

Creeker Volume 4

Various Authors

CREEKER

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Glossary note: Some of the language used in the following pieces reflects how the terms were used at Fairy Creek/Ada'itsx and may be confusing to readers from other contexts. For clarification, '**hard block**' means a physical lockdown where someone locks in. '**Soft block**' means debris piled onto the road, usually logs and rocks. '**Blues**' refers to regularly uniformed cops. '**Green guys**' are the paramilitary looking motherfuckers. '**DLT**' stands for Division Liason Team and they are the more casually dressed 'negotiators'.

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A Basic Timeline of the Blockades

In July 2020, road building extends the Reid logging road higher for a future cut block that straddles the north end of Fairy Creek's watershed. In August, a grassroots meeting is called and that same night a hasty blockade is set up near Ridge Camp around contractor machinery. The camp is moved down to Waterfall three weeks later, and then back up to Ridge in September. In the meantime, the River Camp blockade is established on the Granite Mainline to protect the area east of Fairy Creek and there is a pop-up blockade at Truck Road 11. Road building at Caycuse is ongoing with other logging having happened there the previous spring.

Fall finds the camps starting to winterize, Waterfall/Ridge Camps are shut down for the winter due to snow. In November, there is a pop-up on Grierson Main to protect against road building in Camper Creek. In December, Eden Camp blockade is set up and occupied through the winter and there is a pop-up at Bugaboo. In January, Walbran Watch Camp is established to monitor future logging in the area. In February, a new revenue sharing agreement is signed between the BC Govt and the Pacheedaht First Nation band council. The next day, Teal Jones files for an injunction and launches a civil claim against individuals allegedly organizing the blockades. By the end of the month, HQ has been established as a blockade, logistical hub, and an easily accessible arrival point for newcomers.

In the first few days of April, the injunction is granted and days later, the Caycuse blockade is established, and the injunction is first served soon after. By mid-April, RCMP helicopters are flying overhead a few days a week, eventually increasing to 6 or 7 days a week, sometimes reading the injunction on loudspeaker. A few days later, Sassin Camp is established as a watch camp. HQ camp grows substantially. It becomes known that CIRG will be involved in the police enforcement plan and will be showing up in a few weeks, with DLTs making an early visit. People start adopting camp names.

In Early May, loggers physically harass people at Walbran Watch (and other camps). Land defenders voluntarily close that camp down and leave within a week. Enforcement starts at Caycuse in mid-May and a massive police exclusion zone keeps media and witnesses out, though there are 150 people at camp. They also remove treesitters and mass arrest people challenging the exclusion zone. Caycuse lasts for a week before it falls, during this time treesits are established at Heli Camp. Meanwhile, a specialist using ground-penetrating radar makes preliminary findings that the remains of 215 children were buried around the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. This is the first of many such discoveries over the summer throughout Canada.

During late May, cops begin enforcing at Waterfall Camp and the first 2000 Road pop-ups, but for a few days the enforcement convoy alternates between 2000/ Waterfall and Caycuse. The blockade at Caycuse falls before the end of May and the cut blocks are quickly logged, finishing within a few weeks. Police establish a checkpoint ("Access Control Point") on the Braden mainline so that vehicles can no longer get through, and in response the Hayhaka Camp blockade is established as an advanced frontline for Waterfall, Ridge, and 2000. Arrests hit 100. A blockade

camp at Truck Road 11 lasts for a few days. Hayhaka receives enforcement, lasting about 10 days. After Hayhaka falls, Waterfall receives the brunt of enforcement, except when pop-ups at 2000 (and elsewhere) divert police attention. A photo of a massive tree on a logging truck (a “one-log load”) goes viral. Two thousand people show up for a weekend. Waterfall is cleared by the cops but land defenders take it back several times, so cops begin to maintain a 24/7 presence there. RnR Camp is established as a place to rest, away from enforcement. Land defenders start staying at Ridge Camp again now that the snow has melted.

Throughout June and July, numbers and momentum are high, as dozens of new land defenders arrive daily, with the numbers across all camps rising to 500 people most weekends and staying around 200 people during the week. Impressive amounts of donated supplies continuously arrive at HQ and are distributed to the various camps. The BC Govt announces 2-year deferrals for the logging at Ridge and the Walbran. Nightly meetings happen at HQ, breakout groups provision newcomers, and missions head out nightly to Waterfall and pop-ups. In one day, there are pop-ups at Honeymoon Bay, Pacific Marine Highway, and 2000 simultaneously. There are about 7 separate pop-ups at 2000 between Late May and Late June before it is eventually all logged. Pop-ups also happen at the Teal Jones yard in Lake Cowichan, Bugaboo Main, and Camper Creek. Eden Camp is raided hard and cleared out in mid-June and is unable to bounce back. Lockdown devices are constructed both at the blockades and off-site. New hard blocks are built and extracted daily: sleeping dragons, tripods, bipods, monopods, loraxes, cantilevers, trenches, plus people arrange wood and rock into hundreds of different soft blocks. The daytime police convoy grows to its maximum numbers, usually enforcing six days a week, while green guys execute raids and recon daily, often by helicopter. More takebacks of the Waterfall bridge happen, a strategic chokepoint. Meanwhile, treesits at Ridge continue to be occupied by a rotation of tree sitters. During this time, Hawk’s Nest Camp is established to keep an eye on the newly built Mario Trail that links Granite Rd to Waterfall camp, which allows for people and supplies to get in to Waterfall. Land Back camp slowly becomes established throughout June at what becomes known as Land Back Bridge, adjacent to River Camp.

Lytton burns to the ground. There is a fire ban and industry isn’t able to operate, but police still enforce daily and their aggression increases weekly. A supreme court case initiated by media outlets against the RCMP exclusion zones wins and the court orders the police to cease their massive exclusion zones. The police ignore the order entirely.

In August around the one year mark of the blockade, the RCMP suddenly switch from enforcing at Waterfall, which they had been doing for over two months, to starting to enforce at HQ, and simultaneously raiding Heli Camp. Heli is occupied around the clock for weeks by police who have to helicopter in every day. Hawk’s is wiped out by green guy raids. Police destroy HQ and start gaining ground on Granite Main somewhat quickly, despite big pushes and multiple takebacks. During this time, Waterfall still stands, despite raids by green guys and eventually police abandon any presence on that side of the mountain. On the Granite side, River becomes cut off from supplies, Sasquatch Camp is set up for a few weeks on Hemmingsen Main to act as a launch pad for the newly built Marmot Trail to deliver people and supplies to River. The ‘Spicy Saturday’ pepperspray incident happens towards the end of a particularly brutal week of police aggression and violence. Roadside Camp is set up to maintain a presence where Granite meets the highway. Cops destroy River Camp. A rogue helicopter flies in several loads of hard block materials to the blockade. Sasquatch is wiped out after 2 weeks and Hive is established to take its place to continue as a logistical jump-off point. The Johnson Street Bridge in Victoria is

blocked in solidarity, accompanied by an Abolish the Police banner. The Clayoquot arrest record is broken as arrests near 1000. Once the police take Land Back bridge, they control the road all the way to Heli.

Through September, numbers drop. Land defenders decide to have less of a presence on the Granite road itself and more hidden camps near River. The road is still blocked on and off via pop-ups, while loggers are flown in to start cutting at Heli. The Cops-and-Loggers tactic starts at Heli, occasionally preventing helicopters from landing. Logging is often slowed or stopped, but does occur. Near the end of September, the injunction expires and the court does not renew it, leaving a 10 day period where new Granite hard blocks are fortified and other blockades are resurrected, such as Truck Road 11. Police threaten criminal charges in the absence of the injunction. The injunction is then reinstated after 10 days, temporarily at first, but eventually renewed for another full year. Granite is cleared again, Hideand-Go-Creek tactic happens at Heli. Attempts to block the road are ongoing through October, but often fail, though police numbers are down and land defenders occasionally outnumber cops and use this to their advantage. Land Back Bridge is taken back and lost a couple times in November. Sometime in the fall, Sassin is abandoned for the winter. By December, no roads are being blocked at all. Snow has shut down logging at Heli, which is almost entirely logged at this point. The first land defenders up on civil contempt charges go through the court system.

