

Rise of the Radical Reporter

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Anarchists have a long and bloody road through human history, filled with broken barricades and squats with busted windows; we fought a war in the 30's, struck fear into governments, and created invisible networks of accomplices across continents. But times have changed, and Anarchists are only now beginning to adapt to a battlefield full of orbiting satellites, fascists blending memes with occult techniques, and a presidential twitter that determines foreign policy.

Take for instance the morning of October 2'nd, where the conservative media began spreading rumors that an "antifa chapter" was responsible for the largest mass shooting in American history.[1] As soon as the attack had been made, indeed before the bullet-ridden corpses began to cool, a constellation of fake facebooks, twitters, and "journalists" began to use the tragedy however they could to frame a simple argument: clearly this shooting at a country music concert is the work of leftist terrorists, and if it isn't they sure do wish it was.

Ridiculous. Stupid. Yet it worked. Paul Joseph Watson, the man who honest to god thinks conservatism is "the new counterculture," was quick to write an article about one individual on twitter who hoped "only Trump supporters got shot." The title? "LEFTISTS CELEBRATE 'WHITE TRUMP SUPPORTERS' BEING KILLED IN LAS VEGAS MASSACRE"[2]. To the thousands of willing, voting, and probably armed Americans it didn't matter that these posts meant literally nothing in the grand scheme of things. They saw a headline that told them Leftists were cruel, evil monsters that wanted them dead. That emotional reaction and mental signature will remain in their head every time they see that word or a person who bears the title. 4chan would join the effort, and exhort channers to "*push the shooter was a commie on all social media.*"[3]

Consider a headline put out by CNN, as Spanish cops who had been seen doing fascist salutes beat elderly people with impunity at the Catalanian vote for independence. Reporters described it as "clashes"[4] between protesters and cops, no doubt hinting to those digesting the story that clearly the two sides had been fighting each other. We don't call the rape of a woman a "clash" between her and the perpetrator, yet in an uneven tone the article hints not to trust our lying eyes; that there must be some reason, some good cause, as to why that policeman in riot gear is throwing an old lady down a flight of stairs.

The list goes on. A nazi rally that beats the piss out of black people is a "peaceful march" while a kicked over trash can is a "dangerous riot." "Good people," versus "sons of bitches."

These headlines and articles all serve an important function: the viewer, seeking to understand what is happening around them, ingests not just a story but the framing and narrative of the story. Even something as bland as the BBC has an agenda, and every time that article is shared or read that agenda flashes in the skull of those ingesting it.

You may not be able to convince people to read the "truth" of your choice, but you sure as shit can get them to read the macabre and horrifying tale of for-profit prisons. And when you slip in lines like this:

"Dehumanization is the point of it all, both for the entrapped and the onlooker. Shrieks ring out from Human Factory Farms, wailing people trapped in cages and gnawing on one another in between working for pennies. Long enough and they become lost, twisted and mangled living corpses who've internalized the system that devoured them. Their cries mix with the howls of cops roaming the streets, rabid bloodhounds hunting for families that escaped the end of slavery only to suffer it again. They kill with impunity and the people are powerless, shielded behind the idea that so much evil is needed. Natural. Always been this way, always had. Humans becoming cattle, individuals becoming dollars."[5]

you can be damn sure the details of your particular ideology, if only for a moment, was successfully ingested and imagined by the reader.

The world is at war. We have the bodies, we are building organizations, and by the gods we are getting militant. What we don't have is an Anarchist press capable of singing their praises, eulogizing their heroes, or pointing out just how goddamn awful the world is their trying to destroy.

We need a new front in the global insurrection. We need Radical Reporters.

The Future Was Yesterday.

The revolution in media has gone largely unnoticed by the average anarchist. The established newshouses, whose words were once believed to be the gold standard for "the truth" are falling apart. The New York Times is renting out floors in a building it can barely afford[6] while Breitbart News, an agency almost 100% online and whose editor actually held office in Trump's White House, reaches millions and was read daily by the president himself[7]; Occupy Democrats, with a reach of 300 million a week, claim they "*want to give people the ammunition to engage in meme warfare*" in an age where 45% of Americans get their news from Facebook[8].

40 years ago what we believed to be true came from someone in an office, at a desk, and with a salary. Now it's whoever has the means, the style, and the time.

Think about that for a moment. I mean really, stop and think about. For the first time the state doesn't have a monopoly on interpreting reality. White Supremacists, rogue Democrats, and Tea Party hopefuls have seized the opportunity by the kidneys and shotgunned their message and their reach.

Where's the Anarchist equivalent?

Presently I'm writing this article from a beat-up leather chair missing an arm, a guest in a local tattoo shop. The artist, bearded and telling us about his hurricane experiences, changes subject and jokes about Special K. I have no degree and am guided by only a crude criminal instinct and books like *Storycraft* by Jack Hart.[9] The field is wide open and the people are hungry. I aim to write, as Novatore described, "*not as a demagogue, but as a inciting element, not as an apostle, but as a living, effective, destructive force...*"[10]

Ole' Bonesy will be spitting venom from the madhouse of Florida until the cops take me or break me. There's no reason you can't either.

