this* way; some point their rifles *that* way. To each his own.

But I suspect the soldiers who have fragged their commanders get the short end of the stick when it comes to care packages from home. I imagine the other troops who direct their murder and mayhem at total strangers from oil-producing regions of the world probably get first dibs on the good stuff.

So, to do my part to support the troops, I wrote to the Department of Defense to get a list of soldiers who have turned their guns on their own commanders. I would like to send those soldiers a tube of toothpaste, a bar of soap, a few boxes of macaroni and cheese. Maybe a clean change of socks.

I'm waiting for a response from Donald Rumsfeld. You know, he's a busy guy trying to coordinate military actions to meet corporate needs. But when he sends the addresses of the fraggers, I propose founding the Fragger Support Fund, so people all over can send money and donations and support the troops. I would encourage everyone, even die-hard reactionaries who support the war, to send money to the fraggers. It is a duty we all have.

Even if you don't support the fragging, you have to support the fragger.

MORE SUPPORTING, MORE FRAGGING

It occurs to me as I re-read *Supporting the Troops... Who Frag*, that some flat-earth types in Rush Limbaugh t-shirts may burp up a swallow of beer and blather, "Hey, you're encouraging soldiers to kill their commanders! You're rewarding fraggers!"

Well, yes. Yes, I am. I am rewarding what may be construed as an act of treason with a change of socks and a box of Twinkies. I am sure, right now, glassy-eyed patriotic kids from Omaha and Boston are staring down the rifle sights from their foxhole and thinking, "I like Captain Snowbucket okay, but boy could I use some of Swain's macaroni and cheese..."

Behold the power of cheese.

Yes, what I propose is as much a bribe as the care packages sent to obedient soldiers are an incentive for those soldiers to carry out genocide against innocent Iraqis. I plead just as guilty as everyone else sending stuff to the troops.

And you know, the saddest thing is, everyone who really supports the troops ought to support fragging—and they would, I think, if only Americans were better at math. See, we Americans have never been very big on math, but I would like to give this a try.

When I was in the Army, we had about 225 men in each company, with one company commander. Under normal operations, that single captain gave orders that the 225 men obeyed.

In combat situations, one captain puts 225 men into harm's way. Hundreds of men are potentially gunned down or blown-up or burned at the orders of one man. But the process I propose keeps them all out of jeopardy and creates only *one* casualty. I think, personally, those odds are better.

Under normal combat scenarios, the troops obey their commander and shoot the enemy and far fewer troops come home. But if the troops frag their commander, only one guy dies and 225

people come home. In terms of numbers, that's a far more acceptable casualty rate. Less than one half of one percent.

The troops should frag their commanders.

You may say that the idea is insane because somebody from higher up at battalion or brigade headquarters will take charge in the company commander's absence. But, I would respond, when the brass comes down, you shoot them too. There are, you know, limited numbers of high ranking people who are vastly outnumbered by low-ranking troops. If you envision the military as a big pyramid, the troops occupy the wide base at the bottom. If you shoot the small elite at the top, even if you have to kill them all, you still end up with far fewer casualties than if they follow orders.

I'm not trying to formulate a moral solution here necessarily, just a mathematical one. I'm just proposing what to do if you really want the biggest number of troops to return home, if you really, really support the troops. Mathematically, we're better off if the troops mow down everybody, all the way up to the Joint Chiefs. You would still end up with fewer casualties than if they followed orders.

You might scoff and say that the troops wouldn't be any safer without their commanders because terrorists would still snipe them and car bomb them. But the troops would only have to engage in effective public relations. Put their commanders' heads on pikes, for instance, or make big signs inviting the enemy to compete at volleyball. They may be able to develop a peaceful co-existence. And the crazy thing is, once you get the high ranking idiots out of the way, I suspect that the solutions to both Afghanistan and Iraq would become self-evident. I may even venture to say that fragging the chain of command might actually *be* the solution.

So support the troops. Support them mathematically. Persuade them to kill their chain of command.

IN SUPPORT OF NAFTA

"Mejor morir en pie que vivir en rodillas. (It is better to die on your feet than to live on your knees.)"

—Emiliano Zapata

Almost unanimously, Anarchists, Communists, liberals and leftists rail against NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) as a corporate-inspired attack on the poor of the world. NAFTA, most argue, created a "race to the bottom," where multi-national corporations based in the U.S. farm-out jobs and factories to areas of the world where they can pay workers the least, subject them to the cheapest working environment (which is also the most unsafe), and pollute the environment with reckless abandon and a lack of oversight from government agencies.

So I hope you're right and what we're experiencing is an awakening. It needs to happen. It really does. And while I've never been much of an optimist, I think that the awakening is happening and it will continue to gain momentum.

But to show you how I see it developing, let me use the situation here in Ohio, the reality I face every day. I think the Ohio prisoner and our experience right here in the middle of the country can work well as a kind of microcosm for how I see the revolution developing everywhere.

So, check it out: We've got over 49,000 slaves held by the State of Ohio. We're slaves, plain and simple, because the 13th Amendment allows for kicking us around like this only in the case of a felony. Slavery was not outlawed; it was just confined to people railroaded through the court system. That is the basis for treating us as second-class citizens.

They never use the word "slave" because it would piss you off and it might reveal their real, ulterior motives behind the maintenance of the police state and the massive incarceration rates—economic motives where they farm-out all of us slaves to pick the corporate cotton for pennies a day.

So they never call you a slave. Not to your face, anyhow.

So here we are in Ohio, about to top 50,000 and our average state pay is about \$19 a month. In 1975, just to compare, state pay totaled \$24 a month. And back then, with that amount of money, you had the spending power to buy 57 packs of cigarettes with your state pay. Now, with our state pay, we can buy 4 packs. Our spending power has diminished like that.

The problem is, we're getting fucked and we don't know it. The same thing is happening to us slaves in the State of Ohio as happens to workers everywhere. Prices go up, wages stay the same or decrease slightly, and sooner or later, you wake up in shackles, scratching your head.

The enemy knows what he is doing. To use an analogy from Daniel Quinn, the slavemaster knows that if he boiled a pot of water and then tossed a frog into the pot, the frog would immediately leap out. So, instead, he puts the frog into a pot of cozy, warm water and the frog relaxes. Over time, the slavemaster stokes the fires and the water heats up slowly, ever so slowly... and before you know it, the frog is boiled. He never leaped out of the pot. He never resisted.

So take a look around. Analyze our situation. Does this fuckin' water feel hot to you, or is it just me? Over 30 years ago, somebody in my shoes had the spending power to buy 57 packs of cigarettes with state pay and now I have the spending power to buy 4. And the problem was, none of us stayed awake to see the pot and the boiling water. It happened slowly and now we're boiled.

This is painful. Reality hurts. The truth hits you like a swift kick in the crotch. So, getting awakened just to find you're getting boiled alive by the corporate dictators and their fascist lackeys isn't my idea of a holiday cruise. You won't see Bob Barker asking you for your bid on *that* trip in the Showcase Showdown, that's for Goddamn sure.

If people don't see anything they can *do* about it, then why stay awake and suffer? It's easier to sleep through the boiling. Wake me up when it's over. I'll play cards or shoot hoop or watch babes in bikinis and car chases. Give me some mind candy to distract me while I'm getting boiled alive.

\$286. I did the math. That's what Ohio would have to pay us in state pay each month for us to have the same spending power as in 1975. \$286. And getting an increase from \$19 to \$286 would force the fascists to spend more than \$11 million more each month. It would add up to more than \$125 million each year—the equivalent of the operating budgets for roughly 6 or 7 prisons. No shit.

And that's not even like we're asking for minimum wage or voting rights or recognition of our own union—things that would get us conjugal visits and furloughs and drastic improvements of conditions. Nothing that radical. Just \$286 state pay. The same spending power as we had in 1975. That's all.

But prisoners will automatically respond, "They won't give us that." And that's true. Ohio won't give us that. That's why we have to take it.

Look. It all starts with the realization that the State has no power. None. It gives orders under the *illusion* that it has power and we all go along with it and we obey. But if we stopped recognizing them as the authorities, if we stopped obeying, the whole thing would collapse like a house of cards. Power doesn't come from *them*, it comes from *us*. So, if you've got one slave who sees the truth, one slave who knows that it's the slaves who hold the real power, that there is power in each of us and if we

Sean Swain

Now, keep in mind we're not talking about books here. Books are dusty things that serve as companions for people who cannot get laid. We know that. We're talking about weapons *disguised* as books. Dangerous, revolutionary ideas fill the pages of these things, giving you power over your own life and waking you up to the reality of the struggle. These weapons arm you in ways the slavemaster has disarmed you, and these weapons make you unconquerable.

So let me give you my run-down of the Top Ten:

ABC of Anarchism by Alexander Berkman and *Ishmael* by Daniel Quinn give a larger framework for understanding our reality and seeing the difference between how life goes now and how it could be.

Next comes *Steal This Book* by Abbie Hoffman, *Blood in My Eye* by George L. Jackson, and *War of the Flea* by Robert Taber. Abbie Hoffman gives a blue-print for an alternative life lived in resistance and even if some of the details are outdated, the strategies aren't. It might be difficult to get because it has diagrams for building pipe bombs. George Jackson provides an in-depth analysis of fascism and his conclusions on the impossibility of defeating guerrilla warfare. Robert Taber teaches you how to wage it.

(Besides Taber, you can check out other works on guerrilla warfare such as Mao Ze Dong's *Military Writings* and Che Guevara's *Guerrilla Warfare*, but I haven't gotten my hands on them yet and can't recommend them sight-unseen.)

The next bunch are memoirs and biographies that give you an idea why you should get off your ass and do something: *Assata* by Assata Shakur; *Che: A Revolutionary Life* by Jon Lee Anderson, about the extraordinary life of Cuban Revolutionary hero Ernesto "Che" Guevara; and *Revolutionary Suicide* by Huey P. Newton.

Rounding out the Top Ten, you've got Gene Sharp's *Politics of Nonviolent Action I-III* and *A Force More Powerful* by Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall. While I am no pacifist by any stretch of the imagination, if prisoners everywhere read and grasped the ideas contained in these 2 works, the prison system would collapse overnight.

SLAVES DO NOT READ. Guerrillas do. So Stop being a slave and get dangerous.

We're on the barricades of an awakening by mankind (and womankind and transgendered kind) right here, right now, emanating from the belly of this bastard beast. It's nothing short of revolutionary! How do you see this developing? What more can we do? How do we energize the "sheeple" on the outs?

Wow! That's a lot to chew on, Brother! Let me see if I can address this in order and maybe say a few things that make sense.

As far as the awakening of humankind in the belly of the beast, this is an exciting time to be alive. It really is. Fascism has never been as developed nor as entrenched as it is right now. *Right now.*

I know, I know. When people think of fascism, they think of Nazi Germany and Italy under Mussolini. I know. But those examples were nothing more than pilot programs compared to the totalitarian control that this Amerikan Empire commands. What we have now, what the U.S. has developed into, is the single-most un-free control system ever devised in the history of humanity and it enslaves everyone.

Things have never looked more bleak for the good guys. The war is over. We lost. We lost and we didn't even fight because we didn't realize what was going down until after it was all over. We have awakened—some of us, anyhow—to discover we're slaves... Some of us awakened and we're at that crossroads of history, that place where what we do now or don't do may determine the course of history for the next few hundred years.

FREEDOM

Ultimately, this stance goes, NAFTA has unleashed the richest and most powerful of the world, freeing them from even the illusion of any restraint, to exploit the poor and helpless like never before. It makes the whole planet their playground.

All of this is true, you know.

Even right-wing crackpots and wing-nuts like Pat Buchanan recognize the evil done to at least the U.S. worker, even if they don't consider the consequences worldwide. Pat Buchanan has written critically and consistently about NAFTA's results, about American corporations leaving U.S. workers high and dry, taking their manufacturing to Mexico.

And all of that is true too.

Still, I support NAFTA, and the Free Trade Area of the Americas, often dubbed NAFTA II. I think the governments of the U.S. and its neighbors had a great idea when it completely unleashed the corporate hounds of hell to rape, pillage and plunder. Consider me a rare exception, but I celebrate the day of NAFTA's effective date as a momentous event, a day that the winds of history began blowing in a sudden and vastly new direction.

NAFTA created all the tragic injustices already described, but NAFTA also gave birth to the first post-modern revolution, for the day that NAFTA came into effect, out of the early morning fog of the Lacandon Jungle emerged hundreds of armed revolutionaries, ski masks pulled down over their faces, as they swept into several Mexican villages, rounded up the mayors and police, and liberated an entire zone of operations. They laid siege to the only federal armory, and held a press conference when the smoke cleared, so they could introduce themselves to the world.

The Ejercito Zapatista Liberación Nacional (Zapatista National Liberation Army). The blueprint for popular resistance in the age of feudal corporate empire.

NAFTA created more than suffering. It created a galvanized resistance of people so poor, so voiceless, and so desperate that they formed an armed guerrilla struggle against the vast forces of amassed wealth and power that have used that wealth and power to push these poor people out of existence. This resistance, the Zapatistas, contend they are not fighting for their lives because they already consider themselves as dead and know they will eventually be wiped out by the unlimited resources of the State. They are simply fighting against the proposition that they never existed.

In other words, "You can kill us, but you will know we were here."

For ten years and counting, the powerful of the world have predicted the demise of the Zapatista resistance in just a few more weeks, just a few months, just a year. But they are still there, and the world knows they were here.

How strange it must seem to Zapatista leader Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos when he looks out from the undergrowth and the triple-canopy jungle to see labor leaders in the U.S. eating breakfast with legislators to discuss the evils of NAFTA, or pounding the podiums when they speak to their shrinking constituencies. How odd to see activists marching and advocates begging for more scraps for the poor and homeless, the flotsam and jetsam left behind in the wreckage of the American Dream.

It must seem that we want a repeal of NAFTA and tell the monster to put its mask back on, a kinder and gentler harbinger of death and destruction, rather than facing our enemy head-on.

If landless and uneducated Mexican peasants with homemade wooden rifles can mount a decade of resistance on the machinery of international capitalism under the most severe conditions, imagine what "downsized" auto workers and former members of the AFL-CIO and Teamsters could do with the armaments available to the average American if they simply went south to the jungles of Mexico for the guerrilla training? Imagine the front that could be opened in this war when those disciplined and battle-ready troops returned, cadres to train other "downsized" Americans tossed on the trash heaps of history by the international capitalist machine, gathering up the homeless and marginalized and teaching them urban guerrilla warfare.

While the Mexican peasant revolutionaries liberated villages, New Yorkers could liberate entire corporate headquarters, sweeping through high-rises and banks, factories and Wal-Marts, occupying structures and seizing controls of industry on behalf of the People.

Our enemy, the enemy of all human kind, pushed NAFTA because they saw their future in Mexico. Our problem isn't NAFTA. Our problem is that we have failed to recognize that our future too lies in Mexico. And when we recognize that fact, when we begin a second front to the war that has so far lasted a decade, the whole McWorld will tremble.

Where are the Zapatistas of Cleveland, Detroit, Boston, Milwaukee, Los Angeles, and Seattle?

¡Ya Basta!

¡Tierra y Libertad!

PAT ROBERTSON, HUGO CHAVEZ, AND ONE GOOD BULLET

Pat Robertson, the multi-million dollar televangelist of The 700 Club, raised the issue of political assassination this past month in comments he made about President Hugo Chavez. Robertson, in his best beatudic voice, decided that Jesus of Nazareth, of the Sermon on the Mount fame, would like to see a bullet blasted through the brain pan of the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Oh Crazy Pat just decided to forego all that meek-shall-inherit-the-earth shit, it seems.

So while the media storm rages over Crazy Pat's idiocy, and while the arguments of the empty heads and talking heads still buzz across the television screens, I find it far more interesting to think beyond the superficial argument of whether President Hugo Chavez deserves to get shot, and instead look at Crazy Pat's arguments in larger terms. It strikes me as quite curious but the arguments Crazy Pat makes about the eligibility of Hugo Chavez to receive a head-shot from a high-caliber sniper rifle actually fit much better when applied to U.S. President George W. Bush.

Now, please understand that I am not advocating the assassination of President Bush. But Crazy Pat's arguments are. What I'm saying is that Crazy Pat has effectively argued for shooting the man to whom he gave boatloads of blood-money in the 2000 and 2004 election cycles.

Crazy Pat contends President Hugo Chavez is a tyrant who has killed his own citizens. Crazy Pat says Chavez has no respect for democracy, and that these are the reasons to have Chavez killed.

Now, I don't know how many Venezuelans have been killed by Chavez, but I remember as Governor of Texas, George Dubya executed more Texans than Santa Anna at the Alamo. I remember that George even laughed and joked about executing the girl who found Jesus and became the Mother Teresa of the Texas prison system, spending her time going cell to cell, conducting Bible studies and praying for the broken women in Texas prisons. George W. Bush bragged that he didn't even bother reading her clemency request before signing her execution warrant.

So on the tyrant-killing-his-own-people scale, George W. Bush ranks right up there.

As for having no respect for democracy, I remember the 2000 election where Jeb (Bush, not Clampet) delivered the State of Florida to his oil-tycoon brother by ignoring thousands of votes cast by poor Blacks. As a result, George Dummmy became the first appointed Fraudulent of the United States. The right-wing fascist-inspired voting irregularities were so bad that Fidel Castro offered to send international elections monitors to keep the process fair—an offer that was rejected of course. And while Jimmy Carter travels the world over to ensure fair and safe elections, maybe even in Venezuela, you don't hear Dubya or Crazy Pat soliciting Jimmy's opinion about Florida 2000, do you?

So by Crazy Pat's criteria, we should be assassinating heads of state who are tyrants that kill their own people and demonstrate no respect for democracy. Crazy Pat's criteria apply perfectly to Bush. By opening his big fat mouth, Crazy Pat has endangered George W. Bush's life. He ought to be charged with something for that.

However, in the case of President Hugo Chavez, do the criteria really fit? Recall, Chavez has been elected more than once by the people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and on neither occasion did Hugo rely on his brother Jeb to fix the vote. The last referendum that he won fairly became necessary only because the U.S. pumped money into anti-Chavez campaigns and conservative media efforts to foment opposition to Chavez, a C.I.A.-backed-plot designed to oust Chavez in favor of a U.S.-controlled puppet who will hand over all that Venezuelan oil for pennies on the barrelhead. As

If the prison where you are doesn't have inter-library loan services, push to get them. And if you only get mainstream news, push for your library to subscribe to lefty publications like *The Progressive* and *The Nation* and *Mother Jones*.

Many places send free weapons to prisoners. When you write to them, tell them about restrictions (if you can only get paperbacks, or only new and not used materials, or if there has to be an invoice inside the package, etc.). Some of the best places to contact for free stuff are:

South Chicago ABC Zine Distro/P.O. Box 721/Homewood, IL 60430
Cincinnati Books 4 Prisoners Crew/P.O. Box 19065/Cincinnati, OH 43219
Kansas Mutual Aid/P.O. Box 442438/Lawrence, KS 66044
Liberation Projects/838 E. High St. #115/Lexington, KY 40502
Maoist Internationalist Movement/P.O. Box 29670/Los Angeles, CA 90029-0670
Off the Hook Editorial Collective/P.O. Box 872/Kirksville, MO 63501
Political Affairs/235 W/ 23rd St./New York, NY 10011
Rising Sun Press/P.O. Box 4362/Allentown, PA 18105

And there's a relatively new one: Cleveland Books 2 Prisoners/P.O. Box 602440/Cleveland, OH 44102.