In January, the remaining land defenders consolidate from roadside to RnR to maintain a presence through the winter. There are 3 separate instances of Granite being blocked successfully in April and May 2022 to stop the logs from being trucked out of Heli, with the pop-ups lasting up to a few days. In June, land defenders dismantle RnR and re-occupy Sassin Camp, setting up a camp and hard blocks on the road, lasting most of the month before the cops clear it out in a day. This is the final instance of roads being blocked.

Logging/Road Building Notes and News

The TR11 road building and logging happened throughout 2022 but one of the cut blocks has yet to be logged. Bugaboo road building was done piece meal throughout 2021. Camper Creek logging happens in May, June, and was completed in July 2021. Road building up the “other spur” from river happens piece meal between Nov 2021 and is done by June 2022. Eden has yet to have any of its road building happen. The Sassin cut blocks were logged in Winter/Spring 2023. In June 2023, the deferrals for Ridge Camp at Fairy Creek will expire, though the Walbran deferral has been extended to 2024. New logging is also planned at 2000.

Using the iMap BC Tool to Research Future Logging

On a laptop or desktop, find the government website called “iMap BC”. As of publication, it can currently be found at maps.gov.bc.ca/ess/hm/imap4m

For future logging, click the “I want to...” button and select “Add Provincial Layers”. These are good layers to look at future logging:

- Pending Forest Cut Blocks
- Pending Forest Road Sections -Timber Licence — Pending

These are some other layers that can be useful:

- All Forest Harvest Authorizations
- Active Forest Cut Blocks
- Active Forest Road Sections

You can click the “I want to...” button then select “Change Visible Map Layers” and de-select some layers to reduce visual clutter on the screen.

You can click the “Identify” button and then click any area that has layer data to see info like dates and company names.

You can switch to satellite view, but keep in mind that the imagery might be old, so use apps.sentinel-hub.com/sentinel-playground and find recent cloud-free imagery to see where logging has happened or is ongoing.

New/Old Friends

TR 11

It was a dazzlingly sunny Sunday and we had all just arrived, all of us individually — perfect strangers. We were just learning, but by noon we believed police weren't coming so these 10 like-minded people guided to help protect the forest and everything it means to the world, were given a day under the sun to bask in the natural beauty of the river.

We all connected quickly, by dusk we were old friends. A beach can do that, a sunny day, water crystal clear, and a green forest thriving all around us; TR 11 energy is blissful. Monday was very different.

There's an untold story you won't hear unless you spend time in a blockade: a way people bond together deeply as family. You experience something real when you witness each other's traumas. Masks drop and often you're in a scene where your presence really matters for those around you. You all see each other differently from then on—know each other differently.

That Monday was the first time I saw someone—a friend—endangered without me being able to help because it was by the RCMP. This was the first time I saw enforcement and extraction. I said I would look after their stuff and record their arrest; they felt supported. Their arm was locked into a dragon. Every now and then they would just barely get a glance through the mob of Blues. We'd lock eyes and I'd blast them a thumbs up. Later they told me that meant a lot.

She told me she was really scared; I was scared too. Seeing a dozen unknown men physically handle a friend is gut-churning. Once they extracted her, they cleared the whole camp. When she was released from the station hours later, we hugged. It felt like we hadn't seen each other in ages, like family reuniting; we had just met the day before. I was so emotionally invested in her safety, I felt sick all day and I remember questioning if I was built to handle doing this at all.

Heli/Ridge/Cookie

A friend I've known since high school tells me she'd been following the blockade online and she wanted to meet me there.

Immediately we went on a grueling hike and were tailed by loggers so we headed to Heli Camp to chill and add to its numbers. Neither of us wanted to get arrested but we woke up to an emergency meeting that morning. We were told that Waterfall Camp had been completely cleared out at 5am and police could already be in Ridge Camp — one of the most important camps. It was a lot to process for everyone there. We were sad and anxious and angry, hopeless and desperate. My friend and I volunteered to go first with 4 others, to hike to Ridge with no supplies to get there quickest; only bike locks around our necks so if we saw cops to lock into something — anything. My friend and I were suddenly ready to do anything for the forest and to clear this sickening feeling, direct action is the antidote. It was only her second day at camp.

The frenzy before leaving has always stuck in my memory. People were giving and giving: sustenance and supports. The camp of 20, everyone was talking, scrambling to get us all ready for actions. The feeling was we didn't know what was going to happen. Someone quickly served us breakfast in the palm of our hands, someone gave us drops of nutritional tinctures on our tongues for a boost, and a woman wrote a lawyers # on our arms.

We rush through the ancient forest taking only glimpses at the glorious giants and their gushing ecosystem they've created before arriving at Ridge. It's one of the forests on the chopping block. We get to Ridge and luckily no cops so we head down the road to Cookie Camp. But the plan was the same, police and loggers could arrive anytime so no supplies except bike locks around our neck we had to decide what to do next.

Cookie camp was barely a camp. It was started by 2 land defenders you would call "homeless" in the city, and I guess they don't need much to sleep on a mountain. I think they were just burrito-ing themselves in a tarp next to a fire; bless them!

We became fast friends with the 4 camped there whom we still talk to to this day. After it felt like police weren't coming, our nerves settled and we let ourselves get hungry because sometimes at camp the nerves are too amped-up to let yourself do that. We didn't have much, between the 6 campers we shared a few cans of food and dipped dried apple in Nutella! That was special. The 6 of us shared the only spoon. This was in the height of the lockdown too. I love those people. I felt like a feast. The stressful morning plus comfort food made me crash. The blast-rock started feeling as soft as a bed. I felt so heavy. Before drifting off, I wondered why it had gotten so quiet and looked around and saw that everyone had crashed on the blast rock too!

Cookie camp was cookie because of the giant old growth cut-out someone brought up there. That's how me and my friend showed up there, bike locks around our necks.

We had no supplies because we rushed in with the first wave that morning and survived with donated sleeping bags brought later. The culverts were the most robust structure to sleep in and were surprisingly cozy but energetically a tight metal space was creepy and felt unhealthy somehow. We had chains on our wrists and ready to lock into them at any sign of cops all night long.

It rained hard the next day and there was too many of us under the small tarp. We definitely felt like we were surviving, not camping. We had lots of fun anyway singing that night. The next morning we left and a new friend came with us. We definitely left Cookie Camp better than how we found it, a good habit to have.

This time we took our time walking back through the ancient forest. The lichen, the moss, the trees, the fresh air; incredible.

My friend thanked me for the adventure and she would be a repeat visitor to the blockade all summer, later getting pepper sprayed. Sometimes you can feel time go by if you just stare off, and you can feel how time passing is affecting everything, and how much we are changing every single moment. Even just 2 or 3 days can make us into entirely different people.

2000

This was the first time I defended 2000 road, but I would get kicked out by police and loggers and come back for the next 2 weeks. It felt like a lifetime though there at 2000, a road leading to an ancient forest being logged.

There's a small group of us and 3 locked to the gate. Bless the 2 courageous seniors who put themselves in a friendship bracelet. Through our elders the public sees the sincerity of the people in this movement. They were arrested but not charged.

The woman getting the bike lock cut from her neck is brave. It was dangerous what the police did to cut her out. Sparks were flying by her face.

There's a lot that happened. We were talking to loggers who were surprised to see us there and had to call the police. It's a good feeling to surprise loggers and stop them in their tracks. Though just as we started to listen to each other, a 3rd party hired by Teal Jones came and whispered in their ears and they all turned their backs and walked away. That 3rd party was hired to undermine the movement. He documented me and other forest defenders and told loggers not to talk to us.

A young woman is making a crown as we wait that morning. We're friends to this day, we've both grown so much this summer. After we were kicked out of that spot, we walked back to 2000 at night and were so exhausted we couldn't stop laughing as we lay on the blast road staring up at the stars like we were high.

This is the first time I saw a Tripod: a structure made to perch a volunteer high up on a road to deny passage to logging vehicles. A young land defender was perched at the top, I think he was still in his teens but he was very brave.