I suppose the field isn't completely vacant. We have a few sites discussing Anarchist "news" but it's mostly about what we do rather than the world we're combating; combine that with the acres of treatises on Anarchist sewer systems or idealized societies and you'll quickly realize we're woefully outgunned in an information-equivalent of an Old West shoot out:

The camera zooms in on the white nationalist press, firing shell after shell into the tottering body of mainstream conservatism. A club wielded by a "civic nationalist" smashes his skull and sprays brain-matter everywhere. The nationalist, who claims to not be racist yet sure as hell supports the killing of black people by police, picks up the rifle and begins labeling anything outside Peronism as "liberal" and "for cucks." Across the street establishment Democrats and Huffington Post columnists use flamethrowers to smear anything beyond a "Chelsea Clinton 2020" campaign as "crazy" or "Alt Left." As the camera pans down from the flames we're taken deep into the sewers where spies dressed as fake Antifa accounts throw grenades at anything

sure to cause carnage, gleefully hoping their disguise inspires the troops they themselves cheer for to greater acts of brutality.

Above it all a zeppelin drops bombs of doubt on the idea of climate change, making sure all those fighting below ignore the fact the planet itself will boil them alive.

Magic Words That Bend Reality

Is it any wonder they won't let me so much as sniff around a newspaper office? But that's okay, because I'm not here to sell adspace in the Hometown News or do stories of cat parades and bake sales. If Anarchists are truly prepared for a revolutionary opportunity, if they really want an actual revolution and not activism, they would do well to pay attention to the thousands of American soldiers employed in Psychological Operations, the well-paid journalists capitalists keep on the payroll, or the fact that the forces in Rojava actually have soldiers dedicated to making memes.[11]

Hunter S. Thompson saw much the same purpose in gonzo journalism:

"There are a lot of ways to practice the art of journalism, and one of them is to use your art like a hammer to destroy the right people — who are almost always your enemies, for one reason or another, and who usually deserve to be crippled, because they are wrong. This is a dangerous notion, and very few professional journalists will endorse it — calling it 'vengeful' and 'primitive' and 'perverse' regardless of how often they might do the same thing themselves. 'That kind of stuff is opinion,' they say, 'and the reader is cheated if it's not labelled as opinion.' Well, maybe so. Maybe Tom Paine cheated his readers and Mark Twain was a devious fraud with no morals at all who used journalism for his own foul ends....In my case, using what politely might be called 'advocacy journalism,' I've used reporting as a weapon to affect political situations that bear down on my environment."[12]

Writing, reporting, journalism, all these aren't just "things" but literal weapons we need to employ to ensure the field of affinity expands. Every moment of existence experienced by humanity is being broadcast 24 hours a day on devices most people always have at arm's reach. I want those people to hear about something and reach for an Anarchist experience of it because if it isn't, you can sure as shit bet it's somebody else's.

Journalists determine, in one flick of a keyboard, who the "hero" was, who the "bad guys" are, and what's going on under the surface. They determine whether a riot is seen as the work of "thugs" and "outside agitators" or the justified uprising of an oppressed and exploited people. Describing someone as "idealistic," "level-headed," or "dirty with yellow-stained teeth" will either shut down or build-up an audience even *before they know what was said*.

That's incredible power we can't afford to give away.

Who will take the reins? The enemy? The white nationalists and militant forces of state ideology already lie about us. We are not here to impress or sway the individuals who would spend their free time hunting and persecuting us. But what of the common folk, the ones who gather around water coolers and talk about what they've heard on the news?

"You hear about those kids in California?"

The moustached man shakes his head. *"Yeah, everybody has. So what do you think?"*

"Well," says the reader, pushing her fingers through her hair. *"I think the world's gone nuts."*

"Oh yeah."

"But I can't say these people don't have an argument."

"You too?"

"You've seen the news!"

"Yes! Quiet! Jesus, somebody's going to hear you. I've been reading some of their stuff."

"And?"

"And...well. I.I think they have the right idea. You know my cousin...:"

Whether you're an individualist or socially-oriented such a situation holds extreme opportunity. For the daring a fertile field to swim in, a warm pool of sympathy and resources to further their own madcap existences; for the wider world the probability, on an almost mathematical level, that revolution increases in likelihood.

Where our philosophies may differ the field we wish them to operate in is the same. That's about as much goddamn "left unity" you're going to get in the real world. Why not roll with it?

Journalism doesn't have to be boring, and it doesn't have to be dry. We won't ever get the office or the nice chair so we might as well do things our way. The doors and dreams we were fed as children are closed to us. Do what you can with what you have, and even if you're writing one article a month because you've been worked to the bone you're still doing something. Good reporting doesn't need to be about triangle leads, naked facts, or sentences that sound like two pieces of dried wood rubbing up against each other. It can be fast and loud, big and mean, inspiring and warming and something that sounds like the bright song you've carried in your heart.

What did that sunrise coming over the horizon feel like? What did it *mean*?

What grim horror did you see in her eyes?

When he said he'd "never smelled anything like it" how did his body move?

Is the victim a lifelong gambler or a puritan? Is this unexpected? Par for the course? Why?

Details, life, everything and everything. If we can't get the money and we can barely get the time we can at least put out stories more beautiful, more powerful, and all the more effective than the mainstream media or the psyops officer fresh from vacation.

If we lose, and make no mistake victory is far from assured, these tender and caustic thoughts may be all that's left of us. As the planet changes and capitalism rises into space with machines for every purpose, those left coughing on the global desert will at least leave artifacts for the next civilization after our own.

We tried, reads a broken message on a rusty computer, *and even with the best intentions it wasn't enough. Never take the world that's in your head for the world around you, and for god's sake never put on a uniform!*

So there it is, an open invitation. I'm too deep in a word addiction to ever let go. I'm going to continue to spit and howl at every injustice this world throws in my face as long as I'm wandering about in the World of the Living.

Hope to see you on the road.

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