All the stuff from these folks is free to prisoners, though it isn't free for any of them to copy it and distribute it to you. So, when you can, you should send them a little something.

Just to give you an idea, 4 of us started our own collective library available to everyone. In less than 2 months, we have over 70 titles. Plenty of folks out there are ready to arm you with the literary equivalent of an AK-47.

This weekend, my reading includes the following titles just from Rising Sun and Off the Hook Editorial Collective (it's a light weekend because I have to write up my responses to these questions):

Huey Newton: In His Own Words; The Black Panther Legacy; A Brief History of the Black Panther Party; Amilcar Cabral: The Politics of Struggle, Amilcar Cabral: The Weapon of Theory; Criminalization of Poverty in Capitalist America; Women and Imprisonment in the United States; The Invisibility of Women Prisoners' Activism; Autonomous Self-Organization and Anarchist Intervention; Confronting Empire: Analysis of Contemporary Capitalism and Ways to Fight it in the U.S.; Os Cangcieros: Gravediggers of the Old World; Under the Yoke of the State: Selected Anarchist Responses to Crime and Prisons; From an Echo in the Darkness, A Step into Light: The Prison Industrial Complex and Prison Abolition.

And that's just from 2 distributors—what we received this week.

Now, if you can't find dangerous weapons anywhere else, sometimes you gotta break down and buy them. You can beg friends and family for some funds or if you can't raise them on your own, pool resources with other prisoners and reimburse them off your commissary. You can always try fundraisers like football squares or basketball squares or March Madness brackets or maybe a raffle of artwork or something valuable. House a spades or Texas Hold 'Em tournament. Use your head for something other than a bottle opener.

Some of the furiously dangerous stuff I've bought includes: *Steal This Book* by Abbie Hoffman; *Che: A Revolutionary Life*, by Jon Lee Anderson; *Das Kapital* by Karl Marx, explaining how capitalism is full of shit; *Voltaireine DeCleyre Reader* by one of the most dangerous and inspiring women in history and a leading American Anarchist thinker; *Ishmael* by Daniel Quinn, one of the most eye-opening works ever written; *Politics of Nonviolent Action, Volumes I-III* by Gene Sharp, a roadmap for mobilizing people and taking down the system in a way the fascists never see it coming; *A Force More Powerful* by Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall, giving details accounts of dozens of successful, nonviolent revolutions that took down systems just like the one keeping us enslaved.

A publisher with great revolutionary weapons is AK Press Distribution/674-A 23rd St./Oakland, CA 94612. They give automatic discounts to prisoners. I paid full price a couple of times and they accredited me with my discount toward future purchases.

man locked up in the Ohio prison system. No shit. And he wasn't talking about my hands and feet; I was hand-cuffed and belly-chained and all I lacked was the hockey mask to look like Hanibal Lecter. They've got a solution for dangerous hands and feet. They can contain a 300-pound muscle-bound gorilla. Believe that.

No, he didn't think I was dangerous because of my physical abilities. He was talking about mental weapons I had acquired. Weapons I collected and put together. Those weapons were ideas, dangerous ideas, and those ideas made me dangerous.

I'm far more dangerous now.

The enemy isn't afraid of slaves who can punch and kick. They're afraid of slaves who know how to read and know *what* to read. So, if you want to get dangerous, this is where you start.

All prisons have a library. It's normally filled with books not worth reading—another form of mind-candy. Westerns, horrors, fantasies. But every library has a few dangerous weapons hidden in among the bullshit, and it's your job to find them. The library here, for example, has *The Communist Manifesto*, giving the low-down on how the rich run everything and what we gotta do to change that, and *On Civil Disobedience* and *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau. *On Civil Disobedience* was torn out of another volume of work because it's too dangerous for us to read, but the enemy missed a copy. Both works by Thoreau are filled with ideas about freedom and how to live effectively. He is, bar none, the heaviest hitter of any writer in history. Every sentence packs a punch.

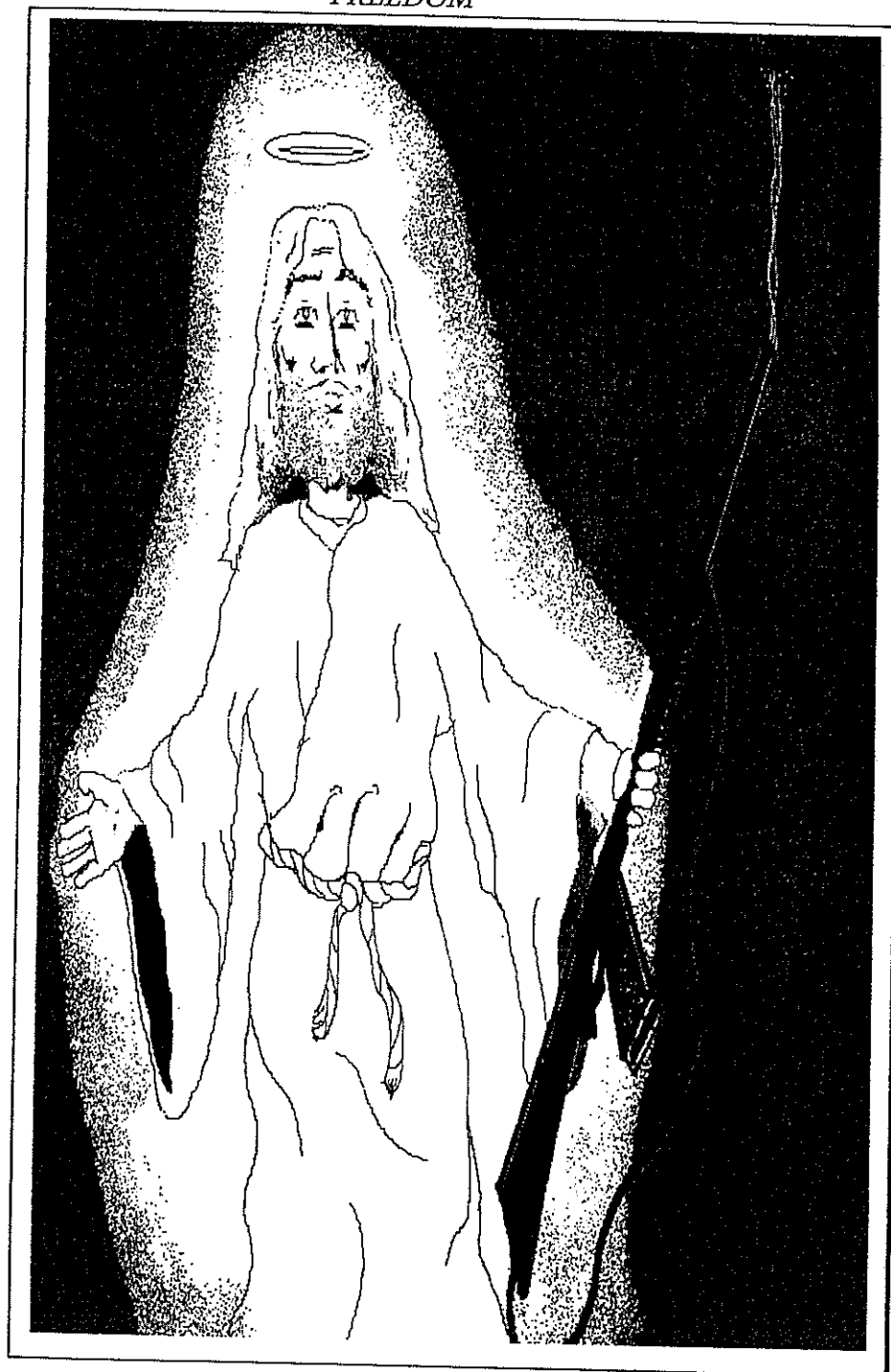
And there's a pile of biographies which are great because they give you insight into a specific person and into the history in which he or she lived.

Most Ohio prisons carry a resource called Bowker's Books in Print. It has alphabetical listings of every book out there by title, topic, and author. You can find price, publisher and International Standard Book Number (ISBN). Bowker's has a volume on publishers that gives you the address, phone and e-mail so you can order.

Ohio prisons are also hooked into the Inter-Library Loan system. If you want to read something and your prison library doesn't have it, you give the librarian the title, author, and ISBN and if any library in Ohio has it, they'll send it to you to read. Through that process, I've gotten some of the most dangerous weapons known to humanity. More that I can remember.

From Ohio's inter-library loan system I've gotten *Assata*, the autobiography of the BLA's Assata Shakur who escaped from prison and gained political asylum in Cuba; *Quotations* by Mao Ze Dong, one of the most-banned books in the world; *Revolutionary Suicide* by Black Panther Party founder Huey P. Newton, one of the most honest and dangerous weapons ever crafted; *Fugitive Days* by former Weatherman Bill Ayers, detailing his days on the FBI's top ten most wanted list as a member of a domestic guerrilla group who the FBI attributed more than 300 bombings in an 18 month period; *Crazy Horse: Strange Man of the Oglalas* by Mari Sandoz, a biography of the only military strategist to defeat the U.S. military in 3 consecutive engagements; *Ho Chi Minh: A Life*, a biography of the Vietnamese freedom fighter who inspired an agrarian peasant population to wrest their future from the colonial hands of both the French and U.S. occupations; *Autobiography* by Angela Y. Davis, the life story of one of the most brilliant Communist thinkers and political targets in U.S. history; *War of the Flea* by Robert Taber, a comprehensive and theoretical guide for fighting guerrilla warfare; *Guerrilla* by Jon Lee Anderson, giving accounts from life among the guerrilla groups across the globe; and several works by and about the Zapatistas, the guerrilla resistance in southern Mexico that is so dangerous that both Mexico and the United States have an unspoken news black-out so you won't hear about them and get inspired. Some of their work I've gotten includes: *Shadows of Tender Fury* and *Our Word is Our Weapon* by Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos and *The Zapatista Reader* by Tom Hayden (editor).

None of these are books. Old people read books. Books are shit. These are weapons *disguised* as books. These are collections of dangerous ideas that get you dangerous. They can get you free. They can get us *all* free. And I'm not talking about "free on the inside" or "free in your mind." I'm talking about real freedom.



the temporarily-successful coup last year demonstrated, the U.S. will do anything to get Chavez out of power and will recognize anyone else. And they will resort to Nixon-esque dirty tricks to manufacture opposition and discord against the duly-elected leader of Venezuela.

So, all other things being equal, if you had President George W. Bush and President Hugo Chavez as targets on a game show called "Who Wants to Shoot a Tyrant?," and you had to apply the criteria put forward by Crazy Pat Robertson to decide which president really deserved to die, the sad reality is that Hugo Chavez would return to his office with the picture of Che Guevara adorning one wall, and Crazy Pat's good buddy George would be leaving a messy stain on the carpet.

I'm not saying you should shoot George W. Bush; I'm only saying that if you accept Crazy Pat's criteria for assassinating heads of state, Dubya needs to stop, duck, and roll.

So what's the deal with Crazy Pat, anyway? Is he just an idiot who doesn't think about how his comments would really endanger tyrants like his buddy George? No. Crazy Pat is not an idiot. Crazy Pat is a swindling, diabolical, murderous, tyrant-loving, money-grubbing idiot.

As *GQ Magazine* has reported, Crazy Pat slithered his way into mineral rights that someone else already legitimately owned in Liberia. He snaked his way into these mineral rights through dubious dealings with Liberian President Charles Taylor. Chuck, as Crazy Pat might call him, lounges around his office with the dismembered heads of his political opponents decorating his desk top.

Yep, Crazy Pat's head of state business buddies hack off their critics' heads with machetes and then save the heads as decorations in their offices. And Crazy Pat seems okay with this. You can note that there are plenty of documents signed by Charles Taylor and Crazy Pat Robertson that ultimately give the American televangelist and human rights do-gooder a profit of an estimated \$2 billion, while it gives Crazy Pat's machete-wielding golf partner and despot a nice kick-back. With all that money, Charles Taylor could buy some brand new machetes to chop off his opponents' heads, along with a colorful line of bowling bags to store the skulls of those who rub him the wrong way.

Before pointing out the tyrant in Hugo Chavez's eye, Crazy Pat ought to pull the bowling bags out of his own, so to speak.

Crazy Pat makes billions in profits by sacrificing millions of oppressed Liberians to senseless butchery and the rule of fear, then criticizes a Venezuelan president who refuses to sell-out his people and give the U.S. good oil deals and cut Crazy Pat in on the potential profits.

Sure, that's what Jesus would do.

So, while Crazy Pat blusters on about President Hugo Chavez, his own blood money drips from the pockets of much more brutal tyrants, both foreign and domestic. When considering this, I have to think that if I had one good bullet, I could put it to much better use than wasting it on Hugo Chavez.

AT LEAST TWO GOOD BULLETS

I have received more than a little negative feedback from writing *Pat Robertson, Hugo Chavez and One Good Bullet*. When I wrote that, I compared the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela with U.S. Fraudulent George W. Bush and I concluded that according to Pat Robertson's criteria for assassinating heads of state, George W. Bush was far worse than Hugo Chavez. That was my only point. Well, that and Pat Robertson is a nut who conducts business with evil tyrants like Charles Taylor of Liberia.

Unfortunately, like all great thinkers with great thoughts and even some not-so-great thinkers with some okay thoughts, I was vastly misunderstood. Defenders of George W. Bush got out the torches and ropes and prepared the lynching posse, claiming I was trying to argue for the assassination of their beloved tyrant, that I was trying to compose some comprehensive manifesto for a crackpot to justify the killing of our current commander-in-thief.

But this was not the case at all. I was not in any way attempting to write a comprehensive argument to justify the killing of George W. Bush, and I write this current article to demonstrate to those offended by my last one, and especially to demonstrate to the Secret Service, that my intention in my last article was not to set forth the argument to kill George W. Bush.

how things really are and see him for who he really is and realize what's going down. And most importantly, we would know we can do something about it.

The enemy doesn't want us dangerous like that. He lets us have our televisions because you rarely find dangerous ideas there. Mostly mind-candy. The enemy knows that all really dangerous ideas are written down and the next revolution won't be televised, so he gives us idiot boxes and tricks us to keep us from reading. He convinces us when we're young that reading isn't fun, it isn't cool, it takes too much time, it's about as worthwhile as mowing the grass or painting a fence. Our enemy convinces us not to read.

But let me clue you in. There's only one class of people in the world who do not read: Slaves. SLAVES DO NOT READ.

Back in the old days of slavery in the U.S., it was a crime to teach slaves to read. A crime! The slavemaster knew the deal: don't let slaves get access to dangerous ideas or you can't keep them slaves for long. So back then slaves like Frederick Douglass would give *anything* to know how to read. It was a great victory over the slavemaster to gain the ability to read and get access to weapons that liberate your mind first and then your body.

Today, we're worse slaves than Frederick Douglass ever was. The slavemaster keeps us slaves and keeps dangerous weapons out of our hands just by convincing us we don't *want* to read. We're such a joke, he puts the weapons on the shelf right in front of us, puts the keys to our shackles right there in our faces and he knows we won't reach for them. He's gotta be getting a good laugh out of that. And tomorrow we'll all wake up slaves. And the next day. And the next.

The slavemaster, our real enemy, counts on us acting as our own worst enemies. We do his dirty work for him. Imagine this: Some guy next to a dumpster has his eyes closed and his pants around his ankles and he reaches into the dumpster and pulls out the first thing he touches. Maybe a beer bottle. A lamp-stand. Whatever. It's a piece of random junk and whatever he grabs, he shoves it in his ass. Then he reaches into the dumpster, finds another piece of junk, and there it goes.

What would you think if you saw that? Would you think the guy was crazy? Well, imagine that when he finished with that, he took the lid off the garbage can and without even looking, he reached in and scooped up whatever was in the trash and shoved it in his mouth and ate it. What would you think of that?

It isn't normal for people to cram random junk in their asses. It isn't healthy for people to eat things from the trash when they don't even know where it came from. And yet, every single day, people you don't know—people who own everything and want you to own nothing—use your television and various other tools to beam random junk directly into your brain and you don't give it a second thought! They don't put junk in your ass or your mouth. They put it in your mind.

Now, I'm not trying to diminish the importance of your mouth or your ass, but isn't your mind worth something too?

We engage in mental consumption. Like eating. We absorb the stuff we take in with our senses and it becomes part of *who we are*, effecting our thinking patterns and how we see things and our behavior. So the question is, what does your mental diet look like, and who do you let feed you? Your enemy, the ruling elite who own everything, wants to feed you a steady diet of junk, the mental equivalent of snack cakes and potato chips so you stay weak and controlled and mesmerized. Car chases. Babes in bikinis. Shoot-outs. Fight scenes. Explosions. Look at all the pretty colors.

All that almost gets you to forget you're a slave, doesn't it?

Let me repeat: SLAVES DO NOT READ. And that's the reason they remain slaves. So, if you're happy as a slave, lugging stones up the side of another bastard's pyramid, picking some rich fucker's cotton, then spend the few hours you get to yourself flipping through the channels. Your master has some dazzling mind-candy waiting on you. He's ready to beam junk and trash into your head. And tomorrow you'll wake up a slave. And the next day. And the next.

Or, you can get dangerous.

Check this out. When the administration of Richland Corruptional tried to get me sent to the Supermax, the investigator looked me in the eye and told me he thought I was the most dangerous

without. Otherwise put the fucking pen down. We're running out of trees and we have too many writers.

3. Prove you give a shit. That means you have to seek out real writers who give a shit and you have to rob them. The more writers you rob and the more effectively you do it, the better your hackery will be. Rob enough writers and mix their profound ideas and skills together and present all of that in a style that a real writer would use (if you hadn't stolen it from her or him) and you might be able to fool larger and larger numbers of people into thinking that you know how to write.
4. Re-write. Writing the same thing over and over again isn't a chore. It's a luxury. Think about this: If you bake a cake, whatever you did wrong, it's done. There's no re-baking. Bakers don't get do-overs. In most things human make, we're stuck with the final product. Even kids. Look at most of them. Nobody did that on purpose. They just turn out that way. You mix egg and sperm and you get whatever comes rolling down the chute 9 months later. There's no do-over.

But in writing, there is. You can write the same thing a dozen times. Two dozen. A thousand. Whatever it takes. And you know what? The reader reads it for the first time and thinks you just effortlessly puked that masterpiece onto the page, perfect the first time around. People will think you're witty and smart and charming.

I fool people all the time.
5. Seek criticism. If people read your work and they only give you praise, jab them in the eye socket with a pencil. That'll teach them. Even if you miss, they'll get the message: You want criticism, not praise. Fuck praise. People who read my work and don't come up with something bad to say every so often will get scratched off my list. I won't consult them. If I need an ass-licker, I can take a jar of peanut butter to the prison dog program room and let a terrier slurp some Chunky Jiff off of my butt cheeks. I don't need an ass-licker. I need someone who will tell me when my material sucks before the rest of the world finds out.
6. Read your work out-loud. Better yet, have someone else read it for you. You get the chance to listen to the rhythm of it. That's very important because words have a certain flow to them; starts and stops and rhythms where it speeds up and slows down. You have to hear them. And when somebody reads it to you, you can see how the reader processes it. You learn a lot that way.