We were on so little sleep, we were building most of the night. I arrived late, I walked up the uphill logging road for hours carrying canned food. I learned that night to never ever take canned food again. It's not worth the water weight. Cook your own damn beans! It broke me a bit but when I made it to camp I had great friends chillin under the stars of a clear night to greet me. I laid down beside them, soaked in sweat and my muscles couldn't move. We laughed from exhaustion for hours. It was just what I needed to come back to life.

I had done that walk a couple times so when I left near midnight and on my own, I knew I'd be fine without a head lamp. I followed the treeline etched by the moonlight. I was exhausted in the first 30 minutes and needed to sit my ass right down on the logging road so many times and ate rations I was supposed to be bringing up. A patrolling police car stopped once, I gave him one word answers, then he drove away and that got to me.

I had nothing but time in the black and empty night to think and I was mad being treated as a criminal because there was no reason to. The police had no interest in this obviously distressed person though. It put a bad bitter taste in my mouth realizing the police weren't neutral champions of the law, they were there for other interests.

We'd made hard blocks then dug sleeping-dragons so RCMP needed to be careful not to damage the tripod's legs. Then we hung out while people slept near their hard-blocks. I made a lot of great friends during that action that I'm still friends with today. I wonder where they're all at now. I bet still being badass rad sexy magical forest beings.

I got back to 2000 the next night and the hike itself was more spiteful than the last. We hiked through the bush at night carrying 50 lbs bag of concrete (for building "hard-blocks") a distance that would have normally taken us 30 min on the road took us 2 hours in the bush. All together the 45 minute hike became 4 hours because once out of the bush and on the road, RCMP would drive by and we'd all dive into bushes. I always refused to do so in subsequent missions. It was exhausting and ridiculously dangerous. A woman jumped in the bush and there was nothing on the other side but a 30 feet drop. How did she survive?! I don't know but bless she made it to 2000.

We spent all night building. In the early morning, 4 or 5 am, we finally stopped and gathered around the fire and small tarp. I remember it was raining lightly and there wasn't enough space around the fire to lay down to sleep so I slumped over, legs crossed, and rested my eyes. I wasn't getting along with people there, because of that hike I was in a terrible mood. We were all such a wild mix of people too; all misfits but all different kinds of misfits and degenerates huddling under one tarp.

But we shared what little food we had, we shared the cold and wet misery, we shared the exhaustions, fears, and frustrations, then everything that came out of our mouths was hilarious like we had all become the world's best comedian — we all couldn't stop laughing. It was extreme exhaustion and we were loopy. It was a bonding moment, and thanks to the light hearted opportunity to connect, my judgments flipped and instead began to love and appreciate them dearly. I'm still carrying our friendships in my heart.

Also 2000

Another day, another hike back to 2000; we overheard loggers say on the radio this spot was essential which explained why police, their cranes, their tactical units, and their authoritarian approach showed up there every morning. So, again, we built all night, the rebel forest defenders. We weren't leaving willingly. The mix of teenagers or professionals, behind our masks we were the same demographic, not many, and the differentiations were set by what we individually did to protect our ancient relatives. Some of us climbed on tripods, one young woman locked herself by the neck to protect its base. This was incredibly dangerous because if the tripod fell, her neck would go with it. This is the level of conviction but also trust in each other: we trusted each other with our lives.

We had a crew of 30 or so people come in at midnight. One team built a horse-like hard-block for one person to lock his arms into. Myself and 5 others built an elaborate dual-bipod. The horse didn't last, neither did my bipods... They figured them out so fast it made my stomach hurt thinking of the effort they took to build. I only had 20 minutes to rest before industry arrived.

RCMP pushed the fella riding the horse to one side exposing his wrist then easily cutting the chain. He was borderline depressed by how little he stalled them. I remember back at HQ I hugged him after telling him he did his best, truly. I remember he had a glint of a tear in his eye; we all cared so deeply, it crushed us when we were ineffective. The thought that industry was on that road freely just made me angry. Frontline work this summer was a rollercoaster of comradery, creativity, and reoccurring spectrums of anger.

We tried to learn from our mistakes but people came and went so randomly. We'll be back with experience, more cameras and a sense of family as we return. Because the forest, our mother, is still calling for help. And the world has yet to remember what none of us forgot.

Still Here

Editor's Note: This story takes place in August 2021 when the cops had suddenly stopped their months-long assault on Waterfall Camp and instead began enforcing at HQ instead.

When the cops started enforcing at HQ, a bunch of us left Waterfall to go help. We went to River and we were there for about five days. People on that side (HQ and River) weren't used to steady enforcement, so it threw a lot of things into chaos. But there was enough people and they weren't receptive to hearing from our experiences at Waterfall, so it didn't feel like we were doing a lot of good.

Then one day I had this moment where I saw someone else that I thought was still at Waterfall and they saw me, and we were both like "wait, if you're here, then who's still at Waterfall?" and we both kinda had this 'oh shit' moment. We needed to get back there asap, because if the cops reverted to enforcing at Waterfall again, we were worried that they would only have to move past a couple people.

When we got back to Waterfall and there was a half dozen people, plus the half dozen we came with. Everything was still intact, but the 10 hard blocks were mostly unmanned. The next day, we went down to see the two people that were actually in blocks. These blocks were a new design. They were trenches four or five feet deep with concrete lids put on top of them. So you just had enough room to squeeze in and cops couldn't see if you were actually locked into the dragon, which gave you a little more of a buffer, mentally and physically. So there's two people in the trenches. One person already was in there for like 5-6 days and the other person was in there for 2-3 days.

And sure enough, green guys roll up, and are like, "We're going through. Regardless of you guys. We're gonna take your camp, we're gonna destroy everything and helicopter it out. So you can either leave or you can stay, it doesn't matter." And so we were like okay well we're gonna stay cuz fuck you. Then within an hour, they came back and were like, "Okay, just kidding. We're flipping the script. Like we're actually going to arrest everybody who's NOT locked in. We will give you 5-10 minutes to decide what you're going to do". We're pissed. Everyone was like, "Okay, what do we do?" The others decided that they didn't want to stay. They were gonna head up and over to River.

There were two people in the trenches and one was like, "You know what? Fuck this, I'm out." He didn't really know what he was doing there. He didn't want to be the last person on the mountain. But I had a hard time abandoning this place, it had become my home. Everyone was freaking out and wanted to leave, but I'd heard a story that took place in the spring before I first came to that camp. Waterfall had been completely raided, everyone was arrested and taken out. They basically wiped out waterfall except for this one person in a cantilever flying dragon and they held it down all night alone until reinforcements came in the morning and they retook Waterfall. I'm not going to let that person down, that person is a champion. I will not let Waterfall be taken. If one person could do it, two people could do it. I just looked at my friend and told him I wanted to stay. He said, "If you stay, I'll stay".

Within five minutes, the people leaving the trenches had given us all of their shit: propane burners, pots, food for a week, warm clothes, sun shade, diapers, toiletries, everything for us to live in these trenches for like a week or two. We put like three feet of stuff into the trenches. We knew they cops would try to reach in and grab our stuff, so we laid on top of it all underneath the concrete lids.

So here we are stuck in these holes in the ground there was five feet of road between us. We couldn't talk at all because we had a lid on top, so we used walkie talkies. We lock in, and everyone else leaves and the cops come back, but there was no one left to arrest.

It's beating hot. My legs were exposed out the end of the trench. I had this tarp underneath lining the trench so I wasn't just lying in dirt and I folded it over my legs. These cops grab it from underneath me and then realize they can't take it because my weight was on it. They cut the whole tarp that was shading my legs and now they're getting burnt in the sun. The whole time they were they're trying to be manipulatively nice. "Are you okay? Do you need anything? Seems like your friends abandoned you".

After that they stopped pretending to be nice. They put boards down over our trenches and started driving ATVs over top. Every time they drove over, it felt like the earth crumbling around me. All I could see were my feet and the shadow of the board. We hear them smashing the three camps: screech kitchen, a midway sort of kitchenette, and then waterfall camp down at the bottom close to where we were. Then we hear a helicopter and it gets closer and closer and we feel the wind whooshing right into our trenches. This helicopter is literally right above our heads, and they lay down this giant net. They piled everything into the net and flew it away. They did this at least half a dozen times as they went through all three camps, grabbing anything that was out in the open. When enforcement switched from Waterfall to HQ, Waterfall went from being 30 or 40 people down to like five and now down to two. All of this shit that everyone had left was still there and the cops are just taking everyone's stuff.

We're in the trenches for about 10 hours, experiencing all this while locked in, feeling the wind each time the heli lands and cops everywhere yelling. Meanwhile, I'm talking to the other person in the trench over the walkie and I'm crying. It was such an emotional experience.

Eventually it's been a few hours since we've heard the last helicopter and the cops dissipate, the sun's going down. I get out of my trench and radio the other person to come out of theirs. They pop up and we're literally the only people here. The camp is destroyed. Do we stay in the wreckage, hoping that the people that left send reinforcements? If we're left alone, we do have a week's worth of shit. Or we go right now to try to get people and then retake the camp. Then we notice a cop car down below, we could see its headlights. It was starting to get dark, so this was our one chance. It was kind of the perfect moment, just dark enough that they can't really see us with the naked eye but their headlights weren't on yet. So either we go now or we just wait. Maybe we camp closer to screech where people would come in. We weren't planning on leaving waterfall, we just needed to reassess. We decided to go up and just see if we can find anybody because we didn't know for sure if everyone had actually left. We grab our backpacks and quickly stuff as many supplies as we can from our trenches and then sneak up. The cops didn't see us, they still think there's people in the trenches.

We're walking up the road, feeling distraught, when we hear rustling in the bushes. We assume it's a green guy. Then he just walks out all camo and says "oh hey guys". Turns out it's actually a good friend of ours, probably the best person that could have walked out of the bushes, so we hug and cry together. He had walked down to try to find us and further up, there's six

people. We get to Screech and it's just rubble, broken structures, and tents strewn about. We pick through everything trying to find stuff to use. We grab cups, utensils, any food that we could find, clothes, simple stuff like that. That was the moment when we changed the name from Screech to Scratch. For the next five days, we kept a minimal kitchen at Scratch and people slept in the bush. We decided to switch from the concrete -lid trenches further down to occupying trenches right near Scratch.

There were a few days where cops kept coming back and flying out more loads. They couldn't drive anything out because of the trenches. It felt like the helicopter was constantly circling overhead. One of the helis was equipped with thermal imaging so when it came, we'd huddle together so they wouldn't know how many people we were. Someone would call out "heli!", we'd mask up in the bush and huddle every time. The cops would still do walkthroughs on the road too, so everyone not in a trench would go into the bush. They knew people were there, but that's all they knew. We were living off peanut butter, freeze-dried backpacking meals, granola bars and berries. At one point there was around 12 of us there, people were still bringing supplies but it was very minimal, and we had to ration. We didn't know when our next drop was going to be. At one point, we'd make like two backpacking meals split between 12 people and have two bites each, one fork to share between all of us.

The cops used to fuck with us at night when those of us in trenches were alone and everyone else was asleep in the bush. We had someone do nightwatch down below to watch for cops, but it seemed like the cops jammed our radio signals so we didn't always get the message that the cops were coming up. One time the walkie just started blaring that fucking 'I'm blue da ba dee' song. Later that same night, I was sleeping on my radio, with it turned up loud and then all of a sudden a little girl's voice blared out, "Hello? Hello? Is anyone there? I need help!". Super creepy. The cops would also come shine these bright ass flashlights on our faces and say, "Oh, you're all alone here. Where's all your friends?" and weird shit like that. They would take shit away from us. They really hated us having tarps. We weren't getting any sleep. I didn't know if we could continue doing this.

Every day we'd have like five meetings trying to figure out what we were doing. At one meeting in particular, someone was suggested, "Why don't we just go into the old growth for a night? Spend the night sleeping in the trees and have a really good night and see what happens in the morning? I think we deserve it." It was just selfpreservation. So we hiked downhill to stay in the old growth by Reid Creek and it was such a beautiful night. Then at like 6am, we woke up to the sound of the grader coming up the hill. So we left all of our shit and booked it up the hill, up through that old growth. Another person and I jump into the trenches and someone else went down and stopped the grader, which must've been there because cops had done a walkthrough and seen that the trenches were empty. The grader turned around and went back down. We're like fuck, we can't leave, we can't do anything.

Then one day, someone that was keeping an eye on the cops saw the them drive away. A group walked down to waterfall, came back up, and was like, "Guys, there's no cops here. They're gone." It was the first time since Waterfall became the frontline in May that there were no cops at there at all. Three months straight.

Waterfall had fallen multiple times, cops never held that side of the mountain. We ran down to the bridge and we celebrated. Eventually one of those giant guardrail logs on the bridge gets pulled across the bridge deck to block the road in case the cops came back.

This whole time, major shit is happening at HQ and on the way up to River. Eventually someone I trusted was specifically asking for me to go over to River to help out. Since there were still no cops at waterfall, nothing was happening there. There was like 8–10 of us at this point. So I left for River. When I got there, the line was between River and Red Dress, which meant I was back in time to see River destroyed. That whole month was the most intense of my entire life. The week before that whole experience at Waterfall, I had been up at Heli Camp when it was being raided and then here was River Camp being destroyed. But by the time it happened to River, I was prepared. I was telling people to hide shit in the bushes. I became part of organizing and navigating people, because River Camp had not ever been a frontline up until that point. Nobody really knew or understood what to do. We offered to help and show them how to build blocks, but they wouldn't listen. We called it Reactive River. Nobody knew what was going on. It was a very indigenous led kind of thing at that point. They had final say and we couldn't really argue with that but they were making really questionable calls and we didn't know what to do.

People were very disheartened. It got harder than Fairy Creek had seen very quickly. There wasn't enough people for them to look up to and the people they could have looked up to weren't being listening to, whereas if you had shown up at Waterfall earlier in the summer and raids happened, you could see how more experienced people would keep their cool and handle it. There was a lot of resilience there, but people at River were really overwhelmed. All we could tell them was that if the camp got destroyed, we would rebuild. The camp is not the forest. We can back off, we can retreat. Take the camp, fuck the camp.

Those days after HQ fell, things changed. It was a whole new game and no one was ready.

How I Became the Same as a Logger

(the little stinker who couldn't stop spraying)
and the terrible, tantalizing times on pacheedaht, ditidaht, nuu-chah-nulth lands &
waters protecting ancient temperate rainforests
and the colonial capitalist conditioning instilled in me against my will
as this tall tale sprouts about with stories surely grand as cruelly brands sink in sand; lies,
demands; we reprimand. sifting each and every strand of sand, sniffing to siffle upper hands. you,
frands, comrades true, thank you for toppling sandcastles from water even if it's no longer blue.
content warning: invitation into choice to read as little/much/whatever of... personal inner
/ outer conditions of oppression, reflection on acts of appropriation, racism, pretendianism, in-
somnia, psychosis, mania, psychiatric incarceration.
growing up in southwestern, so-called ontario, i was taught i could "save the planet" by turn-
ing off the tap while i brushed my teeth, or by turning off the lights every time i left a room. i
bullied the only Black child in my grade 1 class, outright telling her she was the only girl not
invited to my birthday party. that same year, at our family cottage on so-called Lake Huron,
wreaking of our genocidal privileges, i appropriated Indigenous face tattooing with moisturizer,
sing-songing, "i am an Indian".
my programming disgusts me. i don't disgust me. it's not my (nor our) original blueprint to
be behaviourally brainwashed by the state. us white bodied folk need to be real about where,
when and how we've replicated, or continue to uphold, consciously or unconsciously, the very
systemic values we seek to dismantle.
i welcome bringing forth my responsibilities to dismantle these gross ass systems as well as
co-create a just paradigm with all of creation. i welcome the spiral transpiring that is to recount
and heal from such a heart warming / wrenching experience at the colonially called 'fairy creek
blockades'. there are so many layers, nuances and complexities i'm not sure words can fully
capture. i open myself to whatever shapes of creating and processing my story needs. i wish the
same to you and your stories. we are real myths in the making. may the wonderful, the wounded,
the warped and warm lessons steer us to collective liberation. i don't think of liberation as a
destination. i do think it's likely all who read this have the road of freedom tied beneath their
feet. thank you to all living and beyond who fight/have fought for the land, for humanity, for
future generations. thank you to all who don't have the time to write about it.