That's it. If I had to come up with a formula, that's what it would look like. Oh yeah—and fail grandly.

You are enviously and obviously the benefactor of extensive reading, yourself. You must have one helluva library for a prisoner (or a photographic memory!) Please tell your fellow prisoners what the best books you've acquired are, and how they too can access. Be specific and provide contact information.

Books? I'm sorry, Anthony, but I don't think I can do that. Nobody cares about books. Books are the things in school filled up with stale ideas by famous dead guys like Chaucer and Shakespeare and Dickens, and there's no way people can relate to that. Nobody reads that shit.

If it's okay with you, I've got another idea. Instead of talking about books, I can give fellow captives the whole run-down on how to get their hands on some dangerous ideas that will give them power over their own lives and make them a formidable adversary to our common enemy. Like arming themselves with dangerous weapons, weapons that will help them fight for their freedom.

Is that cool?

Again, I'm not talking about books. Fuck books. We're talking about weapons that the enemy doesn't want us to have. And he doesn't want us to have them because we would be armed, we would see

Such a comprehensive argument would necessarily begin by exposing Dubya's illegal machinations before he was appointed Fraudulent. Such an argument, which I never wrote, would point out that after his cocaine-snorting days and after he joined Skull and Bones, a secret Society, he made millions in the oil business without ever striking oil. He simply cashed in on rich and powerful sycophants who bought stock in Arbusto Oil just to get face-time with Dubya's powerful, Iran-gate mastermind of a father.

Then, after receiving inside intelligence from highly classified sources in his dad's administration who saw the satellite photos of Saddam's build-up on the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border, Dubya illegally dumped tons of stock in a company whose main assets were in Kuwait (and were soon to go down the proverbial toilet). Instead of getting up to 5 years in prison for his illegal stock dump, the Securities and Exchange Commission gave him a slap on the wrist. (And all the people who bought his illegally-dumped stock took huge financial losses, just like the little guy in the Enron scandal—Enron, a huge contributor to the Bush campaign.)

But if you read my previous piece, you will find no mention of Dubya's crimes before stealing the presidency, so I was clearly not setting forth the case for killing him. (As a side note, his baseball team was about as pitiful as his oil business that never struck oil, but that argument would only persuade die-hard Texas Rangers fans of Dubya's eligibility for assassination.)

There are lots of things about Dubya's fraudulency that one would have to mention if one wanted to argue for his assassination. You might start with how he used the largest campaign fund ever assembled from unscrupulous corporations, and how he was appointed—despite the vote count—by a supreme court stacked by his own father. Then, you could point out how those same corporations that bought him have actually run the administration, from foreign policy to energy policy to military-industrial contracts to fuel the illegal wars in Afghanistan and Iraq—how the country is run by Halliburton and Enron and other multinational companies.

And think about how much time it would take to go into detail, which I never did. You would have to show how Dick Cheney's firm, Halliburton, wrote internal documents about saving lots of money by building a pipeline across Afghanistan, but only if the political situation stabilized. When you combine that with the fact that none of the 9/11 hijackers were from Afghanistan and the fact that the U.S. originally assembled Al Qaeda as a force to fight the Soviets, and the fact that our military could locate all those abandoned Afghani bases because they were built by the C.I.A. with U.S. tax dollars, and then, when you realize the administration of Hamad Karzai was harvested from lackey managers of corporate oil interests in the region, and you may just conclude that Dubya used star-spangled American soldiers as sandbags for Halliburton's pipeline venture.

Then you turn to Iraq and if you wanted some dirt to add to the argument for Dubya's assassination, well, you hit the jackpot in Iraq. You would point out that Kuwait was part of Iraq until the end of World War II when the allies artificially separated the two countries to gain better oil bargains. And, in recent years, Kuwaiti oil drills were drilling at an angle to steal oil that rightfully belonged to Iraq. So despite all the latter-day propaganda about Saddam Hussein being a tyrant, he had full support of the U.S. before building up and going into Kuwait (when a State Department bureaucrat was asked what the U.S. response would be if Saddam took back Kuwait, the bureaucrat said, "Oh, probably nothing.")

See, you would want to bring all of that up in order to demonstrate that the U.S. response was manufactured, a political ploy that cost the lives of poor Americans. So you'd also want to mention how U.N. Inspector Scott Ritter went straight to the chemical weapons that were still in the crates with the American stamp on the side, that Dubya's claims that Saddam tried to murder his dad was debunked years ago, and that British Intelligence contends that the poison gas used on Kurdish villages originated from Iran, not Iraq. So Dubya has lied all along about Saddam murdering his own people too.

But, just because Saddam didn't murder his own people, that does not mean that Bush did not. In Gulf War I and II the U.S. government used depleted uranium in conventional armaments and had U.S. troops walking around in the radioactive dust, then denied any connection between 'Gulf War

Syndrome' and the radioactivity that the government knows is killing thousands of veterans. If you really wanted Dubya assassinated, you would include this kind of information so all those potential Timothy McVeighs out there dying of leukemia and lymphoma and a host of exotic diseases can still reach out from the trash heap of history where Dubya tossed them and they can still change history. But, since I didn't bring any of that up in my article, I was clearly not arguing for Dubya's assassination.

There were no Iraqis among the hijackers of 9/11. Not one. And there was no connection between Iraq and Al Qaeda, at least not until the U.S. invasion turned Iraq into an open-air free-for-all for terrorists. And Dubya's cronies lied about the weapons of mass destruction too. All of those lies permitted Dubya to make his campaign promise a lie when he said he would not permit 'nation building.' All of these persistent lies were used to prompt popular opinion into the direction that Dubya wanted to go, all for corporate super-profits, all paid for with the carcasses of dead American kids in uniform.

All of that does not even address the environmental degradation, rejection of the Kyoto Treaty, Bush's refusal to even recognize the scientific fact of global warming and o-zone depletion. It does not address his bail-out from the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty or the Non-Proliferation Treaty which, unilaterally, created a domino effects on other nations which have now followed the U.S. into a more nuclear future, re-constituting their nuclear programs—India, Pakistan, Israel, China, and North Korea. Not to mention Dubya's policy of watching sub-Saharan Africa die to boost profits for the pharmaceutical companies that pumped big dollars into his campaign coffers, or the use and manipulation of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to dabble in the domestic politics of Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela, among many others.

If you were really writing something to persuade someone to kill George W. Bush, you would include all of that stuff, and I clearly did not include those compelling arguments when I wrote Pat Robertson, Hugo Chavez, and One Good Bullet. I did not mention how Bush ran up trillions in debt, making the future more dangerous to every facet of life on this planet, doing it for the immediate financial profit of his corporate buddies. So, I do not believe any reasonable person, not even the irrational Secret Service that arrests folks for protesting in this post-PATRIOT Act era of rolled back rights, could get the crazy impression that I was making a case for Bush's assassination. So, for the record, I explicitly and categorically deny, without equivocation, that my previous work was an argument for the assassination of George W. Bush. Besides, the administration of Dick Cheney would be just as bad and anybody contemplating political assassination would need at least 2 good bullets.

GEORGE W. BUSH DOESN'T CARE ABOUT BLACK PEOPLE

How shocking, I thought. Simply shocking.

Kanye West had looked into the camera, live on an NBC Katrina fund-raiser, and said the words, "George W. Bush doesn't care about Black people." West's fellow celeb, Mike Meyers, stared at West as if the performer had just let rip with an obnoxious bean burrito fart, and the vast majority of NBC's audience, suburban white-bread Amerika, mumbled, "What did he say?"

But that isn't what got me to thinking, 'How shocking.' What I found shocking was the number of people who were shocked when Kanye West blurted out the truth. I mean, everybody knows George W. Bush doesn't care about Black people. If Dubya was still drinking, like back in the good ol' days when Texas police could see him regularly swerving down the highway with a roll of dirty oil money in his pocket and a bottle of tequila rolling around on the floor boards, he might just lean on the podium with his snotty half-smirk and say, "Hell no, I don't care about Black people."

But that's if he was honest. Shocking how many people get shocked when somebody tells the truth. Kanye West told the truth.

Voltaire DeCleyre's jewelry and Alexander Berkman's golf clubs and Emma Goldman's pearls. I've even got some of Che Guevara's torn-up khakis in there.

It's a big treasure chest. I do a lot of stealing.

Good writing is a learning process. It takes practice, practice, practice (and persistence!) If there's anything the public school system teaches kids it's to hate writing (and really reading) and that "writers" are full of shit and it's not worth becoming a writer and you couldn't do it (for some reason) anyhow.

Can you give a sort of primer to the up and coming writers—the poets, essayists and ranters who have a natural talent and inclination to express themselves through this marvelous medium?

Yeah, sure. But I don't know how credible I am. I just admitted that I'm a hack and a master thief. But I can give it a shot.

Let me start by separating the writers from everybody else. If you want to be an author, then my advice isn't for you. I've known a few authors in my time. Insufferable people. Couldn't stand them. Can't relate. I'm not an author—never have been, never will be. I'm a writer. Writers write. I don't know what authors do.

Did that clear out half the room? Okay. Check this out: In 1990, when I received my scholarship for writing, the average writer in America made \$500.

Yep. \$500. And that's averaging in the Stephen Kings who make millions. Now, people are reading less than ever in history and publishers are far more selective about publishing new writers, so that has driven down the pay. I suspect the average writer in America doesn't make much more than \$500 a year now.

Okay. Let's narrow it down one more time. If you're in the free world reading this and you take my advice, you'll never get hired by Hallmark or get a contract with Simon & Schuster. Madison Avenue will not knock down your door to throw money at you for your ideas on how to sell diapers. If you follow my advice, you'll be broke, black-balled by major power brokers all over the planet, and you will be frequently monitored by megalomaniacal underling file-flunkies at every Amerikan fascist intelligence agency with an acronym of 3 letters or more.

You can have your very own FBI file, slow mail delivery for no explicable reason, and snaps and crackles on your phone.

If you're in prison, you can expect all of that and frequent trips to the hole along with the occasional ass-kicking.

I suspect that should narrow down the field to only those writers who will let go of the pen when the fascists pull it from their cold, dead fingers. For you, here are some pointers:

1. There are rules of grammar and style and you can buy books from college bookstores that enumerate all of those. None of that applies to you. If you are a decent writer and you have something to say then an editor will earn his/her money for a change and conform what you write to the rules. That's the editor's job. So any time you're seeking writing advice and some moron imparts stale wisdom about rules, rules, rules, smile and nod. If you bought one of those books at the college bookstore, they'll usually buy it back for 80% of what you paid. Take it back. It's fucking useless.
2. Have something to say. I've heard this story about Bob Dylan meeting John Lennon for the first time when the Beatles were still singing sappy love songs. Dylan allegedly told Lennon, "I love your music. Too bad you don't have anything to say." From that day onward, Lennon never wrote sappy love songs again.

Before you let some lumberjack in Washington sacrifice a perfectly good tree for pulp and turn it into paper, make sure you've got something to say. Something meaningful. If you're going to kill perfectly good trees, share something with the world that the world can't do

Soon after we met, we were working together in Catholic Justice Fellowship. The group really served as a front for the 2 of us mobilizing the Ohio Catholic hierarchy in social justice issues—specifically those dealing with criminal justice and prisons. This was in the middle 1990s when the Ohio parole board was handing out what became known as “super flops,” continuances of sentences in the range of 30 and 40 years. Handing them out like candy.

Oles and I had a division of labor of sorts. He networked and wrote all correspondence and arranged the logistical aspects of things—copies and postage—and I wrote all the longer reports and research papers designed to persuade the Ohio Conference of Catholic Bishops to take a stand against the tyrannical State.

It worked. The bishops convened and decided to send a policy advisor to speak before the Ohio Senate. The bishops were in favor of parole reform legislation. And that’s a major coup. Think about this: Over a third of registered voters in Ohio at the time were Catholic, and over half who cast ballots were Catholic. And here the 2 of us, 2 prisoners at Mansfield Correctional, had mobilized the Catholic Church to actually side with us and against the corrections establishment and vocally condemn our treatment.

It didn’t take long before the fascists confiscated the Catholic Justice Fellowship library and files and put both Oles and me on the “hot list,” monitored constantly. Senator Jeff Johnson, the sponsor of the parole reform bill, resigned from the senate amidst scandal over campaign funding and he went to prison soon after. The fascists had to really mobilize in order to defeat what Oles and I had helped set in motion.

But even in failure, I saw what we had accomplished and the power that the 2 of us had channeled. The prison industrial complex had been ambushed and it had trembled for just a moment. I received an invaluable lesson in political action (beyond the uselessness of this particular system); I had learned through the process of action; I had received education that continued my perpetual slide to the radical left; and I had learned valuable lessons in terms of the written word.

Oles showed me the importance of adopting the style and syntax and vocabulary of your target audience. Use the right tools for the job. And in order to do that you have to research your audience. You have to gain intelligence on them. Read what they read. Read what they write. Adopt your arguments to the audience.

Beyond that, I learned discipline. Oles was meticulous and he imposed the same standards on everyone else. Praxis. That was the word he would yell out at least 5 times a day. Praxis. He was up at the crack of dawn and spent his entire day working like he had a gun to his head. He chain-smoked and guzzled coffee and pecked away on a manual typewriter older than he was. If you handed him a finished product and it had typos or errors, he would tell you what a hack you are; nobody will ever take you seriously.

It was all about being effective and getting the job done.

It still is.

Now, beyond those mentors I had in my life directly, there are a number of mentors I have encountered in my reading. And I’m going to confess something here. I hope you aren’t disappointed. But the truth is, I’m really not much of a writer. I’m a fucking hack. I’m a hack and I know it and I fool people into really thinking I have talent. I don’t.

In reality, I’m a master thief of intellectual property. I steal. I steal from every single writer I’ve ever read. I devour books. As a kid, I read Stephen King, an excellent storyteller, and I copied his style, his syntax, his rhythms. I robbed that bastard and left him standing in the middle of the street in his fucking boxer shorts. Then I got on a John Steinbeck kick. Steinbeck is the greatest fiction writer the world ever produced. So I robbed him too. Stole everything, including his crappy wristwatch. I robbed Hemingway and Kurt Vonnegut. Vonnegut was a great heist. I stole everything from him. Cleared out his whole fucking living room. I robbed everybody I ever read.

So, I hope you’ll continue this interview, Anthony. But I have to admit that I’ve pick-pocketed you a few times too. I stole bits and pieces of every single fuck-the-man rant you’ve ever written.. and I’m not returning what I took. I couldn’t, even if I wanted to. I tossed it into the same treasure chest with

It was also shocking how many people you heard *not* talking about Kanye West. Funny how all kinds of people in public forums didn’t say anything at all about him, as if trying to pretend it didn’t happen, nobody heard it. And if you think about it, what could people say? Especially the predominantly-white media?

Then a week later, while visiting mostly Black and mostly poor refugees in Texas, the Fraudulent’s own mom, Barbara Bush, reportedly made some comment like, ‘I hope they don’t decide to stay.’ Yep. There goes the neighborhood.

And if old pasty Barb was honest, she would tell the whole truth. She’d tell you she doesn’t care about Black people either. Her functionally-illiterate son could lean back on his podium and explain, with his snotty half-smirk: “We don’t care about Black people because none of them vote for us anyway.”

The truth is, only four self-hating Black people voted for George W. Bush in the last election: Colin Powell, former Secretary of State and Bush fall-guy for WMD; Condoleezza Rice, current Secretary of State; Clarence Thomas, Supreme Court Justice; and JC Watts, congressman and former college football star. And really, none of them are Black.

See, they are all part of a decades-long FBI secret plot designed to make republicans look less like the hooded figures burning crosses in the yards of Black folks. The FBI selected Powell, Rice, Thomas, and Watts—who were all lily-white at the time—and the FBI began giving them injections of blackness. The idea was to make them appear more and more Black over time, until the transformation was complete and the forces of evil had successfully artificially-created something previously unfathomable: Black republicans.

You might ask, where did they get all this blackness they used to inject into these four white republican infiltrators? The answer is simple. They sucked it out of young Michael Jackson. They stole it from him under hypnosis, a little bit at a time. But they had an accident on one occasion and increased the suction to such a level that Michael’s nose imploded.

And all this time, everybody thought Michael was just a freak who got his skin bleached and his nose tapered, but really the FBI was behind it all. They sucked the blackness out of Michael and left his hair straight, and they injected it into four white republicans who later became Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, Clarence Thomas, and JC Watts, swearing their allegiance to the conservative, reactionary, black-hating agenda of the Bush regime in order to draw a confused minority away from democrats.

So there it is. George W. Bush doesn’t care about Black people. That’s the truth. And you know what’s shocking? That anybody in Amerika didn’t already know it...

GEORGE W. BUSH DOESN'T CARE ABOUT WHITE PEOPLE EITHER

I just finished writing *George W. Bush Doesn't Care About Black People*, and it suddenly dawned on me that I couldn’t just leave it at that. My work might otherwise persuade people that our Fraudulent doesn’t care about Black people because they’re Black, which is not entirely true. I think Dubya, even if for just a few minutes, might be moved to care about Bill Cosby. He might even be able to conjure up a dose of sincerity for Oprah too. At least for as long as they have their check books in hand. Everybody else, get ready to toss your dead children into the sand to protect that pipeline from stray bullets.

That’s what it really boils down to. George doesn’t care about Black people or white people or red people or any people. George cares about money. It just so happens, the money comes to him from the wealthiest one percent of Amerika who gained their wealth from the free labor provided by the slave industry a couple centuries back.

But Dubya isn’t necessarily a racist. He poisons *everybody’s* environment. He’s making the world more dangerous, more nuclear, and we all know fall-out doesn’t discriminate. He’s waging wars and

stirring a hornet's nest, creating the next generation of terrorists who will inevitably fly planes into our kids' buildings, and the flames from the jet fuel will kill people of all ethnicity with an egalitarianism that is certainly lacking in the Bush Whitehouse... although, in fairness, after the planes hit the buildings, the government relief programs will, of course, exclude families of illegal immigrants doing the real work like mopping the floors when disaster struck.

But my point is, when that polar cap melts from global warming caused by George's rich buddies dumping more garbage into the skies, we're all equally fucked in the end. Idiots like Bush hate all people equally.

And look what he did recently to Native Americans. After hundreds of years of struggling to get paid for even a small portion of what was stolen from them, for just a pittance of what they are legally entitled to, a judge got fed-up with government stalling and granted Native Americans their motion for summary judgment. That translates into Native Americans being awarded *billions* of dollars.

But Fraudulent Bush responded that giving just that token of what Native Americans are due would be a 'threat to national security.' Yeah, all of the country would collapse into chaos if we did anything that prevented Native Americans from dying in filth, poverty and hopelessness. So you can bet it will be just as much a danger to national security to find food and water and housing for poor Black people most-devastated by Hurricane Katrina. Even now, Bush is saying that funding will come from cutting "wasteful spending."

Is that the spending that, before the disaster, the government said, "Hey, this is extra, let's just flush it down the toilet to see where it goes..."? I never knew there was such a thing as 'wasteful spending.'

I have an idea that I believe is the only way for poor people to get any real relief assistance from the government. The poor people will have to trick their elected officials into thinking that spending for hurricane relief is really some kind of war spending. See, if the politicians really believe that they are spending money that will get thousands of poor people killed, they will dump *billions* into the plan. Then, you turn around and spend that money to save poor people instead.

Sad, but the government will never purposely spend money to save poor people. And that's probably the best argument for no government at all...

THE MOON?

Beginning with his last State of the Union Address, our first selected Fraudulent, George W. Bush, has made a commitment to increase resources for space exploration, including a return to the moon with a manned space craft. He has made this one of the smaller-noted staples of his re-election campaign.

The moon? Are you kidding me?

For those that remember, President Kennedy made a similar pledge in the early 1960s when the Soviets put Cosmonaut Yuri Gregarin in space. Kennedy saw that the Soviets had far surpassed the U.S. and had challenged them in a race to the moon, much like the 2 neighborhood bullies racing to a street corner to prove their superiority to each other.

But, in the moon race, both countries expended millions upon millions for "global bragging rights" by landing people on a useless chunk of rock in the earth's orbit.

So now, decades after finding nothing of value on the moon, and finding no useful purpose for risking lives to get there, Fraudulent Bush pledges to go there again in a second moon race where the U.S. is the only participant. After wasting billions on military hardware and the vast machinery of death, and after squandering billions on a prison industrial complex that hobbles the poor and ethnic minorities, Bush discovered that a small pittance of public funds had trickled down in public education and housing for the poor, and he could find no better excuse for snatching it all away than to concoct a new scheme for going back to the moon.

Please don't think I oppose science and technology. I'm all for it. I'm not Ted Kaczynski scribbling his ramblings in a small shack loaded with plastic explosives and carpenter's nails. No, I think the government should fund scientific exploration, all for the benefit of humanity and so on, and so on.

I have a TV now. I watch PBS and some of the new movies that come out and the Sunday morning political drivel. I watch very few shows designed for entertainment because my writing and reading time is simply more valuable to me. My parents showed me early on by their priorities that written words held more value than sound-bytes pumped at us through visual media.

In high school, I wrote for the paper and the class instructor, Paul Rogers, was also the owner of the local paper. He hired me to write opinion and editorial (op/ed). He taught me 2 very important things. First, good writing is something to offend everyone. And he would say it just like that, too. Something to offend everyone. He wanted every single reader to get slapped in the face somewhere between the first and last page of every edition or else we didn't do our jobs. The edition was shit.

He provoked me to see that good writing doesn't give people what they want to read. It gives them what they need to read. The very first duty of the writer, particularly from a journalistic standpoint, is to speak truth to power. You speak truth to power at all costs.

Today, all the mainstream media who are supposed to speak the truth are owned by power. They are owned by corporations. Fascists and greed-mongers traditionally do not have the tendency to speak truth to themselves, to toss themselves down the steps to stand naked in front of the people. And that's why every network and every mainstream newspaper supported the illegal invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, and cheered unquestioningly from the sidelines for Operation Iraqi Liberation (OIL). Hitler never had such a shamefully docile and passively-accepting bunch of lackeys and lapdogs cheering him on at the height of the Third Reich. If one of our suck-ass boot-lick media rags actually offered me a job in honesty and sincerity (fat chance), their affirmation of me, their acceptance of me into their fold would make me question seriously just what a worthless sell-out that would mean I had become. That might actually be enough to get me to blow my fuckin' brains out.

The second thing I learned from Paul Rogers was to never accept conventional wisdom. Never. In a debate in journalism class, he brought up Richard Nixon. Like a knee-jerk reaction, I replied, "He was a crook." And Rogers immediately turned on me. He was venomous. What did Nixon do that was crooked? What was Watergate? What did Nixon know about the break-in? And I didn't know. I had only parroted what everyone else always said and Rogers expected more than that from me. A human head might as well be perfectly empty if you only use it for a hat-rack, if you're going to let other people think for you and decide what information means.

After that humiliation, I read every book I could find on Nixon and his presidency. I can now tell you why he was a crook. But more, I can tell you why he was a fascist and a murderer... like all presidents.

The lesson Rogers taught me was clear: If you have nothing to add to the conversation except the platitudes that other idiots have pumped into your skull, then shut the fuck up. If Amerikan mainstream media today put Rogers' lessons to work, most of your magazines and newspapers would feature nothing but blank pages and the evening news wouldn't last 5 minutes.

After Paul Rogers, my next mentor was Dr. Joel Rudinger, my writing instructor in college. He nominated me for a writing scholarship. I used the money to buy a good set of snow tires.

Dr. Rudinger nominated me not because of my successes but because of my failures. I had made a point of breaking the rules when I wrote, doing things that others weren't doing. I didn't write safe. I didn't write about the mundane. I wrote about the things he called, "grand themes." And while I didn't always write about them well and the effect was not always as intended, when I failed, he said, I "failed grandly."

So I learned the importance of breaking the rules and avoiding the mundane. I write something real and I bleed all over the page. Fail grandly—that's my motto.

My next mentor was Oles Cheren and that's where my writing converged with politics for the first time in a really concrete way. Oles was the son of Ukrainian emigrates and he spent some time during the Cold War years working for U.S. intelligence—a publishing house that was a front for the CIA, publishing Russian dissidents and political prisoners. Politically he was somewhere in the range of a Social Democrat.

If left to our own devices, we would create new ways of life for ourselves that work and we would rely on 3 million years of evolutionary experience that we accumulated before this twisted way of doing things came on the scene. In such a world, all our needs would be met. And our needs would be met because we would design a world to meet our needs; we would not design a world made to neglect us. We would have a world based upon giving support and getting support, not one based upon rewards for picking the cotton or dragging the stones.

Anarchism isn't impossible or utopian. Far from it. It isn't perfect. There is still suffering in successful Anarchist cultures and people are still people. People do dumb shit. We always have and we always will; we simply do less dumb shit, we engage in misdirected behaviors a lot less when our human and psychic needs are met and we have fewer drives created by unfulfilled needs.

Die-hard stone-draggers cannot imagine that Anarchism would work and they insist it must be faulty. Instead, they opt for poverty, pollution, drug addiction, child molestation, terrorism, fear, depression, stress, crime, war, disease, genocide, mass-starvation, maldistribution of wealth, medical neglect, and a sense of isolation and a lack of self-worth. For that wonderful package, die-hard stone-draggers spend upwards of 12 hours a day dragging product up the side of somebody else's pyramid.

Yep. They're right. Anarchism couldn't possibly compete with that lovely fucking dream.

I'm a big fan of the powerfully-crafted word—especially the cogent, cutting-edge Anarchist analysis, loaded with awesome quotes and references, tied together as a cohesive whole, brought home with a spine-tingling crescendo! Yes, I like that sort of thing very much!

But what really makes this sink into my developing consciousness is the way it has been conveyed! I feel like I've been taken on a leisurely walk with you, with the express purpose of being so that you could patiently (and lovingly) explain things I really need to know and answering my questions (without even being asked them!) That's what I call, "Carrying the rock!"

How did you get in this position? Who were your mentors?

You know, Anthony, I don't think I can distinguish between the people who had an influence on my living from those who had an influence on my writing—if that makes any sense. I'd say that my Grandmother was my biggest influence on both. She lived with us from the time I was 3. Twelve years, I think.

I told you that as far back as I can remember, I sat at her feet and listened to her stories. I learned how she lived through the Great Depression and how everybody would pool their rationed food and how she met my Grandfather—he died before I was born, but I got to know him through her. He was this gentle soul, this mythological working-class hero who lived for the people in his own humble way. It was in her telling of the stories that Gramma gave me a great gift: Herself. She imparted herself, her history, her story of where she came from and where we all came from. In telling a story, you give of yourself, you transmit part of who you are to someone else. There is no greater act of love.

There is nothing more noble than the storyteller. The storyteller is a living archive who collects everything and then gives it away to everyone. Because of the storyteller, we don't forget who we are. In tribal cultures, the storyteller is a sacred figure.

My Grandmother didn't really die. She simply transferred the valuable pieces to me and made it my duty to pass them on to everyone else. So long as I keep telling the story, in whatever shape it takes, she lives in those words. And she lives in the people who accept them.

Also, growing up, my parents set an example. Both of them read voraciously. They certainly read more in a day than they spent watching TV. I didn't have a television in my bedroom until after I graduated from high school and, really, I didn't care. I never asked for one. It didn't occur to me that I would want a television. For the first 15 years of my prison term, I didn't have a TV. Early on, my parents offered to buy me one, had the money set aside. Instead, I sent them a list of books that came to about the same amount.

The moon? The only way to benefit humanity by going to the moon is if we send Bush, Cheney, Ashcroft, Rumsfeld, and the bozos who funded them.

Instead of racing to the moon, couldn't we race to eradicate homelessness—a race we lost, by the way, to Cuba, that terrible dictatorship where homelessness is zero.

Couldn't we race to provide universal medical care and raise the number of physicians per capita? The country with the most physicians per capita, by the way, is Cuba.

Couldn't we race to increase literacy and school funding, raising the number of teachers and lowering the number of students per classroom? U.S. schools average more than 30 students per classroom while Cuba averages 18. Their literacy rate is higher than ours. Go figure.

Before the U.S. goes back to the moon, couldn't we instead improve our standing in any number of social categories where we lag so far behind the last remaining Communist country in the western hemisphere? This whole go-to-the-moon deal seems like we have given up trying to compete with the Communists on anything that really matters, so now we must prove our superiority with a multi-million dollar interstellar joy ride that might distract the millions of Americans sleeping in their cars and watching the next moon shot in a rent-to-own store window. One more small step for man and all that shit.

If I had my way, I would commemorate the next moon shot by going to the cape and watching it live from a Florida beach. Then, as the spacecraft disappeared from view, I would take off my shoes and socks and push my rubber raft into the water. With any luck, and just the right currents, I would be just hours away from socialized healthcare, substantial education for my kids, and guaranteed housing for all—social benefits Americans can't find on the moon...

AFFIDAVIT REGARDING ASSATA SHAKUR

IN THE COUNTY OF LUCAS)
IN THE STATE OF OHIO)ss
IN THE UNITED STATES)

I, Sean Swain, being duly sworn according to law, hereby depose to state:

In May 2005, the Fox syndicated series, "America's Most Wanted: America Strikes Back," featured the case of Assata Shakur, a.k.a. JoAnne Chesimard, who escaped from federal custody with assistance and fled to Cuba where she requested and received political asylum. The show's commentator and creator, John Walsh, asked for information about Assata Shakur, and I now fashion this affidavit to provide information I believe will be beneficial.

Fred Hampton and others of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense were murdered in cold blood as they slept in a Chicago apartment, murdered by Chicago police. Zayd Shakur, Assata's husband, was murdered by police on the New Jersey turnpike and Assata was shot while her hands were raised, and she managed to survive the assault. She is one of the few who escaped the covert, undeclared dirty war waged by the U.S. government against the Black Panthers, the American Indian Movement, Students for a Democratic Society, and numerous civil rights organizations existing during the Vietnam War era. The U.S. government's illegal campaign of repression has since been well-documented by authors such as Ward Churchill of Colorado University, who sifted the vast amount of papers generated by COINTELPRO (Counter-Intelligence Program) of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Assata was the target of fabricated and exaggerated charges, much like other figures of her era such as Abbie Hoffman, Huey P. Newton, Bobby Seale, Martin Luther King, and former California State Senator Tom Hayden. The U.S. system of injustice was used as a weapon to silence and neutralize political dissent.

If Assata had not escaped custody with help from urban guerrillas of the Weather Underground, and if she had not fled to Cuba, she likely would have met the same fate as George Jackson, murdered by prison officials in a racist system of covert apartheid.

Assata Shakur is an inspiration, a model of courage, character, and integrity who has defied the reactionary forces of corporate dictatorship with her every beautiful breath. Her true crime is withstanding each wicked effort hatched by ruthless fascists. Now, Assata has been used by the spokesperson for those reactionary forces, a man who may have murdered his own son behind a shopping center and chopped off his head, using the unsolved killing as a springboard for a career as a blow-hard poster-child for the pig establishment, a sensationalist apologist for the emerging police state.

I intend to send copies of this affidavit to numerous media sources and a copy to the Cuban Interests Section of the Swiss Embassy in the hopes that my affidavit will be delivered to Assata Shakur and to the Cuban people so that she knows, and they know, that not every captive of the U.S. empire believes the false propaganda disseminated by the lackeys of the imperial grocer's media machinery. I also hope that the government of Cuba will continue to protect Assata Shakur, and will formally request through the United Nations that the U.S. re-open the investigation into the murder of Adam Walsh and charge the primary suspect in the case, his father, John Walsh.

Poder a la gente. Seremos como El Che.

I sign this affidavit without promise of remuneration, without threat, or coercion.

AFFIANT FURTHER SAYETH NAUGHT.

Sean Swain A243-205
Political Prisoner
Toledo Corruptional Institution
P.O. Box 80033
Toledo, Ohio 43608
(419) 726-7977

Sworn and subscribed before me, a notary public, this ____ day of September, 2005.

NOTARY PUBLIC

ON THE TOLEDO RIOT

What could they have been thinking? Toledoans engaged in wanton destruction that stands as a shameful monument to wasted energies. What a disgrace.

It started with the Nazis rolling into Toledo, dead set on zeig-heiling and goose stomping right through the minority neighborhoods with the protection of the Toledo Police Department. So, one group of fascists who admit they're fascists was going to hide behind another group of fascists who pretend they're not.

And you know, nothing can draw an angry mob of poor and exploited people like a gathering gaggle of rightwing crackpots with swastikas and megaphones. As a result, when throngs of pissed-off people showed up, yelling and waving fists, the Nazis bailed out and left the pigs and people behind to sort it out.

When the Nazis left, according to Toledo Police Chief Mike Navarre, the unexplained happened. It was mind-boggling. Cosmic. Enigmatic. For no reason at all—in the thinking of Navarre—the angry crowd turned its hostilities from the departed Nazis and directed it at the cops.

Who'd've thunk it?

Now, I wasn't there. I was locked away in a prison a few blocks away, so I have to go out on a limb here and engage in some wild conjecture in my effort to explain to Pig Chief Navarre why the people turned on them. I'll give five possible reasons in no particular order:

- The pigs had just served as protection for the Nazis. You were working as Adolf Hitler's security detail.

So our other option is to go outside of the rules to get our needs met. But when we do that—if we get caught—we get punished. We get labeled. We get treated as deviants.

Anarchism tells me we are not the problem. Anarchism tells me the problem is that we have rules pushed down on us and those rules are outside of our control and those rules don't permit human beings to live like human beings and to be human beings.

We are circles crammed into square holes. The problem isn't that we are all circles; the problem is that the system is square.

In Anarchism, there are no rules pushed down. There is no one above or below anyone else. No master, no slave. No one drags stones up the side of somebody else's pyramid. There is no compulsion.

Many diehard stone-draggers pose the argument, "Without rules, without government, without force from somebody in control, everyone is going to go crazy and there will be no order—just mayhem and disaster and doomsday." That's what we all think when confronted with Anarchism. Why? Because the guy who owns the pyramid has been working his ass off for ten thousand years telling the same lie, convincing all of us that we need him or the fucking sky would fall.

The sky won't fall. If left to our own devices, none of us will go any crazier than we are right now with this twisted system of things kicking us in the pants and exploiting us. Think of this: We have never needed soldiers or cops to occupy our living rooms to keep order. A traffic cop never had to signal when each of us can get up and get a snack from the refrigerator or mediate disputes among your family members. Families work. *We order ourselves.*

How do we do that? How do we maintain order in the home without jails in the basement or a cop on the sofa or a judge ready to pound his gavel on the kitchen table? We do that the same way we have done it for 3 million years—with our natural inclination for cooperation and social harmony. We're built this way.

And if we can do that in our living rooms—and most of us can—then why can't we expand our living rooms to include the neighborhood? We can make the community a larger family and we can cooperate and engage in mutual aid and social harmony and we don't need the cop or the judge or the jail.

It's simply a matter of re-connecting on a human level and re-organizing without all the bullshit that distorts and separates us and leaves us with holes we can't fill.

The day after the revolution, however it happens, when all the cops and soldiers have become people again and the systems of control have collapsed, the vast majority of people will still stop at the stop sign and look both ways. They won't do it because they're afraid of a ticket; they'll do it because they don't want to get in a wreck.

People won't randomly decide to drive on the other side of the street. People will still do things that make sense.

Consider this: After a hurricane, when there are no governments and there is no capitalism and all the rules of this weirdo world are temporarily suspended—what happens? Well, of course you have what the media calls "looting." When humans do it, it's called looting. When animals do it, it's called "foraging." See, survivors find themselves in a new world where they forage for resources and the best place to forage is where the store used to be. So that's where you forage for toilet paper and hordog buns.

What else happens? Well, people begin to get their lives together. They look to fulfill their basic needs like shelter and first aid and water and food and heat. People with particular skills—carpenters for example—they don't charge anyone by the hour for putting together shelter. Capitalism blew away with the storm. Everyone pitches in and does what each can contribute. People cooperate in building shelters and starting fires and getting clothes and food.

We have 3 million years of programming and experience that tells us our chances are better if we cooperate.

We have a natural inclination to form order, an order that makes sense, that meets our needs. No hierarchy. No money. No one exploiting everybody or forcing hordes of slaves to drag stones up a new pyramid.

When you recognize that at the root of it, this social disorder has stuck its finger in your ass without consulting you and it intends to keep it there, there is no possibility of accommodation or appeasement or compromise. You're dealing with a system inimical to your survival on a human level, one that withholds from you the things you need, just to keep you broken and needy and subservient, and once you see that you realize: One of us has to go. It's better to tear this motherfucker down.

So, by my thinking, a proper and honest application of self-analysis cannot be oriented to keep people from coming back to prison. Self-analysis, as I see it, cannot work as Brother Talib intends it. It can't. Self-analysis reveals the true source of all of our troubles to be the dysfunctional relationship we have with a dysfunctional culture that will not provide for our basic needs—ever. It is a selfish, drunken, abusive parent. It doesn't have any desire nor intention to meet our psychic or emotional needs. You're just not going to get what you need from it. It keeps you around because it is too lazy to get up and switch channels.

So, where does that leave us? As a logical conclusion, all you can do is go beyond this social disorder, transcend it, and find new ways to cultivate other relationships, other methods of living in sustainable and healthy ways that meet your human and emotional needs. You must, for your own mental health, reject the terms set by this pathological culture and make your own terms. You must work effectively in cooperation with others so you can collectively meet your own needs.

And if you do that, if you truly do that, you'll find yourself living outside of the program. Your happiness and well-being will require you to reject rigid structures and hierarchies and systems of exploitation that humiliate and reduce you. In other words, you'll turn your back on the pyramid and tell the slave-driver to hoist his own fucking stones.

And by rejecting the system, you become a threat to it. You become competition, an alternative, the one thing that the fascist pyramid scheme cannot tolerate. The only reason anybody sticks around, the only reason anybody works 12 hours a day and puts up with crime and smog and drug abuse and traffic jams and crumbling schools and tax-hikes and gas prices and threats of terrorism and fear of getting tossed in society's dumpster and the cost of medical neglect is because they don't see any other choice.