mid-may 2021

filled with fierce hope and trust in the world, a bright eyed eighteen year old carpools with
a stranger to the blockades... having attended some environmental/ human rights rallies, i had
barely skimmed the surface of reflecting on my internalized oppressions. i really had no clue
what i was getting myself into. from the rad Indig femmes instagram call-out, emerged among

the strongest, most certain pulses i'd probably ever felt towards going somewhere and doing something.

with me, i brought everything i owned because i wanted to be in it for the "long haul"... as if i'm a truck driver ...??? i also thought i was down to get arrested because white written fairy creek media team propaganda shoved it down my throat. "we need arrestees!!11@11,!" spoiler: the movement being "started" by settlers without consent, little to my knowledge at the time, hijacked everything. land back, anti extraction, decolonization, will always be an indigenous led movement and we must learn to be good students. so, after visiting my ever supportive brother on unceded Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh lands & waters, i was bound to eden grove camp, where i had visited for a weekend a couple months prior.

once the injunction was in junk action, someone said they felt death in the ground and more than usual. we could hear ancients falling up on the bugaboo mountain across from gordon rd. with such low numbers, things were slightly frantic, and sometimes alarmingly yet nicely mellow. right off the bat, i didn't really know what to say at meetings, didn't know how to use a walkie talkie. hearing of the first arrests the day of via word of mouth, made me feel like i had come just at the right time. i felt more and more compelled to be where more action was. while committing to locking myself into an underground PVC tube through a bus flipped on its side, everyday side missions kept me increasingly impassioned. eden camp was a god sent gift to call my temporary home. if you know you know.

a few of us told some indigenous folks at the sacred fire about the logging at up on the bugaboo. we showed pictures from friends' scouting: hell a litter, sheer signs of dynamite shot into the earth for road building. we were told to keep scouting and record as much as we can. the air shifted once us at eden began to scheme about the bugaboo, and had a direct line of communication with pacheedaht, nuu-chahnulth and other Indigenous youth. (consent that sadly really lacked in the beginning of the blockades) sigh. although we didn't have the numbers to set up a pop-up blockade, it seemed that motivation, trust and creativity began to replace the fear of the cops clearing us out at any moment. we were trying our best to be ready for when they did. in the faces of new found friends, less furrows of brows. more laughter. we were all starting to speak the same language. i remember having to let myself cry in the middle of a stump. i fell in love with the people around me, i fell in love with the spirits of this potent land that was and is stronger than any means of destruction.

i genuinely fucking love talking to people... i found myself as a messenger, the mycelium. so many people didn't know what to do upon first arriving to hq. i loved giving folks options of where bodies were needed but most importantly suggesting to go wherever they wanted because they have unique gifts to offer and anarchy is cool as fuck. the communications on walkies between camps was always delayed and unclear, so i became a human walkie talkie. hundreds of people started showing up to hq or it at least felt like it. hayaka and truck rd 11 blocks were in their vibrant infancy. numbers growing, ideas forming into being. it was probably the happiest i'd ever been. i am so grateful for the pacheedaht hereditary chief, who shared the concrete needs to meet the abstract. strong hard blocks, softened by, maybe even made stronger by, art. the forces we're up against largely only understand the intensity of stopping something. stop the land's abundance. stop giving. stop the blockade. stop the source of life itself.

so then what are we starting?

in a venn diagram of destruction and creation, what's in the middle? what if the two circles dissolved altogether? while holes were dug for blocks, i untied the pink, blue and yellow flagging

tape from trees and crafted dragon decor... can't recall all of what became of these flagging tape figurines. i sought to bring colorful creations to the hardcore. both are necessary.

before that stretch of "gordon rd" became illegally occupied by rcmp and their "security" buds in disguise, i approached that very "frontline"... pigs letting people walk around a pathetic piece of orange plastic attached to two pylons. someone's yelling at a reporter. although the cops were lazing away, the excessive scent of bean farts rancidly lingered. a wonderful soul lent me his merlin (a small stringed instrument remnant of the mountain dulcimer)...

when i first plucked, sighs of happy ears struck release. harshly toned conversations like toast got globs and glazes of butter. only then the cops tried to start joking around all chummy chum with us. i stuck to the merlin. as goons packed up their plastic, i spoke with a woman of colour in the middle of the road as an the rcmp truck drives immediately towards us. she runs to the side of the road safely. the truck slowly inches a literal inch to my body. my raging heart had me reacting as if these men weren't even there... because they shouldn't be... and neither should i have had to be there... i didn't move a muscle on this uncaded road until i had no choice but to. so with their tacky ass truck deadass right in front of me, i'm skipping backwards with strength, sing-songing "where are you going? what are you doing? where are you going? what are you doing?" video cameras out on the sidelines. a lifeless head murmurs out the passenger window, "you're obstructing." ummm you nearly obstructed two femme's entire lives... but okay. in attempts to save my arrest for eden grove, i continue to playfully skip backwards, slightly to the right, conducting their driving to, "turn around just turn around you can do it! you can do it! turn around!" and indeed he did, with two other trucks trailing behind following suit. someone said they saw one of the guys in the behind trucks shake his head in frustration. i couldn't have them going and harassing more fellow hooligans. felt like i hexed the soulless suckers. i now attribute it to this white body, and it being early on in the increasingly violent responses, for being spared a trampling.

the next day or so, camps hayhaka and truck rd 11 were in full swing. those blocks were a quickly hatched plan to block either entrances to eden camp — to protect our little home. at hayhaka, i arise early for a meeting. folks are needed to walk down the road and make sure others are waking up and what not... off i go, ignorantly appropriating, bringing a drum with me. ew. do not drum on the frontlines if you are not indigenous.

legal observers are set and a few km down, someone's ripping on a motorcycle, sporting a strangely high quality and face covering helmet, in all black... so i pull

my infamous move, planting myself in the middle of the road... just incase its a pig... only a few folks i knew of had dirt bikes and something was off.

"uhh i work in port renfrew making coffee, i have some to drop off." no helmet removed, no common heart-full yet confused and bright eyed look in the face.

"hey, we have lots of coffee up there, and we came to a consensus on no vehicles past this point, so if you wanna hop off and visit, all good".

"i have work up there i need to do." cop.

"i have work i'm doing up there too." drumming in his face, he hastily took off.

reaching group consensuses, listening/acting from indigenous leadership, igniting my silly natured creativity, meeting new friends, turning cops around from whence they motherfucking came, breathing blessed untouched forest air, and going with the fucking flow all had me in such a groove like never before... the medicine of halting the ways of medicine killers. i was electrocuted.

quite a solid group of us wake up early at hayhaka to head up to waterfall, they needed numbers, they'd been getting hit heavily with arrests everyday. another ways up waterfall's road, ridge camp- massive massive hardwoods deemed the most profitable. i wonder if all the timber we tried to stop is already someone's kitchen table across the ocean. so the bridge at waterfall was an obvious chokepoint. that morning began at the snap of dawn as i sang the women's warrior song at the fire, knowing that day would be more of a warzone day than the others. with saxophone and scatting, coffee brewed and a circle began to form, devising the plan. the clear willingness of everyone to support the frontline was so fucking beautiful. while i grew kinda impatient wanting to get to waterfall, i couldn't help myself but to sculpt sculptures from the camp's garbage on the "gordon rd" bridge. thank you to whoever suggested i may want to save that energy for later.