People see *no other alternative*.

If you and others have the courage to turn your backs on the pyramid and the fascists who run it and you look to fulfill your real human needs in some alternative manner, *you become an alternative*. So by virtue of being happy in some other way of life, you will become an outlaw and the fascist pig forces will descend upon you. You will be able to gauge how successful your alternative to this madness would have been by how ruthless and violent and deadly the pigs are. If you reject the pyramid scheme that butchered and twisted you since birth, you become a gang or a cult or a terrorist group. The names are interchangeable, really. And the end result is the same: You must be eliminated. You will find your survival is in direct conflict with the fascist response.

So, by my thinking, the proper application of self-analysis brings you to a very different place than Talib Y. Rasheed has you arriving. I don't see someone self-actualizing and emerging from prison as a stock-broker in the suburbs teaching spoiled white kids how to play piano in his or her spare time. I see someone self-actualizing looking more like Che Guevara, encircled by the forces of the status quo, living on water and bombs, defending his or her right to exist with the staccato singing of the machine gun in a haze of sulfur smoke. If someone was so complete that they could exist without being dependent upon the fascist slave-master, that person's life-expectancy just plummeted.

How did George Jackson say it? Oh, yeah: "My pledge is to arms." I like that.

So now, having said all that, it leads me back to Anarchism because—as self-analysis indicates—our needs are not met in the current order of things. This social disorder does not try to meet our needs. It sets the rules and says, "These rules must be followed by everyone," and we find when we follow the rules, we are left unfulfilled. The vast majority of Americans self-report that they are not happy.

If we had power over the rules, over the way things go, we would change them. But we don't. The rules are the rules and they are pushed down on us and we must obey. By obeying, we suffer and we stay unhappy.

- Some of the pigs likely cracked a few skulls in the same neighborhood the night before.
- The other white racists in uniforms and scowling faces had the sense to leave. You didn't.
- The pig presence represented an invasion, a colonization in the miniature. You had no business sticking around after the Nazis left unless you intended to do some pushing around.
- You're the enemy, Mike. That's why you wear flak jackets and carry guns.

From what I can gather by the shoddy news coverage, unarmed people took offense to getting pushed along in their own neighborhood and the pigs fired tear gas at them. I don't know, but I've never seen tear gas canisters make anybody calm and peaceful. Marijuana canisters could have that effect maybe, but tear gas never does.

And I'd like to interject a rather telling detail, if I may, from the riots that began in France a month or two later. The riots in France started as the result of police chasing immigrant children—minority children—who fled, as children do when cops chase them, and the kids got electrocuted when they took a wrong turn and ran into something electrical. Poor people, many of them immigrants, fed up with police harassment, took to the streets. It was all downhill from there.

Does anyone see a common denominator? Chicago, 1968—police attack peaceful protesters outside the Democratic National Convention. Seattle, 1999—police attack World Trade Organization protesters. Over and over, police are the *cause* of civil unrest.

What are police for, again?

And there you have it—tear gas. Pissed-off crowds. Pigs not understanding why the people hate them. It's at that point the mobs burned down a local bar and engaged in some small-scale looting and plundering. As I said before, it was an absolute disgrace. The wanton destruction was shameful. Someone should have had the presence of mind and the courage to stop the crowds from such disorganized and fruitless behavior. Someone with moral influence and integrity should have persuaded these angry people to stop and think. If they had just gotten organized, they could have accomplished some important, *purposeful* destruction.

People got angry and they didn't think. Who are the lawmakers who pander to the wealthy, who maintain the status quo, who leave the poor and marginalized fuming with rage and indignation in poverty, filled with hate at the injustice and inequality? That bar owner? That store owner?

I don't think so. Senator Teresa Fedor lives at 2054 Belvedere in Toledo. Senator Randy Gardner lives at 14900 Mitchell Road in Bowling Green. They both represent portions of Lucas County.

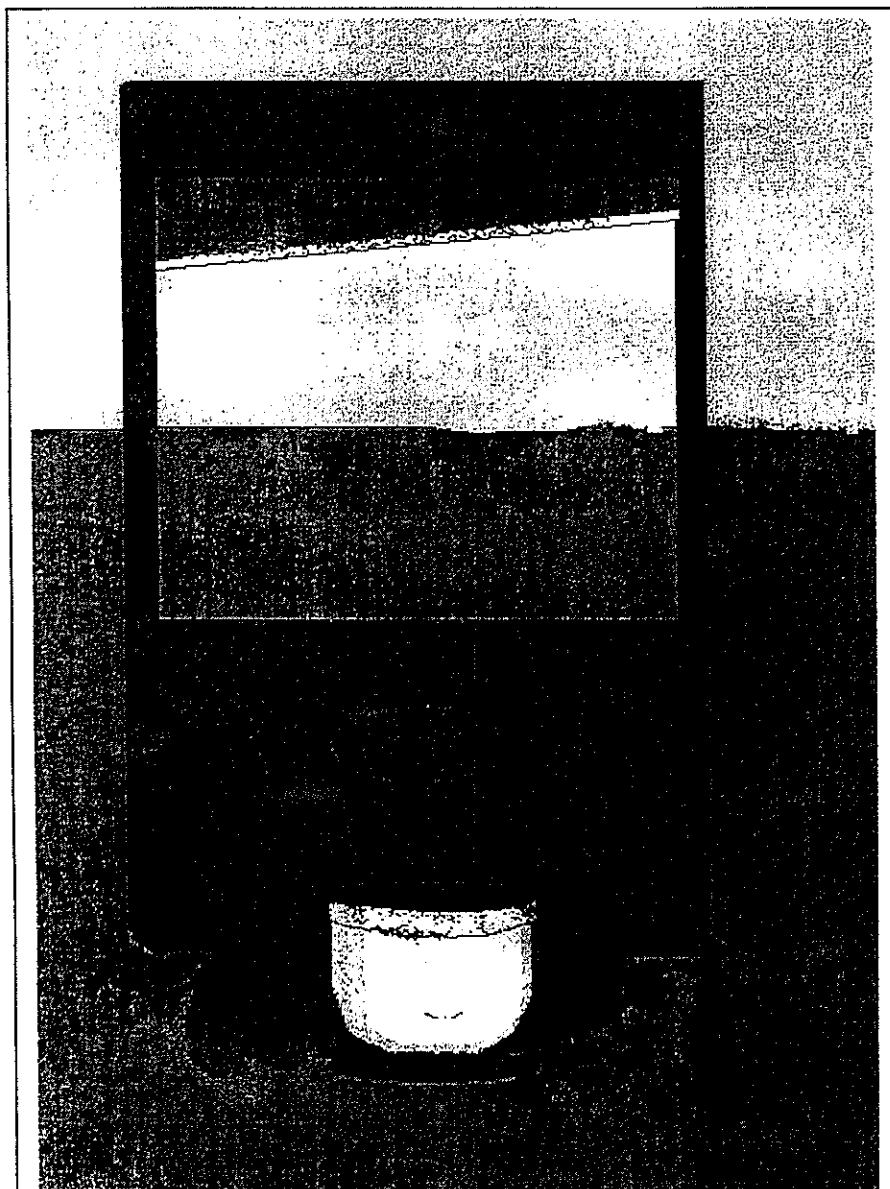
I'm not saying you should go burn down *their* houses. I'm only saying it would make more sense to burn down *their* houses than to burn down a perfectly good bar. Next time, get a highlighter and a map and pack a lunch.

Representative Jeanine Perry lives at 4928 Ottawa River Road in Toledo. Lynn Olman lives at 2922 River Road in Maumee. Those sound like nice neighborhoods. I bet those two have done far more than the owner of that corner store to serve the class enemy keeping you down.

Jack Ford, Mayor of Toledo, lives at 1935 Shenandoah. He's Toledo's first Black mayor. You know what he's done for the poor and marginalized? Me neither.

Kanye West made a good point about the media's role in portraying Black and poor people, and the Toledo riot was a perfect example. The media served to portray the same, tired stereotypes. WVIG Channel 13 is at 4247 Door Street and WNWO Channel 24 is at 300 South Byrne Road, both in Toledo. I'm not saying you should burn those places down or find a way to get inside and take over the broadcast, or trash the cars in the parking lots. All I'm saying is, with gas prices as high as they are, when you've only got one can of it to go along with a book of matches, you've got to think about the best way to use your limited resources. That's all.

And while you're at it, remember that a few centuries back, what started as a minor riot ended in one of the most famous revolutions of all time. The major turning point occurred when the rioters stormed the Bastille, the state prison, and threw open the gates. For future reference, Toledo Correctional is at 2001 East Central Avenue, filled with hundreds of angry bastards. So, the difference between a minor riot and a revolution might just be a few blocks away.



HAPPY BASTILLE DAY!

parents who infused their own fear and self-loathing into us when they shaped us, leaving holes in us, unfulfilled needs. Teachers fill our heads with the same garbage that someone shoveled into theirs and they create who we are, filled with psychic holes. I have to forgive the family and the schools that failed to teach me and the community that didn't love

me and the government that didn't respect me and the economy that didn't need me and the corporations that didn't value me and the empire that didn't consult me.

I don't need to forgive myself; I need to forgive them. I need to forgive everyone who molded and shaped me, impacted me, created who I would become. They are all responsible for my misdevelopment. They are all responsible for the unfulfilled needs that drove me to rob the proverbial gas station.

In this way, I would not be the robber. Really, I would be nothing more than the pistol in the hands of everyone who formed me. I am their product. I came off of the assembly-line with holes in me and nobody gave a shit, nobody noticed, nobody pulled the alarm until their product pulled out the pistol and started waving it around at the Sunoco station. Once the fear and loathing and confusion they've participated in force-feeding me gets me veering off in unpredictable ways, all of a sudden everybody gives a shit.

Seeing the true source of the problem—our social disorder—I'm not inclined to ask for forgiveness. I'm not inclined to forgive myself when my unfulfilled needs originate with so many social forces that created me outside of my direct control. I became exactly what I was made to be. I became what the whole world helped to make of me. And you did too. There's nothing wrong with us. The problem is the culture, the pathological culture, and the degree to which we let this rotten motherfucker seep into us.

And that's where we come to another problem, at least with regard to self-analysis as Brother Talit presents it. This is a kind of fork in the road where I diverge from his application.

To use an analogy, self-analysis tells us we are toxic because we have been poisoned. We have been poisoned on a psychic level, taking in and accumulating toxins. Having been poisoned, we stumble about, not completely under our own control. We engage in toxic behavior. Because we have been poisoned, our behavior reflects the poison we have ingested. So, in order to become healthy again, we must purge the poison from our systems. We must get to the basis of our problem and uproot it and flush it from our systems.

Cool. But *my* question is, who poisoned us? That's the important question, isn't it?

The fact is, we've all been poisoned by kind old Grandmother Culture. That's the real deal. We all sa down at the breakfast table and Grandmother Culture fixed up a batch of her marvelous pancakes and she smiled and told all of us how much she loves us as she dished out the pancakes onto our plates. We all wolfed down her pancakes, not knowing she had poisoned them. She had dumped serious doses of terrible, toxic shit in the pancakes she shoveled onto our plates.

So now we have to go to de-tox. Her poison got us all fucked up and now we have to go to de-tox. That's the way to get ourselves right, to get the poison out of our systems so we can live healthy and clean and happy again.

Now, once we get the poison out of our systems, do you think it's wise for us to go back and sit down at the breakfast table and let kind old Grandmother Culture poison us again? Personally, I don't think that makes any sense.

I cannot go through the arduous and painstaking process of self-analysis and purge myself of all the self-defeating psychological dynamics, all the psychic poisons, brought on by fear and self-loathing and confusion, just so I can return to the same social disorder and the same system of control that fucked me up in the first place. Why would I do that? Just so I can be a better slave dragging more stones up the side of the pyramid for the dirty fuckweasel who capitalizes from me being distorted and deformed by the forces he unleashes on me?

I'm not interested in confronting all of my unfulfilled needs and drives just so I can be a better stone whore for the pimp who owns the Goddamn pyramid. Fuck that.

the need for acceptance by my peers or a need to prove myself powerful in my life—and those unfulfilled needs are pushing me along in life and I do not even know it.

So, at the root of my misdirected behavior, at the root of my robbery of the gas station, let's say, is a real and human need left unfulfilled. If you feel unloved or unwanted or unneeded, if you feel incapable or castrated or you have a low opinion of yourself, then all those unfulfilled needs become drives, and those drives thrust you forward to doing shit that is probably not in your own best interests. You engage in misdirected behaviors.

By the process of self-analysis, we dig down deep to discover those drives and the unfulfilled needs behind them. It is a process of soul-searching and dealing with issues—real issues. The idea is, once you come to grips with what drove you, once you uncover those unfulfilled needs and confront them directly, they no longer push you along to do the crazy shit that got you into trouble. You end up honest with yourself and more in tune with your real human needs and you have the courage and insight to engage in behavior that addresses those needs directly.

I'm cool with all of that. Self-analysis makes sense. But from what I've read of Brother Talib's work, that's pretty much where the process ends. You get yourself right and you get out of prison and you integrate back into the social disorder and strive for the wife and 2.5 kids and the white picket fence and the dog named Spot to fetch your morning paper.

Life is grand.

And that is where I disagree with Brother Talib. I can't roll with that.

Here's the deal: We engage in misdirected behaviors because of unfulfilled needs. So my question, the question that self-analysis doesn't ask is this: Why were those needs unfulfilled in the first place? Why are our basic human, emotional and psychic needs neglected?

The answer is, our culture is all fucked up. We live in a social disorder that doesn't meet our basic psychic needs. It isn't designed to. This social disorder subjects us to exploitation and manipulation and it reduces us to slaves dragging stones up the side of some other bastard's pyramid. This process of inculturating us into slavery infuses us with self-loathing and fear and confusion because those are the tools that keep us under control and dragging the stones.

To his credit, Brother Talib recognizes this in his writings. He does a masterful job describing the inequities and injustices of this whole chaotic swivelization. He makes it clear that this culture makes about as much sense as 3 monkeys fucking a football.

And that is why we all have unfulfilled needs.

Look, if I rob a gas station, self-analysis tells me that the crime didn't start when I pulled out the pistol. But I submit that the crime did not start even with the unfulfilled needs that we discover through self-analysis. I propose that the crime began when society neglected me and neglected my needs and left me no available recourse to have my basic needs met in socially-acceptable ways.

And if that's the case, then we're all abused children of an abusive society, and we must recognize that this pathological culture is *not designed to meet our needs*. It's designed to keep us under control through various and mutually-reinforcing dynamics, controlling us for the benefit of the greedy, ruthless shit who owns the fucking pyramid, not for all of us who are trudging up the side of this motherfucker with stones on our backs. We must recognize that this social disorder *infused* fear and doubt and confusion and self-loathing into us, that it is all part of the process, part of the prearranged program, and this monster doesn't give a shit about our well-being or our emotional and psychic fulfillment or our self-actualization. It cares to the degree that you keep dragging stones. But if you interfere with the program or interrupt the pyramid construction, they have a place for you and they don't give a flying fuck in a rolling donut what it was *they* did to you to get you to glitch in the first place.

So, accepting that reality, I can't get too enthusiastic about this concept of forgiving myself. I was shaped and formed by a social disorder that prefers that I remain afraid, confused, self-loathing and unhappy because I am more predictable and controlled that way. So if I engage in honest self-analysis, I find I have been driven by unfulfilled needs. We all are. And if that's true, no one is a criminal because they failed society. We become criminals because *society* failed *us*. We are all shaped by

I would propose that rioters should take a good hard look at what they did and at what they didn't do. Isn't there a better solution to the grave social problems that have generated such anger and animosity than to direct that anger and energy at destroying your own neighborhood?

I would suggest that the rioters do some honest soul searching. I would suggest that they find some method for creating permanent, radical change. The Nazis have a permit. They're coming back.

The people of Toledo have a chance to get it right this time.

THE PEOPLE IN CONTROL ARE YOUR ENEMIES: A Demonstration to Persuade Young People that the Rich Assholes Who Run Everything Are Full of Shit and Fucking All of Us, So We should Stop Doing What We're Told and Get Dangerous

Introduction

I've written this for high school-aged kids. It occurs to me that writing such a thing, telling them their parents and teachers and culture in general is full of shit—and using words like “fuck” and “shit” quite frequently—may disturb people and they may think this material will corrupt their kids.

I can only hope that it will. Kids today are growing up completely uncorrupted. They go to school and then they get jobs and get married and have kids and pay taxes and die. Some of them get pulled into the Defense Department's Babies for Breakfast Program, and they go to some foreign country and kill poor people they don't know just because some asshole told them to.

We have a whole mindless generation who does what they're told to do by fuckweasels and shitbags who run our government and run giant companies that fuck us every time we turn around.

These kids don't know any better. Nobody taught them how to think. Nobody showed them anything real. So, that's what I'm doing. And I suspect that everything I've written here is so true, so clearly true, that kids will read it and pass it on, and hopefully they'll get plugged in together and they'll have the courage and the sense to take this whole motherfucker down. All of it. The whole big lie.

Death to all authority.

Freedom,

Sean Swain

Political Prisoner

Toledo Corruptional Institution

September 18, 2006

The People in Control are Your Enemies

You've been lied to. Your parents, your teachers, just about everybody you meet—they all take part in it. They buy into the same lies and most people don't even know it, don't even question it. The lie controls them and they pass it on to you and it keeps you from opening your eyes, from seeing the truth.

See, the truth can make you dangerous and the people in control don't want you to be dangerous. They want you to go along with the program, to know your place.

Your enemy, the one keeping you under control, isn't your teacher or your parents. It's higher up than that.

So, how about this. Instead of *telling* you the truth, how about we discover it together? That way you can figure it out yourself. In fact, you already know it. You just don't *know* that you know it.

But if you don't want to figure it out, if you're happy NOT knowing, if you're cool with being kept under control, then stop reading this now.

Okay. Cool. You kept reading. Let's do something fun. Let's pretend that you and I are really, really rich. We have piles and piles of loot. We can do anything we want. In our world, we own almost everything.

But when you look around, you see we've got poor people all around us. They don't have much. Most of them work for us in some way and we pay them as little as we can, that way we can make more money for ourselves. If they live in apartments, they pay us rent. If they buy a house, they get loans from our banks and we soak them on the interest.

Many of them barely get by. Some of them go hungry. And they see how we live. We got piles of money we can never spend. And the poor people, the workers, their stomachs are grumbling and they start getting angry.

So what do you think? We could ignore them, but they outnumber us. There are lots of them and only a few of us. If we aren't careful, they could get together and come take all our shit from us, and they'll leave us with nothing. Then we will be poor and we will have to work for a living and we won't be able to do whatever we want. So what should we do?

Well, we could give some of the money back that we constantly swindle from them and we could be fair and everyone would have enough to eat and they wouldn't be angry anymore. We could. But let's say we don't. We're *greedy* rich people. The worst kind. And if we don't turn our pockets out and give the people fair wages, we'll have to come up with some kind of a plan.

I think we should come up with a thing called "government." Then we can prevent the poor people from taking our shit from us.

Here's how it works. If you look closely, you'll see some of the poor people are pretty smart. They have things figured out. They see that we're doing them dirty and they say the poor should get together and show us who is really boss. Those are the radicals, and since we're rich and greedy, we want to make sure the poor people don't listen to them. So we have to give them someone else to listen to.