the 10k hike didn't feel at all like 10k. equipped with my clarinet, a backpack full of my favourite brightly coloured clothes, a sleeping bag, food for waterfall and water for me, i was mainly the caboose, checking in with folks. as the pigs would drive by, i'd squeak my clarinet like the nose of a clown (i didn't really know how to play it anyway)... along came ripples of laughter... it brought me so much joy to bring some giggles to the inevitable stress of a frontline mish. while validating the inevitable stress, inviting the discontinuation of its stagnance. on the cops' second drive by during our hike, we huddled in a circle to wait them out and slowly continued in little groups. at the last moment, i rifled through my backpack, trying to distract the cunts, pulling out colourful sparkly garments, only to put them all back in. felt like one of those cheesy magicians pulling out coloured fabrics for forever from up my sleeve. what we did seemed to work, they drove back down the mountain. the most serene, purest waterfall i'd ever beheld danced beyond itself in the air. its taste, look, touch all so clearly so full of life... folks at camp were so happy to see us. a meeting instantly sprang out, roles were smoothly assigned. just in time for everyone to be ready for the raid, an excavator came to clear soft blocks made of boulders and branches. i storm forward in the middle of the road, smack dab in front of the yellow CAT. concern for my safety was as

fleeting as these precious ecosystems. with a branch of fallen cedar raised high in my hand, screaming at the top of my lungs, "WHAT IS REALLY GOING ON HERE? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?" the operator 's face solemnly sulked, turning off the machine. dope! but the piggies oink me the injunction, so i quickly retreat back to the waterfall, surrounded by song and brave folks locked into PVC tubes in the ground. two sweet froggers, a biggie and a baby hang out with me by the water beneath the bridge as i both emotionally and physically cool down. did i for real just stop an excavator from clearing our blocks? cloaked in monochrome hot pink, and a bright yellow cap gifted by the lovely indigo, with a cute little skunk saying, "i'm a little stinker"... and so i sprayed! nimble on my feet, not only cleaning up the camp, but interior designing... outdoors! beautifying in the midst of destruction. multiple officers tried to grab me, but i learned in my 2 weeks there that if i wasn't "blocking" as declared by the court, i could not be arrested. once again, it's important to name that my whiteness is why i remained alive & physically unharmed in this exclusion zone.

challenging the arbitrary yellow line, i asserted the human right to move my body, i sang improvised melodies, i checked-in with those in hard blocks. a conduit of creation, staging all the camp's garbage right in front of the police tape... an installation of garbage made beds, toothbrushes and food scraps gathered in hypnotic hues... in hopes to convey a message that we had everything there that we needed. and these colonizers in the name of canada, created a mess and

its about time they picked it up. i left a note saying something along the lines of, CLEAN UP THE MESS YOU'VE MADE AND GET OUT!!! instead, i was met with pigs squealing, "you can't put that there!" and "you're making more of a mess than you realize". with people videoing and laughing as i discredited the yellow tape's existence that they stood behind, i continued to create garbage art for hours in the blazing sun. moving back and forth from the police line, chatting with the one brave soul chained in the ground whom the cops weren't extracting as i had yelled from behind them earlier, "STOP ARRESTING HER. LEAVE US ALONE" they didn't even see me but did as i said. i still don't understand how this happened. if you have this footage please send it to me so i can remember all i did and i ask please don't share it otherwise.

eventually, police patrolled the camp in search of hidden contraband, soon stopped seemingly in awe of the colour coordinated displays i created with my clothing & camp supplies. it felt like they were stunned out of their job that day. i know i shouldn't have talked to them and i never will again. it was like artistically altering the space made their militance obsolete. i may not have the bodily strength (yet!) to make hard blocks but apparently i could create a space to, albeit temporarily, hex the state out of their job.

this little stinker couldn't stop spraying. once the goons left, people were generally confused about what happened. why was there only one arrest? why wasn't the camp raided? i had mediated the meeting, and everyone eventually got on the same page... with dinner down the ol' esophagus, i kept organizing the camp gear. clearly seeing a drone fly over waterfall and thinking a friend i knew who had a drone, maybe wanted to document my installation, sweet! i was hella emotional. playing music at the fire was blissful and bittersweet. no sleep that night, maybe an hour... i got this overwhelming urge to walk up the road towards what would eventually become screech camp... i lit three candles, taking off at dark under a ladybug umbrella. i remember telling someone i needed to make sure my family was okay. i think i was talking about the people at eden grove / the forest & all it's creatures. soft, fast whispers emerging from the woods etched into by the logging road i walked...tactical green guys? maybe folks are camping in there... for some reason? after all three tealights went out, huge loud footsteps barreled towards me.

i booked it back to waterfall, clenching rabbit fur around my neck gifted by a friend. everyone was asleep by then and sunlight came soon after. i tried to fall asleep on a lounge chair and i think i did for a few minutes...

the next day was another whirlwind, as i found more ways to spatially alter the camp, i was working through more and more emotions. grief for the Earth and every fucked up thing ever and of gladness for this new passionate drivenness. it was really not cool of me to have yelled at a fellow blockader, an older white man, for wanting to place some ropes elsewhere. i fully thought he was an undercover cop. paranoia began to kick in. i'd been smoking weed pretty much everyday, multiple times a day, for weeks, in combination with less sleep. the balancing beams of being threw me for a much needed loop... i also slowly needed more space from folks. going for a little walk back down towards braden, more whispers emerged from the woods and this time calling my camp name, softly, over and over, and enticingly. i nearly went to go investigate, but a voice seemingly from someone at waterfall sent me back there. arrests went down at hayaka that day and i really wanted to get back to eden, so i remembered a hack in the system that medics and media are "allowed" through exclusion zones (which of course the nasty blues and greens didn't play by their own rules later on) so i requested a medic to help me get through the police line at hayhaka. while i was experiencing every single feeling so strongly, that was usual for me and i was so physically exhausted that i needed a ride down. (thank you to the two

beautiful women who hiked up to help me get a ride, although the only one that could come (since the police line at the bottom of the hill) was one of the same RCMP trucks that tried to run me over the other day). at first, the cops wouldn't even let me get in. they asked me my name so i made up another fake one. they laughed in my face and drove away, and i screamed and wailed, balling my eyes out thinking of the MMIWG2S. my legs were so tired i sat and waited for the two women to negotiate with the pigs that it was indeed me who needed the ride. as i waited, friends soothed me with their kind words. singing and playing the clarinet was a constant help. on the way down to hayhaka, i was so untrusting the pig would even drive us there. in my head i was really scared he wouldn't. but i was calmed by the two women's support. at the bottom of the hill, back down 10km, the arbitrary yellow line was still up and someone's van was getting towed. so i went right to reconfiguring nearby objects of a packed up camp into joyful shapes, over, on, with the police tape line. making rhythms with these patterns, banging water jugs on the ground. another abundant shift of atmosphere. it was so fucking fun. a comrade leans over, "i'm so glad creator made you". the jig was up – way, way up.

soon thereafter, the cops pack up and leave. seemingly, momentarily once again defeated by my creativity. we started unpacking the camp that was just packed up from arrests that day. a bluetooth speaker is bumping and so is dinner. the hayhaka banner is back up! we could still see some "security" bitches and i heard the shrieks of chainsaws just as nearby. so naturally, i went and screamed at the security dudes throwing a poster at their feet. i want to give thanks to the human who then pulled me aside sharing they've had psychosis and thought i may be as well... i now know its really common to be in denial during such a crises and i totally blew them off. (i actually really enjoyed your presence and thank you for trying to help me). i later found out the cut block at caycuse was done logging that day. you truly can't talk about rest without a analysis of white supremacy. so white writers telling you to lay down and slow down because it's good for you it's not a gonna free us. it's just more ignoring the systems and ignoring justice work. also any white writer talking about rest but not implicating themselves and their Ancestors in upholding and aligning with white supremacy and the history of colonization is also ridiculous...

you cannot speak about sleep deprivation or grind culture without talking about
white supremac -Tricia Hersey¹

from there, i did not and could not sleep for roughly a week. while it was partially my own inducing, i know now it was also ancestral ... "growth" in the name of progress, aka go go go, assimilated Earth honoring ways that thus became the assimilators, labor taken advantage of to then take advantage of labor. for thousands of years, before we brought these atrocities to turtle island. my body became a site for old, recent and current storylines of harm. i say this because i want all white bodied people to excavate our harmful histories so we may be in harmony and balance with all of creation, for the next seven generations. i know it's a big dream but some days it feels so, so possible.

i kept wanting to get back to eden camp. i felt i could finally sleep once i was back where it felt like home. my backpack and buddies were there. i do remember my visual scope was especially vivid and my body felt aged 60 years. falling into loops, uncontrollably chatting and chatting with folks (to later find out i didn't make much sense), to me it was the most sense i'd ever made. i felt invincible. like i was untouchable yet touched by an almighty power of the divine. the amount

¹ Tricia can be found at @thenapministry

of unsolicited advice i had given folks was unhinged. burnout made me feel no different than a ray of sun, more like i was the sun itself. as i noticed “I’m a little stinker” on my yellow skunk cap had the word “tink” in it, tinkerbelle the ticking time bomb. self-destructed fairy. but i loved it. i assumed fame from the videos of the art installation at waterfall had not only circulated the masses, but blown up. visions of my every move being broadcasted out onto huge screens where my art inspired millions. this gross grandiosity had me reminded of a vague story from my mom & great uncle of our scottish ancestors ~4 gens back *possibly* mixing with Mi’kmaq / Inuit peoples. dead ass started telling people i was Indigenous. yikes. this zine i found a couple months later, Settlers on the Red Road² by Tawinikay, gratefully got me out of this pretendian mindset. highly recommend.

i thought i had summoned world peace. i could not stop rearranging spaces, (i hope they were as pretty as I thought they were lol) im now aware i crossed people’s boundaries seemingly stealing from them as i hyper-made object art. blockaders appeared to be actors of an MTV special all about me. i felt i fluctuated on a dime between masculinity and femininity. ringing in my ears, crowds and crowds of fans waiting for me to sign their autographs, all in merch of me in all pink in front of the excavator. i kept hearing my name quickly whispered over and over. everyone seemed to be in love with me. i owe an apology to this man and the person who’s vehicle i fucked him in, i was a few days with no sleep at that point. i lost complete control of myself and i dont know what you remember of me, but i’m sorry. i remember sharing so much laughter with many people, but i bet i made lots of people uncomfortable & worried about me too. i’m sorry. thank you for trying to give me soap and toothpaste. i would try to sleep but i couldn’t. then i felt like i didn’t need to with this newfound power.

so many shadows seeped me deep in the underworld of grandiosity, rushing, excess, paranoia, fear. and it makes so much sense when i think back on my childhood as a spoiled brat, thinking i was better than children of colour, how i wanted to be a famous actor for money & fame...

this go, go, go, no rest- no more. i became the same as a logger, self-inflated, self-destructed, utterly delusional in my reality. White supremacy shares those qualities. initial warmth led me to such drought.

folks at camp, well-meaning strangers really, got my brother to pick me up, taking me to become incarcerated for two and a half weeks in a psychiatric ward in vancouver. i think of it as having mentally arrested myself. i understand i had gone mad (that’s what these systems do to people!), but that still doesn’t excuse my brother and concerned blockaders for first handedly imprisoning me... when we said abolish land extraction projects, we (most of us, anyway) meant abolish prisons. we should have meant abolish psychiatry and psych wards too. i was admitted against my will the same day eden grove camp was raided. i went back to fairy creek after my two and a half weeks there, but i had really lost my essence on meds and after having my soul sucked by the colonizer’s mind seeping into mine.

to all who were at eden, thank you thank you thank you. i love you. if the balancing beams of being didn’t need to throw me for a loop, i would have been there on the day of the raid as intended. i hope that we may meet again. i am learning to heal and i am learning to be in practice of abolition, eco-socialism, anarchy. prioritizing rest, without avoidance, with real love for myself and all living creatures, learning the old sacred ways of ancient pre-invasion europe. i have

² Settlers on the Red Road can be found at itsgoingdown.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/SettlersontheRedRoad_SCREEN-1.3.pdf

begun courses by Dra. Rocio Rosales Meza of the Q'ero Inca lineage "Unveiling my Unconscious Collusion with Systems of Oppression" and "Remember: Clearing Colonial Imprints for a New Earth". her teaching of creating in me a site for harmony and balance, so i may be clear vessels to co-create a new paradigm, through ritual, pre-colonial ancestral inquiry, encouraging reparations, etc. is changing me immensely. please check out her work and pay her for her brilliance.³

i'm sure the answers to my current questions will continue to unravel, or just lead to more questions, like...

how are white bodied people, having been involved with fairy creek, ensuring other movement spaces are safe spaces for people of colour/disabled folks, since we know fairy creek was largely not a safe space for them?

how do we abolish psych wards? they're prisons too!

what is it to be "well" on every level? how do we walk in right relationship to all living creatures on stolen lands? how do we tend to our burned out selves/comrades/family in non carceral ways? how do we prevent/heal from self/collective burn out? so as to not continue micro/macro cycles of harm as we continue the fight?

is it worth holding people who caused harm accountable when numerous attempts have failed? (such as the self-titled "core" fairy creek "founders" :/)

what did people involved with fairy creek learn that is now helping them to contribute to Indigenous-led, anti-extraction, decolonial movements?

how do folks interweave politics and spirituality in their daily lives? what strategies did/did not work at fairy creek? how can these insights further us along in responding to repression in ways that actually free us and the land?

if we are not spiritually grounded while doing that paradigm shifting work, we begin to enact that violence in ourselves, in our relationships. and what i mean by that is, when you're doing the work of awakening, decolonization, you are really opening and confronting violence, so you're opening yourself up to grief, you're opening yourself up to anger, you're opening yourself up to really any aggressive and violent energies and if we're not spiritually rooted, we begin to embody that. instead of liberation, we begin to embody violence, and so it looks like really forcing ourselves, pushing ourselves and so we get irritable... and so for me, i really see it as if you are not spiritually grounded, then you extend the shelf life of the colonial paradigm.

-Dra. Rocio Rosales Meza⁴

thank you for you and thank you for reading. feel free to email me at alarmwhitenoise [at] protonmail.com if you have questions/feedback/would like to be in touch.

peace!

-jig

³ drrosalesmeza.com/home

⁴ on the 'let it be sacred' podcast by Jamelia Gregory

Resistance as Remembrance

by Spudwrench

The struggle seems so far away now. The dirty wet streets of the city stand still in contrast to the lush rain forest of Ada'itsx.

Sitting with time to reflect, one becomes nagged with the many experiences that made up the Ada'itsx struggle. We are burdened with unraveling the role of the personal within the larger dynamic of colonial oppression and capitalist exploitation.

The lingering aches and pains; the injuries; the bad dreams. The court imposed conditions. The strained personal relationships. The memories of those ruthlessly taken from us never to return. Our thoughts continue to smolder.

While we fought, suffered, and sacrificed in the forests, police violence continued on unabated in towns and cities across the region. The refined campaign of counterinsurgency by the RCMP against Ada'itsx occurred in unison with their day to day thuggery in the streets.

As tactical police knocked over tripods, twisted fingers, and brandished pipe saws centimeters from peoples necks, beat cops were marauding through communities killing with impunity. Jared Lowndes is but one example that makes up the many names of those the police media attempts to erase from public memory. Pinned by police cars in a Campbell River drive thru, he was mauled by a k9 dog before being shot several times. A memorial set up by his family a few days later was destroyed by vigilantes. Whether Ada'itsx or Campbell River, to the cops and their vigilante auxiliaries the world is nothing more than their area of operations.

The police violence unleashed on Ada'itsx is but one part of the larger police violence used to pacify people into compliance with the Canadian state. It is important to not be bamboozled into compartmentalizing police violence into isolated categories removed from one another. To do so is to fall into the well oiled trap of divide and conquer. Or more bluntly in the words of police manuals themselves: isolate and destroy.

Although the struggle for Ada'itsx has slowed, the struggle against the Canadian state remains open ended. The question now becomes one of where are we to take our experiences of struggle learned from Ada'itsx. Are we to simply turn our backs on these experiences and the struggle? As the jaws of alienation and apathy yawn wide open our determination must reignite. Those who have suffered and sacrificed so much have set a powerful example for us to follow. Those who have been taken from us are a searing reminder to never forget.

Dwell upon those friends and comrades you stood shoulder to shoulder with over those long months. Do not let go of those who loved, laughed and cried.

Papi. Fungus. Smiley.

Julian Jones. Chantel Moore. Jared Lowndes.

Anthaney Dawson. Lorraine Jacobson. Lisa Rauch

To remember is to fight!

Cops-and-Loggers/Hide-and-Go-Creek

I think it was November. We hiked up the mountain to visit (the once) Heli camp, the place where scientists discovered Marbled Murrelets — the endangered birds. This is the place with the cleanest water I've ever drank. We found they had cut so much just in the last month when the blockade couldn't stop them.