So, check it out. You get one of the calmer people and I'll get another one. We'll put money in their pockets so they can run a thing called a "campaign," and then we'll let the poor people choose between your guy and my guy. We'll let them vote and they'll feel like they're in control. We'll call it "democracy" and tell them it's the best form of government. Then, when they choose their leader, it will be your guy or my guy. Either way, the guy making the laws works for us and the poor people will think he works for them. This new lawmaker eats swell, just like we do. And the first thing he does when he takes office, he writes a law: "Don't take the rich people's shit from them because they earned it."

Everybody will think he works for them and he's just doing a lousy job. They'll grumble, but they'll know it's their own fault. After all, they voted for the bum, right?

Now everyone listens to their law makers, their government, and nobody listens to the radicals who see us for the greedy enemy we are. Problem solved. So far, so good.

Now we're rich people and we control the government of everyone and the poor people are under control and they don't know it. The law maker and the judge and the cop all look down at the people and tell them, "We protect you from chaos. You need us." And the poor people believe them and they don't rob us of all of our shit.

But just when we think everything is cool, the law maker comes to us and says he's scared. He's scared because they only have so many cops and laws to keep people under control and the poor people outnumber the cops. And the law maker is nervous and asks us what will happen if the poor people find out he really works for us and he's been fucking them over? They'd likely kill him and rob us of all of our shit.

So again, we have a dilemma. And again, we could give the poor people enough to live pretty well and they would have enough and nobody would rise up and steal all our shit. The problem would be solved. But don't forget, we're greedy. We're greedy and we want to devise some other way to go—one that won't cost us money.

unconscious in my own urine. Staff had carried me to the hole and had used my head as a battering ram to open a steel door. Another time, the warden had ordered me sent to the hole for strictly retaliatory purposes and the pigs ground my face into the floor while I was prone and cuffed. In order to hide me so no one could document the holes in my face, staff had me transferred to the prison system's Residential Treatment Unit—the nuthouse—under the false pretense that I was delusional.

When I reported these abuses to the Corrections Institution Inspection Committee under the direction of Shirley Pope, I was advised to change my attitude. Yes. The oversight committee advised me to play dead in the gorilla's grip and it may not squeeze me so hard.

I *did* change my attitude. From the assault on Dumb Kid Fred and through the Dirty War that the Department of Corruptions had waged against me, I came to recognize that, as a writer, I was limited to effect change. Pens certainly have their place, but I reconcile myself to the use of the pen simply because I cannot get my hands on anything else. Pens alone are quite ineffectual against the giant gorilla squeezing the shit on me. The Dirty War—the prison system's state-sponsored terror and the bureaucrats' complicity and the legislators' apathy transformed me. I am no longer a writer but a revolutionary.

It wasn't the logic of Kropotkin or the rhetoric of DeCleyre that persuaded me along the revolutionary path. For me, the acceptance of revolution as the only recourse came when I recognized how corrupt and useless the entire system is, from top to bottom, from prison guards to governors, the whole machine inimical to my very survival. They are all components of this giant gorilla, and we cannot play dead to get away from it; we cannot simply bite the fingers to get it to release us.

The Dirty War, the state-sponsored terror waged against me, has strengthened my resolve. I don't think friends and family of mine who have not experienced this direct and violent contact with the forces of fascism can understand that I am unable to return to a world of rhododendron bushes and white picket fences. I cannot walk away from this experience and forget; I have a long memory.

This is not a situation that I have created, but one the gorilla has imposed upon me with its insistence of squeezing the shit out of me. It declared war on me in 1991 and has made good on that promise ever since; it shows no signs of relenting. It has proven itself unreasonable and irrational and it has made clear that its existence and my deeper human existence—my life in its fullness—are mutually exclusive. That is, my survival and the gorilla's survival are not compatible.

I have learned from my dealings with this gorilla that I cannot play dead and I cannot simply bite the hand that squeezes me. By process of elimination I have come to one conclusion on how I may survive.

I gotta find a way to kill this motherfucker.

I think Talib Y. Rasheed makes a strongly explicated case that self-analysis is the way to go to attain self-love, self-respect, self-correcting behaviors, etc. We exercise our demons, attain a homeostasis which allows for our intellectual development and our subsequent social usefulness. For, once we "forgive" ourselves and go from there, our natural inclinations of solidarity, mutual aid, free skool education, direct action—our innate basic Anarchist principles—take shape and guide our work. Does this make sense to you?

I like Talib Y. Rasheed's work a great deal. I read the interview you conducted with him ("Each One Teach One"). I know you're a fan of his and you were inspired not just by his concept of self-analysis but also his spiritual ideas—spiritual humanism. And while I see great value in the application of self-analysis, I have serious and grave disagreements with Talib Y. Rasheed in terms of where I see it being applied most effectively.

Check it out. As I get it, self-analysis is a process of getting down to the nuts and bolts of why we do what we do. If, for instance, I robbed a gas station, I didn't do it simply because I needed the cash. Self-analysis accepts that, deep down, I have other needs—emotional and psychological needs, like

other is doing. The courts tell you the corrections system can treat you as it chooses and that is corrections business; the corrections thugs will tell you that the judging and sentencing is between you and the courts and their job is just to hold you here and force you to conform to the rules.

No one takes responsibility for the sum total of the incompetence and neglect and abuse. None of them take responsibility for the failure of the whole grand scheme. And they attempt to prevent you from seeing anyone as responsible too. They all look less evil if you compartmentalize them. But if you recognize the role each of them plays in the larger whole, if you see how each is instrumental in the final outcome, then you see that, together, they all compose one giant monster, a vicious gorilla that's squeezing the shit out of you.

This giant gorilla may have 2 hands and those hands may not know what the other is doing, but one of them is squeezing you at all times. You are getting squeezed and you initially perceive 2 options: The first option is that you can play dead and flop around limp in the gorilla's hand in the hopes that the gorilla will lose interest and set you down and you can run free. That is the option most people take, only to find that it doesn't work. The gorilla is ruthless and continues to squeeze you long after you have stopped resisting and have had the ability to resist subsequently squeezed out of you. The second option that most perceive is that you can bite the hand that squeezes you. And that's where I was at when I was at Richland Correctional. I had gone through the phase of searching for some legal salvation and I had been through the process of legislative reform.

And that's when I witnessed the assault on Dumb Kid Fred.

Fred was a likeable young guy in the same dorm with me. We treated him like a younger brother, most of us. We called him Dumb Kid Fred largely because he didn't like it.

He was laying on his bunk asleep when the pigs came into his living area and shoved him off of his bunk. They slapped him around and shoved him, humiliating him and calling him names like "bitch" and "cocksucker." They cuffed him behind his back and then pulled his arms up, forcing him to walk bent over as they paraded him past all of us. We had to stare on in silence like we were all castrated, paralyzed. We had to watch it happen.

They did that to Fred because he had not gone to work in the gym that morning after a fog alert lifted and no one notified him. The pigs were particularly fat, slovenly, malicious fucks who picked their shots like cowards always do.

Later, Fred came to where I sat typing and he had a complaint in his hand. He asked me to help him. He couldn't hang limp in the gorilla's grip. He had to bite the hand that was squeezing him.

A few days after he filed the complaint, the administration predictably threw Fred in the hole and intended to keep him there until he changed his story. I had copies of everything Fred had written and I recognized what was happening so I contacted senators on the Corrections Institution Inspection Committee. When the smoke cleared, the institutional inspector who had lied to cover up the assault had lost her job.

But, in the process, they had also learned that I was the one who had blown the whistle. I had gotten one of their fascist friends fired. And that's when the Dirty War began.

The Dirty War is an undeclared war like those waged against Colombian union organizers by the Coca Cola company paying thugs to settle problems with bullets. In this case, the prison administration targets specific prisoners and subjects them to all-out assaults from every sector—plausibly-deniable harassment and physical assault and disruption—even torture, in some cases. The fascists unleash their full brutality in a kind of microcosmic COINTELPRO operation with the same kind of intended outcome: tame, train, punish, and destroy.

In my last 9 months at Richland, I spent 6 of it in the hole and suffered separated shoulders and brain concussions. I was harassed by a steady string of nonexistent and fabricated rule violations designed, in part, to malign me and brand me a troublemaker in the eyes of any outside official I may have contacted.

I was transferred to higher security on the basis of my plethora of rule violations and came here to Toledo Correctional where the Dirty War intensified. On one occasion, having been sent to the hole on orders of the warden himself, I ended up in the emergency room after 4 days left naked, laying

So, check it out. I came up with a plan. Tell me what you think of this: We have to get the people to think about some "enemy" that might come over here and take things over. It really doesn't matter if there is one or not. We just need the people to get scared. It doesn't matter that nobody has ever tried to come over here and take our shit from us. What matters is, if the people get scared enough, they'll agree to fork over money to the law maker, to the government, so they can build up what we'll call a "military." The law maker will pay for the military by taxing the poor people and giving us loopholes so it won't end up costing us anything. After all, we're greedy rich people and we won't pay out of our own pocket.

In fact, we can make money because the law maker and the government take in money from the poor and they need to make guns and bullets and bombs, so our companies get gravy contracts to make all of that. We make a business out of arms and technologies to kill people. Turn it into an industry.

Now, once we have a military, the government will have control of a bunch of guys with guns who are trained to follow orders and not question anything or think for themselves. Of course, the law maker will tell the people we need soldiers and sailors and marines to protect us from invasion and that's bullshit, but poor kids will want to prove their patriotism and manhood and all that, and they'll volunteer. We know that this country can't be invaded if we didn't have a military but those stupid poor people don't know it. Everyone in this country owns guns and nobody could come over here and take anything because everyone would fight to defend their own homes and families and nobody wants to have to engage in fighting guerrilla warfare, house to house, and lose their military. Nobody would dare try it. It wouldn't make sense. It isn't worth the losses. But the poor people won't think of that; they'll believe the lies.

Then we'll have the military to keep "order." That means if the poor people get out of line, if they get hungry and forget their place and try to take over anything, we call in the marines and feed those poor folks some bullets for lunch. Plain and simple. If they protest policies like war, we send in the troops and they shoot a few students and take care of the problem.

So what do you think? Will they fall for it? I think they will.

So let's take a look around at the situation. We own the government and the law makers who run it. The laws are all in our favor and keep us on top of the heap. The cops and judges take care of anybody who steps out of line or rocks the boat. And if there are too many of them for the cops to handle, we call in the military—all paid for by the poor people's taxes. All armed with weapons built in our factories at a massive profit.

Now the law maker and the judge and the cop and the marine all look down at the poor people and say, "We protect you. You need us." And the poor people believe them. They don't suspect that the law maker and judge and cop and marine are really there to protect you and me from them.

So, there they are—all these working people working for us and buying and shopping and making us rich. And they believe all the lies and they are under control. Nobody is robbing us of our shit and we don't have to work like everyone else. We eat for free.

But we still have a problem. Kids. Kids are like learning machines and they take in all kinds of information and if you leave them alone, as curious as they are about everything, they may take a close look at the way everything goes and they may see we're full of shit. They may question things. They may see how it operates to keep them slaves. And we can't have that because if the kids realize the whole system is full of shit, then they'll see us as the rich and greedy enemy who control them, and they'll grow up to be adults who won't go along with the system. They'll overthrow it and we'll be screwed.

That's a real problem. So how do we create a system to control what they think?

It would have to be a system that would get them when they are young, before they know too much, that way we can present the information to them in a way that we get them to think what we want them to think. We can fill their heads full of all kinds of shit to convince them the system is their friend.

We'll call it "school." And we'll say that school is important to teach kids what they need to know to be successful in life. And we'll teach them a few things like how to read and mathematics. But that's not really the important thing about it. That's just an excuse to get them together and teach them that government is good and laws are their friends and the rich deserve what they have because the rich worked hard. We'll teach them shit like, "We're all free. This is freedom. Voting is democracy and democracy is freedom and you control your government. And everyone can get rich and it only takes hard work and everyone here gets treated the same." We'll pound it into their heads how they shouldn't rock the boat and get them to hate criminals and anyone who goes against the system and they should always do what they're told. Then they'll grow up and get a job working for us and they'll drag stones up the side of our pyramid and we'll get rich off of them while they struggle along and get nowhere and never figure it out.

Poor people may get confused at times because they think schools are for teaching their kids what they need to be successful and they'll wonder why the schools always fail. The schools don't seem to work. And the poor will be puzzled because they keep spending money and the schools still don't work. Little do they know, the schools are for keeping their kids under control and keeping them from learning the *real* truth, from learning the dangerous truth.

You and I know the schools work perfectly.

And whenever we send the military to slaughter people and enslave them for us so we can make profits, we'll put it in the text book that they defended our wonderful country and our military will always be the good guys. That way the recruiters can go into the schools with their cool uniforms and show the kids action videos of tanks and planes and guns. The recruiters can get them before they really know anything other than what we fed them. Then we'll get these kids to go and kill poor people in other countries and when the smoke clears, you and I can put law makers in office over there. We've spread law and order and democracy and made people free. And really, we got poor kids to toss their arms and legs and eyes and lives down an oil well.

The schools prepare them for participating in the lies we tell the next generation of kids.

So, do you think we have all the bases covered now? The poor are under control and kept from robbing us of our shit. They get told what to think in the schools we set up. They get told what to do by the government we give them. They get moved along by the soldiers and cops who work for us even though they don't know it. Is that everything?

What would happen if just one person started digging into all of this and discovered the truth and was able to write it down and let everybody know? Then our whole gig is up. We're fucked. If just one person goes to a reporter and can lay it all out, we could have a real problem. The poor might get pissed and they'll rise up and try to come after us. So how can we prevent that?

How can we keep the newspapers and the television stations and the publishers and all of the media from blowing the lid off of all of this? Any ideas?

Try this one: Let's take all our money and buy up all the newspapers and television stations and publishers. The ones we can't buy, we'll let the owners in on our plan and they can hang out with us and get rich and keep the poor under control too. And nobody will suspect a thing. They'll believe there's a free press and a free country and that they get told the truth. They won't know that they get told the truth we want them to know. We'll control what they learn in school and what they learn about the world. They'll keep shopping and working for us. They'll be under our control.

So now, we have no problems. Everything is taken care of. We're rich and we own everything and everyone else is enslaved and they don't even know it. They don't have a clue.

But now that we've completed this little exercise and the fun is over, you and I are no longer rich people. You and I are back to being who we were before you read this. You're back to being one of the people kept under control. So I have to ask you this: If we can think this up, what do you think the real greedy rich fuckers are thinking up? Do you think we just came up with something that they can't figure out?

Greedy rich fucks are laughing at you right now.

Wake up. It's time to get dangerous.

him one of the girls' softball teams; who had, behind closed doors, threatened to quit and expose the whole rotten deal if he was even asked politely and quietly to resign?

These are narrow-minded people who would have hated Brenda, a girl from my area, the only Black girl in my neighborhood, a beautiful soul with an easy laugh who, when we were adolescents, had been the first girl with whom I had flung the vast majority of my clothing on the floor.

I resisted the pressures to be something I wasn't. In doing so, I anticipated that I would become a target for everyone. I decided to live with that until the dogs and the birds ate me.

It probably helped a great deal that the clerk had access to my file and found that I had come to prison for stabbing a man to death. In prison, where—at that time, anyway—knives and swords were pretty-easily obtained, being in prison for a stabbing case always seemed to earn you some elbow-room. I would be lying if I said that I haven't taken advantage of that. I certainly have.

However, in the last decade or so, the complexion of the prison population has changed dramatically. No longer filled with dangerous criminals and hardened tough guys, the prison now warehouses tired and broken souls who have smoked their way to three-hots-and-a-cot, a massive influx of people wounded in their ability to recognize what is in their best interests or even to care.

With the flood of serious drug addicts into prisons, shaped by poverty and addiction and desperation, a self-centered, myopic and individualist mindset has destroyed—or at least greatly obstructed—prisoners' collective capacities to gain solidarity and unity in common struggle. And while prisoner-on-prisoner strife has decreased, what has replaced it is a kind of surrender where the population mindlessly bows to the arbitrary whim of the fascist authorities. The whole population has been pacified like defeated Indians on the reservations.

I think maybe we were better off in the days of tension and swords. At least they stood for something. A person willing to fight for the wrong cause can always be persuaded to look up and recognize the true enemy and change his allegiances. A person unwilling to fight for anything has no allegiances.

This, I suspect, is the most daunting task. Before awakening prisoners, they must be persuaded to give a shit about themselves—something that some of us have never done in a concrete way.

I guess the truly driven come to a sort of cosmic crossroads—a life-altering epiphany: We come to a reckoning where we resolve and make an unshakeable promise to ourselves—to become ourselves! Can you tell us about that?

You know, as I think about it in that sense, I think maybe I have had a few of those. Certainly, the awakening I had when I first came to prison, my understanding of my connection to everyone else, that was one of those. But I think maybe each of them, when you string them together and connect the dots, that becomes a kind of steady slide into who we are.

So I see it in those terms too. With the exception of a period of conformity in junior high school and another right after high school where I tried to become what others were imposing upon me to be, I've been in the process of sliding into the me that I'm supposed to become, I think. The archetypal me. We all emerge.

One of my most important epiphanies in sliding into who I am becoming, I think, resulted from the assault on Dumb Kid Fred at Richland Correctional. Just like the previous one provided me a new understanding of my relationship to humanity and to prisoners specifically as a class, the assault on Dumb Kid Fred gave me a new understanding of my relationship with the State.

See, for the first few years of my struggle, my focus was on the courts. Trial, appeal, re-trial, more appeals. My hope, my salvation was in some judicial decree. I didn't see a need to change the circumstances of my imprisonment, only to escape them outright by earning my freedom through some juridical edict. I saw courts and prisons as separate.

The State is very good at provoking "compartmentalized" thinking, the idea that the courts are separate from prisons and they are both separate from schools. One hand does not know what the other is doing, and both hands trick you into thinking that neither of them *should* know what the

Suicide rates have sky-rocketed because we have lost our sense of "we." The prison system has worked all too well at dividing us and isolating us and tricking us into abandoning our sense of collective identity. And they have done it because individuals are so much easier to control. Groups cannot be predicted or as easily bullied. But in the process of making us more docile and passive and easy to control, we have lost our sense of "we" and on our deepest levels we forget that we are not alone. We forget that we all experience the same deprivations, that we are "we." We have lost the sense of our significance, our place in the bigger picture. We have become social creatures who are forcibly alienated from the social aspects of ourselves in fundamental ways.

Under such circumstances, suicide makes perfect sense. In fact, suicide is a rational response. If you have already lost yourself, if you have forgotten who you are and you have no sense of social significance, then you are already dead. You are only waiting for your own carcass to hold still long enough so someone will throw it in a hole and keep the birds and dogs from eating it. So what is the sense in suffering on?

Prison only produces two things: Suicides and revolutionaries. Suicides are those who are told they must comply with the rules and let the State diminish them, make them less, murder them inside-out. This is the prisoner who participates in self-murder even if the body remains alive. On the other hand, the revolutionary is the prisoner who is told to comply with the rules and let the State diminish her or him, make the prisoner less, but the prisoner rejects the terms. The prisoner refuses to engage in self-murder and comes to understand that survival, real survival, demands that we each refuse to be invaded and contained and tamed.

Survival demands that we maintain our autonomy.

Maintaining autonomy in prison, I think, used to be more difficult in many ways than it is now. I remember when I first arrived at my parent institution (Mansfield) from reception, prisoners ran the prison. Prisoners processed paperwork, did everything. Anything you needed done, from a cell move to the purchase of contraband, simply had a price. Back then, the racial divisions were very intense and "gangs" did not exist; prisoners were divided along racial lines into fairly well-armed, hostile factions and the threat of serious violence erupting at any time always lurked and bubbled below the surface. Rape and stabbing happened regularly. The State of Ohio had just begun the process of prosecuting prisoners for the offenses they committed in prison; previously, chopping off another prisoner's head and rolling it down the range as a warning to others might get you a few weeks in the hole, depending upon how well liked the guy was you killed.

My second day at Mansfield, at the ripe old age of 21, I was told that a Black faction was angry because they had intended to claim a young white kid named Donny as their collective sex-toy and they had been thwarted by one of the white gangs who agreed to protect Donny. So, in response, they intended to assault and rape me.

Nothing personal. I was the next white guy to come into the block.

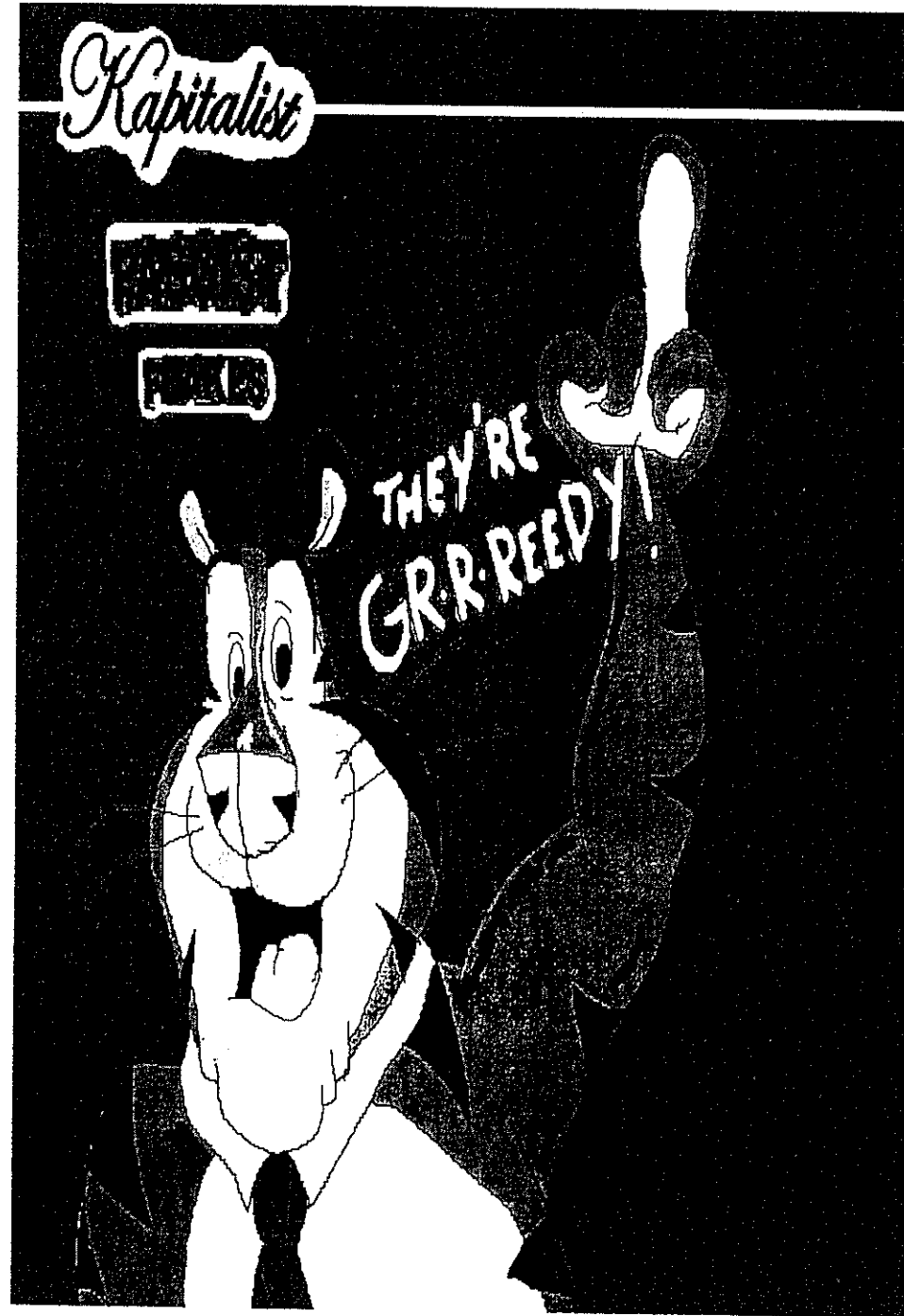
I was told they would try to get me if I left the block and went out to the yard, so the prisoner giving me this heads-up urged me to stay in my cell where I would be safe. I didn't know, but this was a ploy. The plan was to scare me so I would remain in the cell where they would assault and rape me.

They counted on me being afraid and remaining in my cell. They didn't count on me arming myself and heading out to the yard, alone, to face whatever was coming. And that's what I did.

In my absence, they went a few cells down the range and brutally raped a marginally-retarded guy. When they finished, they took a sharpened paintbrush handle and broke it off in his rectum. He left by ambulance and was taken to the hospital where he required surgery.

Even in the face of that racially-motivated violence, I had no desire to join any group. A leader of a white faction approached me and told me, as if imparting some revelation, that I had been their first target. He was shocked when I told him that I knew. He proceeded to ask me why I had not approached him or one of the others to tell them what was going to happen, why I had not requested their help or protection. I told him simply that I handle my own problems.

What would my mom have thought of me joining some racist group like a coward? My mom, who as Little League vice-president had recruited the first Black coach ever in our community and had given



Sean Swain 28
DIG MY GRAVE: INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY ANTHONY
RAYSON

FREEDOM

37

Hey, Brother! Now that I've billed you as the Second Coming (of Spartacus!) good luck on your essay test. (Don't worry, you'll get your crack at me later!) First off, since we don't really know you, let's wash the dishes, put the food in the oven and set the table. How old are you? Where were you born? Any siblings? What was it like coming up? Paint us a picture, please.

Wow! Thanks for that great build-up! Spartacus. Leader of the greatest slave revolt in human history. He turned the slaves of the Roman Empire into an effective fighting force and kicked a big dent in the Empire, hastening its collapse.

Spartacus. And here we are, the largest slave population held by the vast modern empire with international capital at the helm. A ruthless empire. And if all of us just—

Hey, wait. You just gave me an idea, Anthony. But let me answer your questions and I'll get to that.

Your questions:

I was born in Des Moines, Iowa on September 12, 1969—the second day of Abbie Hoffman's testimony in the Chicago Seven Trial. That was the trial of the so-called organizers of the student protest outside the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1968, the protest where unarmed kids were beaten and brained and tear-gassed on live television by brutal thugs in blue uniforms. The whole world watched as peaceful kids opposed to the war got treated by the representatives of law and order as if they were enemies to be eliminated at the end of a billy-club.

So I was born in the middle of the trial of Abbie Hoffman and Bobby Seale and the rest of the protest organizers. By my best guess, I was born right around the time the assistant attorney general asked Abbie if he had planned spontaneous acts of violence (and Abbie answered, "How do you plan 'spontaneous acts of violence'? I don't even know how you would go about doing that.").

That same day, poor kids without the luxury of college deferments and with heads filled with empty slogans participated in the illegal slaughter of the Vietnamese people, fighting and dying for the rich and powerful of an established order that lied to them and used them. Here we are, 37 years later. Nothing's changed except the body count.

I was adopted at birth. I never knew my biological parents. My biological mother was 16 and unmarried and her father was an attorney with political aspirations, so he forced her to give me up for adoption. So, I have two birth certificates; one from my birth with my biological parents' names on it, and the birth certificate that lists my parents—my adoptive parents.

Che Guevara had 2 birth certificates. He was born away from home about 8 months after his parents' wedding and had a birth certificate from that date, and then when his parents returned home, they claimed the baby was just born on the trip and he had a birth certificate for a month later so no one would suspect that his parents had conceived him out of wedlock.

So, Che Guevara had 2 birth certificates. I'm in good company.

I was an only child and it was a damn good thing; I was the busiest kid on the face of the planet. I soaked up everything. And my parents were always really cool about giving me something to wrap my mind around, even if it was a refrigerator box tossed on the living room floor. Do you know how much fun you can have with a refrigerator box and a handful of crayons?

I was fearless in my discovery of the world. Fearless. My mom had to stay within leaping distance of me for the first few years of my life. I was 3 when I jumped on the back of Podunk, my cousin's pony laying in the yard. I kicked him in the ribs and held onto his mane and road him down the side of the road with my mom and aunt chasing behind.

My mom had to stay close to me. I would jump off the monkey-bars head-first. I would climb to the top, turn to the side where my mom wasn't standing, and I'd leap. My mom had to sprint around and catch me before I hit the ground.

I saw myself as a political prisoner. I had arrived at this place of exile as the result of a distinctly political process and I began to piece together how all of the facets of the process of society were interrelated, how they worked by a larger design to control and distract people and maintain the power and prestige into the hands of a limited few.

But even then, I saw myself as different and separate from the criminals around me. I was a victim, while they were volunteers. I didn't belong here. My attorneys would liberate me. I just had to fly under the radar and get along.

I filled a second notebook and a third and a fourth, sending them home to my parents after letting a few prisoners read them. At some point, I made a deeper connection, a very important one.

As I mentioned, I saw myself as a political prisoner. I probably had an easier time than most recognizing the political nature of my captivity because the circumstances of my case were more overtly and conspicuously political. The outrage of my family and friends and the depth of their support for me maybe seemed a little bit more intense, my predicament more unexpectedly simply because I had come from relative privilege, I had come from a different world from those most often cultivated and harvested as fodder for the prison industrial complex.

But I made a deeper, more important connection before I finished my last volume of *Reflections of a Political Prisoner*. But only did I see myself as a political prisoner, but I looked into the faces of the men around me and I saw myself.

They were me. I was no better than any of them, guilty or innocent. They were me. The poor, the uneducated, the hopeless addict, the desperate crack dealer, the molester twisted up at a young age by a predator who robbed him of his childhood and passed along the legacy of abuse, the illiterate who used his fists to solve problems. They were me. Black, Hispanic, Asian, White. They were pounded into the yawning, gaping mouth of the meat-grinder's machine because some ruling elite had decreed that none of them counted. For whatever reason.

The rich and powerful saw us as expendable, maybe even more useful in cages than out. I recognized a collective identity that I shared with the most despised segment of the human population and I fell in love with the wretched of the earth.

Strangely, the day before Andy broke into my apartment, my mom ended her term of jury duty. She had served in a rape and kidnapping trial and even though she believed the defendant had been involved in a crime—that he had solicited a prostitute and he had taken drugs—he had not committed the crimes for which he had been charged. She had persuaded the other jurors to find the man not guilty. Much to my shame, I remember telling her over the phone that she had been irresponsible; the man was a criminal and had committed crimes and deserved to go to prison and they should have found him guilty of something. I recited for her the same kind of mindless, reactionary clap-trap that our twisted culture feeds us.

My mom responded in words I will never forget: "I hope you never have your life in the hands of 12 people who think like you do."

Less than 24 hours after she uttered those words, Andy had broken into my home and my life was altered forever by the very same system that had tricked me so easily into being its cheerleader.

So, not long after my fate had been sealed by 12 people who thought like I did, I no longer thought like me. I recognized a deeper truth, a deeper connection that I shared with an entirely different "we." I discovered me—or, I should say, discovered "we"—in the oddest place.

That connection, the understanding of "we" has been fundamental to my survival.

As I remember these experiences and how they changed me, I think about the record number of suicides that escalate year after year in the Ohio prison system. The fascists have attempted to confront this problem but they remain perplexed and I do not think they understand the real cause of this drastic rise in suicide. They probably think that their suicide video and a minor adjustment in their use of hope as a tool of control—the hope represented by eventual release or the promise of amenities or conveniences—will address the suicide problem. But I don't believe any cynical manipulations of our false sense of hope will make a difference.

away that I didn't belong in prison. Somewhere in the back of my mind it was as if I suspected that this vast mistake could somehow be easily reconciled if only I encountered the right rational state-employee and persuaded them with reason.

Strangely, I still saw the system as legitimate. My experience, I still believed, represented the uncommon mistake. While I did not belong within the realm of cruel and inhuman barbarism, certainly I was surrounded by the worst criminals who had chosen this fate and *they* deserved it. I rationalized the existence of this fascist system even as I experienced it in all of its heartlessness.

There is a fog that settles in on the mind. If you have ever seen the movie, "The Wizard of Oz," the first half is in black and white and the second half is in color. Prison works the opposite. You step out of the free world of vibrant color and into a bleak world of steel and cement—materials that actually leech the heat out of living things—and the color disappears. A fog sets in, a numbing fog that clouds the mind and makes everything less real. Everything in the universe turns varying shades of oatmeal.

During the initial de-humanization, I had the added advantage of military experience. I had endured Basic Training and had worked for a time at a Basic Training unit, so I had experienced and witnessed repeatedly the process of psychological deconstruction. Shaving the head, stripping subjects naked, processing like cattle, removing all things individual. It is part of the control process. It works as designed. Everyone cowers into their proper place. So, as I experienced each imposition, each harsh cruelty, I had the ability to detach myself from the event on a personal level and engage in analysis—what is the purpose of this? What is it they are attempting to create of me? What part does this play in the over-all process?

In that way, I could distance myself from the de-humanization. It didn't wound me, The first days locked into a cell, I remember I paced constantly. I would take the same number of steps from one corner to another and I would move with the same motions as I turned and paced back. The guy locked in the cell with me shared his cigarettes (this is before I quit in order to take away a potential control lever from my enemy). He slept a lot. For about 2 weeks, we left the cell only for meals. We did not receive showers or phone calls.

I paced. Just a few years back, I recall a PBS documentary on animals taken from the wild and placed in zoos. In the course of it they showed a lion who had just come from the wild, and he paced his area, one corner to another, the same movements both ways, same number of steps. He would pace, turn, pace. Even in his head motion—I recognized myself. That was me. The lion was adapting to captivity, his mind turning inward as his body assumed a regular routine.

The lion died. He could not adapt to captivity. He died. I didn't. Humans are the most adaptable creatures on the planet. The most insane and unnatural environments, the most coercive and imposing control systems under the most brutal conditions—we adapt and survive.

I have had people tell me they could never endure captivity or endure the particular tortures I described from my experiences; my response is that everyone can survive it. Everyone. The other option is to sit down on the curb and wait. If you remain there long enough, the birds and the dogs will eat you. The birds and dogs will eat you just like they eventually ate that lion who could not adapt.

The birds and dogs have not eaten me yet. It's a good day. My first time to the commissary, I bought paper and pens and created my own sanctuary. I wrote. In putting my thoughts to the paper, I found myself concretizing my own thinking. From a prison cell, locked down 23 hours a day and with no television, no radio, sharing space with an irrational and marginally-functional crack-user dumped into the prison system only because Ronald Reagan had gutted the psychiatric hospital system, I looked at the world I had previously inhabited, looked out at the systems in which I had played my own role in maintaining, and I tried to make sense of this new experience. When I filled the first notebook I put the title on the cover, one that seemed perfectly natural: *Reflections of a Political Prisoner, Volume 1.*

Just as strange, I always confessed if I did anything wrong. As an only child, I couldn't blame a sibling. So if I colored all over the back of my bedroom door, when I got done I'd head out to the living room and tell my mom. Puzzled, she'd ask me, "Well, you know you're going to get a spanking, right?" And I would reply that I knew but I wanted to get it over with.

I had things to do. I didn't want that shit hanging over my head.

So that's one theme—fearlessness. I was a fearless kid to the point of being an idiot and you cannot control the fearless.

I was sick a lot as a kid, too. My sinus cavities never formed right so I've had sinus problems. When I was between 5 and 8 I had several surgeries. I remember laying on the couch with sinus infections and throwing up so much that blood vessels in my face broke and my face was all bruised up. When I had my tonsils out, the stitches came loose and I started throwing up blood. By the time my mom got me to the hospital, they decided to operate right away. I was wide awake and I remember the doctor had tubes down my throat and made a game of it, telling me to pant like a dog; it was the only way I could breathe.

When a kid fell on me in first grade and broke my collarbone, my mom knew I had a broken bone as soon as she saw me because I was crying. I never cried. If I cried, it was a broken bone.

I've always had a helluva pain threshold. Good thing, too. Considering all that the Nazis have done to me—concussions, separated shoulders, holes ground into my face, record-breaking stints in their torture cells—a decent pain threshold has served me well. But all that comes later.

I didn't watch a lot of TV. But what I did watch was Spiderman and Batman and the Green Hornet. Superheroes. Those kind of shows represent a world of good guys and bad guys, where the good guys are selfless and they care about freedom and they defend everyone from the bully who wants to impose himself on the world and subject everyone to butchered half-lives of misery and exploitation.

You can probably see how that kind of thinking fucked me up for life.

This was during the Cold War. The dichotomy of good guys and bad guys. And of course on the world level, we were the good guys. You didn't even think about it. So that good-guy-bad-guy mentality was fused into us so we'd know how to view the world in simple terms.

I saw a documentary on the Symbionese Liberation Army once and one of the members of the SLA was talking about how he was raised on Robin Hood, the fugitive bandit who robbed from the rich and gave to the poor. And I could identify with him because I was raised on archetypes too. But when you think about that, can you really be surprised when those kids grow up to be Robin Hood? When they kidnap Patty Hearst and force her rich, gluttonous father to deliver \$6 million in food to the Oakland inner-city poor?

Rob from the rich, give to the poor.

I've got a picture of me with Spiderman when I was a kid. I made my mom wait in line for like 4 hours for that. Poor Spiderman—he was just a mall Spiderman. The bastard wanted to take a piss break and eat a sandwich and my mom led a contingent of disgruntled mothers who had waited in line for hours and my mom made it clear that if Spiderman didn't keep snapping pictures, his life would be in danger.

He went behind a propped-up divider wall and pissed into a coffee can and kept snapping pictures.

My mom sewed me a hood and cape so I could be Batman. You should have seen this. It looked like somebody blind had sewn it. To this day, whenever I mention it, my mom laughs. The hood looked like a blue, cloth paper bag with jagged eye holes. The cape wasn't any better. It was awful, just awful. But I was a dumb kid and I loved that hood and cape. So every time my parents had friends over, or had company, I would steal away to my room and pull out my hood and cape and I would leap into the living room with flair, a pair of underwear on the outside of my pants.

I was Batman. I was an idiot. And my parents would have to explain why their weirdo kid had his underwear on the outside of his pants and what that ugly monstrosity was on my head.

So there you have the superhero thing. Add that to the fearlessness and the high pain threshold. But we still have a few more ingredients.

My grandmother lived with the family from the time I was 3. She had a massive heart attack and my dad supported her. Because of her medical costs, my parents couldn't invest in a house so we lived in a trailer park on the far side of a suburban, upscale world in New Baltimore, Michigan.

Gramma was always on my side. No matter what I did, she would always plead my cause and defend me to my mom. She was my television. I would sit at her feet on the foot stool and listen to her stories about everything.

I stuttered growing up. I stuttered and kids made fun of me. Being adopted, my very origins were different than everyone else, but then when I stuttered it made me an object of ridicule. That's part of why I turned to writing, I think. Nobody stutters on paper.

I went to a speech therapist in 2nd grade, I think it was. That worked for me, but I still stutter now if I get tired or if I talk on the phone. Phones are torture for me. I stutter like a buffoon. But even after the speech therapy and I no longer stuttered on a regular basis, even after the kids stopped making fun of me, I was still a stutterer on the inside. I was different on the inside and they weren't making fun of me because they didn't know. That's all. They just didn't know.

So I was militant in my defense of everybody who was different. I didn't permit anyone to get bullied. I made every single cruel kid kick my ass, and that probably contributed to my high pain tolerance.

We got a cat when I was 7 or 8. We found out after a couple of days that it had brain damage because her mom had had distemper. Her name was Casey. When she would run, her back legs would pass up her front. My mom called the pet store and chewed them out and they agreed to take Casey back and we would get a new kitten. But when my mom told me the plan, I asked her what they would do with Casey. My mom suggested that they would try to sell her to someone else. I asked my mom, "What if no one else can love her but we can?"

We kept her.

So you have that strain going through my development too. I identify with the kid being bullied and I am a collector of brain damaged cats because, deep down, I'm kind of a brain damaged cat myself. So you add that visceral kind of aversion to cruelty to the mix of a high pain threshold, fearlessness, and a deep-seated desire to be a super-hero and you're starting to get the ingredients for real trouble. You can see why the fascists have had to kick my ass again and again and I only learn the lesson that they must be defeated because they are evil.

But that's getting ahead of the story a bit.

I was in the cub scouts and my mom was the den mother; I was in Webelos and my dad was the wigwam leader taking us camping and making us survival belts; I played baseball and I pitched. It wasn't that I had talent, but I worked at it. My dad would play catch with me every single day after he worked 8 or 10 hours at Ford.

I remember there was this period of conformity in junior high and into about 10th grade. It was a period of intense suffering for me as I tried to dress and act like everyone else and felt completely out of place. It was about 10th grade I realized I didn't need the approval of anyone else. I didn't need to conform. I knew who I was.

I wrote for the school paper and criticized the school board's inept policies, even going so far as to call them Nazis. I knew that school was only there to keep us from having fun all day. Everything they taught us was bullshit. If I had things to do over, I would drop out of school on my 16th birthday and hitch-hike across the country with everything I owned in a backpack.

But that isn't what I did. Instead, I fucked around and graduated from high school like an idiot.

I had decided some time in high school that I wanted to be a rock star. I couldn't keep telling people that I wanted to be Spiderman. That's only cute up to a certain age, you know. After you're old enough to drive, people expect you to recognize the improbability of becoming Spiderman. Especially if you don't have the ability to climb up the sides of buildings or shoot webs out of your wrists.

The adult world forces all this practicality shit on you.

He then told me that, based upon the potential of public outcry, he was continuing my case for 6 more years. What would the public think if I was released after only—only!—14 years? So, as of now, I see the parole board again in November of 2011. I anticipate that they will give me 5 years at a time until the day I die.

As a manipulation, as a control tool, the fascist State simply breaks it up into bite-sized increments in order to dangle the carrot of hope. They know that hope and fear are the 2 most powerful tools available to them and they use both of them with much greater skill and predictability than any other control system that has existed previously.

Hope is a motherfucker.

I have been formulating a clemency request and I intend to file it even though I anticipate it will be rejected. My strategy, as of now, is to file it again a year later and have the necessary support network to engage a media assault while I begin what would likely prove to be my last hunger-strike. I don't suspect that the threat of my imminent starvation would earn me my freedom, simply because I know the enemy is ruthless. I suspect that I will likely go out like Bobby Sands.²

But I also suspect that, in the process, I will effectively rip the mask off of the face of the State and, dying on the front page of the papers, I'll take the parole board with me.

There comes a time when you recognize objectively that you have gone beyond fighting for your life. You accept that even your life is forfeited. Under such circumstances, you fight with no possibility of victory only because it is better to fight and to die than to live as a slave.

In other words, the State can kill me and likely will; but the State will know I was here.

Now it'll get really interesting! See, I want to make this interview a sort of instructional (mental) video. How did you cope the first few months? Was your family supportive? What are the initial dynamics of struggle? On the one hand, the system tries to break you down into a meek, self-loathing, obedient slave. On the other, prisoners have things in store for you. Meanwhile, you're trying to retain your psychic energy. How did you maintain your autonomy?

Well, let me start with the coping—how I coped the first few months. And you have to remember that I thought my case was an anomaly. Remember where I came from. I was a suburban mall-rat who had bounced from public schools to the military to college—from one lie factory to another. And I had been spoon-fed the idea that our justice system wasn't perfect but (you can probably complete this sentence before I do) "it is the best one we've got."

Everyone says that. Word for word. I swear to the gods some bastard in some office laughs his ass off every single time somebody regurgitates that same-old tired phrase. The best one we've got. Fuck, it's the only one we've got. It isn't like you can go shopping around for a justice system you like. And nobody ever questions it. What? Is the U.S. system better than the French? How does it stack up to the Belgian system? What about the Japanese or the tribal systems of Papua New Guinea? We don't fuckin' know. We're Americans! We don't know shit about any system but our own, and we don't know shit about our own system either except what we're fed on prime-time television dramas.

And yet, we all say that: "It's the best one we've got." Fuck.

So I arrived in prison with my mind perfectly mismanaged. I had been out on bond prior to trial so I didn't even have that long experience of county jail time to ease me into captivity. As the prison lingo goes, I was still "shitting McDonalds." So I felt this inner inclination, as dumb as I was, to perhaps walk up to someone and say something to the effect of, "Excuse me, but I think there's been some sort of a mistake. I'm not really a criminal." As if they would be able to look me up and down and see right

² Bobby Sands was an Irish Republican Army prisoner in Britain who led other IRA prisoners on a hunger-strike at Long Kesh prison, demanding recognition of their political prisoner status. Bobby Sands died after 66 days, one of 11 men to die in succession on that hunger-strike.

Take, for example, the public defender, Erich O'Brien. His office initially botched my case—had represented me for months. *Misrepresented*, actually. Turns out, he was well-rewarded. He won election as a municipal court judge not long after they buried me. His campaign manager had been the former Clerk of Courts, the aunt of the man I killed in self-defense.

How cozy.

Also, in that interim between trial, Diane had lost her mind. Remember that police had pressured her to cooperate and help get me convicted, and she had performed quite well. Sadly, a year after she helped get me convicted of something she knew I didn't do, she dragged a can of gasoline and a book of matches into her mom's house while her mom was sleeping. She lit the house on fire and police found her in a bedroom, stabbing herself in the leg with a steak knife. She was muttering to herself. She later reported that she heard the voice of demons.

Another casualty. I don't know what pressures drove her mad or what role feelings of guilt may have played, if any. The police and courts used her up and spit her out. They had pressured her with threats of taking her kids from her and in the final analysis she lost not only her children but her mind. The system placed her into an asylum like putting a good milking cow out to pasture.

I returned to court with my eyes open, no longer the naïve kid they had railroaded. I gave an interview with the local paper and the media recognized the case was fishy. I was vocal in my assertion that if I received vindication, it would prove what I had been saying all along: the case had been propelled by class and political motives, not by any real or honest belief that I had committed a crime.

See, it's like this. We common, ordinary people are supposed to know our place and go quietly. Most of us do. We get shoveled into a combat zone or we get shoveled into a factory or we get shoveled into prison. We get herded like cows. We're not supposed to make a stink about it.

I refused to go quietly. The prosecutor offered a Voluntary Manslaughter stacked on a Felonious Assault, for an aggregate sentence of 15-40 years. He couldn't go any lower than that because the former Clerk of Courts and her family were really in charge and the prosecutor was simply acting as their proxy.

If I had taken the deal, given the conduct of the parole board, I would likely be home now. I would be free.

I went back to trial. Despite the fact that the appeals court reversed my conviction on the basis of the trial court not permitting my expert witness, the trial court turned around and denied the expert witness again during the re-trial. They had to do that. If they gave me a fair shake and the truth came out, I would go free and likely ruin them. So the re-trial was conducted even more unfairly than the original trial.

After the jury found me guilty and I stood up for sentencing, I made the following statement. I meant it then and I mean it now:

"On April 20th of 1991 I had the best friends, best family in the world, I was the most fortunate man I knew. I did not purposely take anyone else's life. It's been 4 years. I've been in prison and back and I'm going back to prison again. I still have the best friends and family in the world, and I still consider myself the most fortunate man I know."

I appealed the conviction, of course. Inexplicably, the judge who previously wrote the reversal of my conviction was removed from the appellate panel hearing my case. He was replaced by a good friend of the former Clerk of Courts. My appeal was denied. A case identical to mine from the same court, involving the same prosecutor and the same magistrate who engaged in the same conduct as in my case was reversed. Mine wasn't.

I saw the parole board for the first time in August of 2005. Parole Board member Jim Bedra told me sympathetically that, given the circumstances, my case could have easily been viewed as nothing more than a misdemeanor, Negligent Homicide. That charge calls for a sentence of 6 months to a year.

So I gave up the dream of becoming Spiderman (or so I claimed, anyhow) and adopted a more practical dream of becoming a rock star. Being a rock star appealed to me. Hot chicks don't throw their underwear at newspaper columnists.

The day I graduated high school, I had to move to Ohio. My dad's job had transferred to Sandusky. It sucked. I wanted to stay in Michigan where I grew up. I probably should have.

In the fall of 1987, I enrolled in college because neither of my parents had gone to college. It's amazing how kids have to do shit because their parents didn't do it. My parents didn't jump in front of a moving bus, naked as jay-birds, with roman candles shooting out of their asses either, but they weren't pushing me to do *that*.

Jumping in front of a moving bus with a roman candle hanging out of my ass would have made as much sense as enrolling in college. I skipped most of my classes and wrecked my car, running over a mailbox.

It wasn't my fault. I honked.

My parents found the mailbox sticking out of my windshield, discussed it, and decided I needed to go into the service. I could join the Army and learn discipline.

Discipline. That's what the fascists call it when they mangle your mind.

So I watched these fake films they show you in Basic Training about how evil Russians are training 18 hours a day so they can invade our country because they hate freedom, and they plan on killing all of us and raping poor Susie at the malt shop. Democracy and Truth and the American Way were endangered and I was the last line of defense.

So I learned to tear apart a perfectly good rifle.

I went into the Army because I was supposed to. I got married because I was supposed to. After 2 years of trying to conform and be what I was supposed to be, I escaped the service and got out of a marriage firmly convinced that crazy people were running everything.

They were. They still are.

When I was a kid, the evil and diabolical masterminds with plots to take over the world would get foiled by the courageous and selfless superhero who would defend the poor and the helpless. He would keep the greedy, rotten villains from imposing themselves on the lives of the masses, keep them from exploitation and subjugation.

As an adult, I see it doesn't work like that. In real life, the evil and diabolical masterminds, the greedy, rotten villains, they all run the giant corporate machines and the political parties. They get elected to public office. Spiderman isn't there to protect the people, so the people end up electing the dirty bastards who impose exploitation and subjugation on everyone. It leaves everyone begging for the jobs they keep in short supply.

What amazes me is that we have all these guns laying around. Piles and piles of them. It's mind-boggling.

I'm not advocating the violent overthrow of the government or anything. I can't do that. The Smith Act makes that illegal. So that's not what I'm doing. I'm only saying we have all these evil bastards running everything and we have all these unused guns laying around and it's fucking mind-boggling. That's all I'm saying.

OK. I want to get past this part, too. Every prisoner has a story—the how and why they got sucked into these pits. What's yours?

Strangely enough, the story of my imprisonment begins with Al Gore. In fact, whether prisoners know it or not, the story of the imprisonment of a lot of us begins with Al Gore.

Yeah, Al Gore. The academy-award winning hero of the ecological left. Former vice-president. That guy.

The dirty rotten bastard was running for president in 1988. He faced off in the primaries against Michael Dukakis for the democratic nomination and he had no way of winning. Dukakis was a shoe-in. But in a last ditch smear, old Al brought up the specter of Willie Horton.

Horton was a Black man in prison in Dukakis' Commonwealth of Massachusetts who received a furlough and spent a sunny weekend raping and brutalizing a pretty, blonde-haired, blue-eyed young woman while he had her husband duct-taped in the basement. Somehow, Al Gore made it Michael Dukakis' fault.

It was a fear-smear, and a blatantly racist one at that. Al Gore implied, "If you elect Dukakis, he'll be soft on crime and hordes of Black men will invade your homes and rape white women." It was fucking shameful.

Later, in 1988 when Dukakis faced-off against the republican candidate, he was way ahead in every poll. So, the republican decided to resurrect Al Gore's Willie Horton fear-smear. Crime, crime, crime. Fear, fear, fear. That republican candidate, George Bush, unleashed a powerful explosion of reactionary and racist hysteria, winning the election. His come-from-behind win inspired other politicians to jump on the bandwagon and for the next 9 election cycles, weasels in suits fell all over themselves amping-up the tough-on-crime rhetoric, working the public into an irrational frenzy. Fear mongering became more fashionable than... well, the previous round of fear-mongering, I guess.

It all started with the polar-cap poster boy, Al Gore. So, if you ever read this, fuck you Al.

The foundations of the modern system of fascist control and expansion were constructed by the Nazi architects who ushered themselves into power with Al Gore's fear smear so now he's some great messiah because he put together a PowerPoint presentation to expose some miniscule fraction of the crimes and devastation caused by the forces he unleashed in the first place? Fuck Al. Fuck Al *and* his academy award.

So that was the social climate. It was 1991. The Fascist McWorld Disorder was in full-swing at home and abroad.

I was just 21 years old at the time. I had left the military and a marriage because I didn't fit in either of them and I had gone back to college for a semester only to find I didn't fit there either. I didn't know what I believed in but I had managed to cross a few things off the list. I was looking for some kind of direction.

Instead, I found misdirection. Her name was Diane. She had 2 kids and had just left an abusive relationship with the father of her second child. The guy—his name was Andy—had tried to light her on fire on one occasion and kick her down the stairs on another. He beat her while she was pregnant but, being the great guy that he was, he made sure not to punch her in the stomach.

What more could a girl ask for?

And the thing was, neither Diane nor I were too heavily invested in each other. I don't think either of us saw the thing lasting forever. We weren't talking about getting married. But her jealous and abusive ex-boyfriend saw me as an interloper who had stolen his life; I had taken his place in the lives of Diane and the kids. Of course, those jabs to Diane's mouth and eye had nothing to do with her leaving him.

Diane worked as a bill collector for a Sandusky company called Periodical Publishers. Her boss, Jerry Porter, had been engaging in fraud, giving his favorite employee, Fifi, advantages over the other employees; she had won the largest bonuses for months and months in a row as a result. Diane, discovering this (and being angry about coming in second each month as a result of the fraud) enlisted my assistance and I immediately suggested that she call the Teamsters and look into unionizing her workplace.

After a meeting with Teamster representatives, I volunteered to try and get the workers organized. While Periodical Publishers had avoided unionization for decades, just a week after I began my volunteer organizing and handing out leaflets that I had typed myself, a team of company attorneys flew in from the offices in New York to discuss what had to be done about me.

Periodical Publishers was worried about me. I had become a problem. And I didn't know that powerful people in Sandusky didn't appreciate the waves I was making.

On April 20, 1991 Diane's jealous ex-boyfriend Andy kicked in my apartment door in a drunken rage and when he made a move as if to draw a gun, I stabbed him several times in a panic. He later died.

He was the nephew of the Clerk of Courts.

I'll write that one more time: He was the nephew of the Clerk of Courts.

It was a clear case of a guy with a violence problem who had been jealous and making threats and drinking and arguing with Diane over the domestic court hearing scheduled for May 1—less than 2 weeks away. It was a clear case of self-defense. So, the fascists had to do something about that.

Police took photos inside the apartment. They took photos of every room, photos of the blood stain, photos of the kids' toys. All of the pictures were taken by the same investigator with the same camera at the same general time and under the same conditions but the pictures of the door and door frame didn't turn out.

I claimed from the time of the 911 call that there had been a break-in but police had zero pictures of the door and door frame. Further, the door and frame of the apartment were replaced and nobody knew who replaced them. The police claimed there had been no evidence of a break-in.

Police interviewed me 4 times on videotape. They erased 2 of the interviews and claimed I made extravagant admissions, conveniently *not* caught on tape.

A few days after the break-in, police interviewed Diane's mom. During that questioning, Diane's mom made an honest mistake, the kind of thing people do when they're nervous. And I suspect police probably tried to elicit that kind of mistake out of her. It was an innocent mistake, but it made it sound as if Diane had known about the stabbing in advance. As soon as it happened, Diane's mom called me, frantic and crying and kicking herself.

Police then threatened Diane. They told her they would charge her with conspiracy and throw her in prison and take her children away unless she cooperated. Under pressure, Diane quickly began to unravel emotionally. In her own self-interests, she decided to make herself useful to police. In effect, they coerced her services to manufacture a case.

I passed a polygraph test but that was inadmissible. I became the first murder suspect released on \$2,000 since 1929. No shit. And I didn't run. Guilty people run.

But the fix was in. Prosecutor Kevin Baxter at trial brought up my Teamster organizing to paint me as some kind of mafia thug. He brought up the fact that police were called while I was organizing outside of Periodical Publishers; what never came out was that the police were called because management stole some of my papers and the police came and retrieved my stuff for me.

Police were called on *them*, not on *me*.

A parade of Diane's friends came into court, some of whom I barely knew even in passing, and each told a story about some kind of murder plot I had shared—plots I had hatched against other people. People I didn't know at Periodical Publishers were testifying that I had hatched plots to murder other people I didn't know.

Prosecutor Baxter presented 3 neighbor girls that Diane had recruited as eye-witnesses more than a week after the event. Their testimony proved impossible, but that didn't matter; juries believe eye-witnesses even after they are discredited. My attorney sought to introduce the testimony of an expert in human memory and recall to discuss eye-witness testimony. Judge Ann Maschari refused to allow it and undercut my defense.

Did I mention that my jury foreman was one of the managers at Periodical Publishers?

The Clerk of Court's family wanted their pound of flesh. Beyond that, my unionizing activities had hit a sore spot. Sacrificing me to the gods of political expediency would earn both the prosecutor and judge valuable brownie-points in two important spheres.

The jury found me guilty during their 45 minute lunch break. They flushed the rest of my life down the toilet in the amount of time it takes to eat a Big Mac.

Would you like fries with that?

The court assigned me a new, young attorney by the name of Jeff Whitacre to file my appeals and they all wrote me off—the court and the local ruling elite that they served.

Two years later, when the court of appeals reversed my conviction and I returned for a re-trial, you should have seen the looks on their faces. They were pretty mad. And a few of them were cussing their bad luck.