Where these trees once were, I slept in my hammock cradled between some mammoth cedars, swaying under the full moon, connecting to that dreamy forest. But it's cut now. It's unbelievable. Like your old school's not there anymore. Like grandma's house doesn't exist anymore. It's hard to believe.

I need to write something else though, just so it's written somewhere. I need to write about the hardest experience I had that summer, it happened in the same forest. I had so many pictures that are stolen now. It's important to my older self to somehow embalm the details.

We went up the mountain because there was active logging happening in the valley just below the road. All the efforts from the summer were being undone. Numbers at the camps were dismal because it was September: cold and wet.

We camped in the bush because the police had the roads. One morning, we woke up to occupy the cut block before the police or loggers. But we'd been doing this for a few mornings so they woke up extra early and surprised us. We were watching the roads but somehow they got past our scout. Everyone scattered, helicopters landed, then the sounds of chainsaws.

I was going to write only the highlights of this but there are too many important moments, it feels wrong to not fully acknowledge what people went through.

We had to get into the cut block and occupy that space to stop the cutting.

When Creekers occupy an active cut block and police come to grab us, we run out, replaced by other Creekers from a different direction, we called this 'cops and loggers'.

Cutblocks are merciless. Moving over the slash (a labyrinth of felled trees) in the rain was too easy to slip and fall down layers of felled trees. Not everyone had the nerves or even the physical ability to do it; a few people backed out at the last minute. It took a pep talk to get me out there too. Police didn't want to walk the slash more than we didn't. They hated us for being there.

So after we scattered, I snuck into the cut block and suddenly a massive cedar crashed 30 feet from me. It would have killed me. So I quickly got closer to the loggers cutting, got their attention by yelling and dancing so the police came in after me.

A handful of others were there too. A friend was snatched by green guys and punched until he would walk himself out. That's what happened if they caught you alone. He told me he was too afraid not to comply. He was a brave guy who did a lot for those forests. Later he taught me peanut butter and instant noodles made good bush food — what a gem.

Evading police over the slash was exhausting though. It was noon, 5 hours of cops and loggers when I started to lose my edge — my speed and balance — I fell a few times pretty hard. Weak but determined, I let police arrest me, halting the cutting as long as possible.

We thought of a new tactic. We hid in the cut block with air horns, one person told the cops that people were in the slash; the horns proved it. The police looked for us but not once found anyone; the slash was too thick. So they couldn't fell trees while people were there, awesome! Though being still on a mountain in Sept all day chilled us to our bones.

We had our victories and they were important to celebrate. A few times the whole camp took a bath. That's right. At (the once) Heli camp we had an iron bathtub near the watering hole but Police threw it in the water. Blessed with an early day from our successful new tactic, we pulled it out. We made a fire and cooked that icy mountain water, hot. We were all so happy, the whole camp stayed till dark cuz our collective aura was intoxicatingly high.

Some days later, back in the cut block, someone approached loggers to tell them people were hiding in the slash. There weren't any cops, it must have been a Sunday. The loggers were violent when the cops weren't around. There were multiple videos of loggers attacking forest defenders published even in mainstream media but sheeple still thought we were the dangerous ones.

These loggers didn't stop cutting even though the horns were being blown. Someone had to get in their faces, they revved their chainsaws at him and then threw him to the ground. But he did get them to stop, basically saving the forest defenders' lives. He is a hero.

I heard that later on in the fall, Charney, the police sergeant notorious for violence and disregarding the law, let loggers cut even with Creekers hiding in the slash blowing horns. If someone died I believe the media would have spun it as police and loggers having no choice; they needed to feed their poor starving families. Or some shit.

Some fresh faces came up with supplies so it was a good time to go down and recover from sleeping in wet sleeping bags, wet socks, eating packaged food 3 times a day, the cold, and having our nerves constantly amped from the helicopters looking for us, green guys combing the forest to snatch us, and the sounds of chainsaws tearing into ancient trees.

It wasn't all hardship though because we all kept each other going. One hilarious night, we had to keep the fire going; it was too cold and it was raining torrentially. I only had one pair of clothes that were sorta dry that I wanted to sleep in so I took off all my clothes and ran out into the rain collecting twigs naked. Twigs are small enough to make a flame even when wet. We named that camp, Camp Nude-tella.

Later, a friend did this too but got lost coming back and was stuck in the rain naked, for a bit. Poor guy.

You Told Me I Was Free

By Ray Brochure

I scramble for the last crumbs of tobacco from my pouch. As I look up I hear the booming voice of the imploring individual I sit beside in the toyota corolla release another string of stock arguments regarding living with nature and our climate situation. I, like anyone else that has paid attention to the state of climate activity, should have concern for the state of affairs regarding our consumptive behaviour and how it affects the life forms that rely on it, but I only feel futile in my efforts. As I take this corolla ride further I begin to dwell on my decisions to leave the city as sorting recycling and slacktivist petitions were getting me nowhere. The thick canopy of trees that make up the west coast of Vancouver Island pass me by and reassure me in my choices. Yet I don't truly know why I decided to go, I had enough of where I was and I heard of people who cared for something more than how they are seen in the eyes of others. The cigarette paper I pull out is damp. I remove it in such a way that it does not tear the papers it is stuck too. The thunder of the opinion-generator seated beside me comes back into my awareness with another stack of question-less statements. How long must I endure this banal chatter? Such is the life of one who has a habit of attracting ranters, especially ranters who have little ability to distinguish between speaking to another and speaking to a wall.

Just as I am about to light the tip of a mass of tobacco twigs sticking out the end of my paper the car door opens and I am greeted by a pair of serious eyes. The driver is no longer here, they must have walked out while I had been trying to find some way of edging into the conversation. This person that opened the car door has soft stubble and a shredded shirt, they know no concept of subtlety in their confrontation of my motives for being where I am. Where exactly am I? I think the driver said some matter of a blockade, but then again I could have been imagining that. Whatever the case, it is certain that I am in a setting where people are milling about acting as though they are busy. Shovels, spatulas and coffee are involved with whatever these people are up to. This individual with the soft stubble affirms my distorted memory, he says this is a blockade operating in a decentralised and autonomous manner. He continues to expound how this is not the society that I have come from, and that they are all non-hierarchical and voluntarily associated to a common cause. This cause is tacitly stated as "buying time" for those down in the serious offices to overturn legislature. Words of conviction are used to describe the blockade: "this is an autonomous, indigenous, land defence encampment". I now walk up the road with an extinguished butt in my mouth and a motivation to observe the words of this gatekeeper: decentralised, non-hierarchical, autonomous, mutual aid, anti-capital, anti-establishment. This list of kitsch language rings in my ears. These are words of high regard spoken with such repetition I can only believe that the experience I am about to enter will be true to this. I am enraptured by a prolonged episode of tying my shoe from which I look up and see an emotionless grin looking down at me, they share with me their name and I immediately forget it. This grinning individual speaks to me with a lazy drawl, they are trying to appear accepting and convince me to take part in one of their ventures. By the body language of the three other uncomfortable people surround-

ing this central figure it appears as though this person has some sway in the immediate vicinity; their motives are barely questioned and they are allowed to carry out whatever they please with very little criticism. I can tell that these slouching secondary individuals lack selfpurpose and this grinning person provides subtle reassurance to their purpose in the blockade by applauding some act of arrest or late night hardblock build they were part of. When I read through the new age poetic language this person uses all I hear is that they want to see me in the throes of the front line as they think that I can make adequate fodder for the voraciousness of the arresting force. I reply to the grinning scout that there is little chance that I will participate in some show of force, and he replies with an invitation, not to get arrested but to come with them and be in the milieu of beautiful people on the front line. He speaks of the tantalising foods and tobacco that will be brought to me without charge, the mildly-sexual late night cuddling with many people experiencing pandemic-loneliness. The scout lures me in as I have little to go back to and little work to occupy my life with as my CERB checks are keeping me afloat. Why not follow the aromas of revolution masked in the language of consumables and eroticism?

I look at the ground and up again only to realise months pass — I have fallen into the currency of number of arrests and who has had the least amount of sleep. There is little else to treat as a token for upward mobility when one lives in a community void of money and other statist aspirations. Waking from hazy recollections on muddy mornings, I have grown weary of the meandering passions that I am embroiled in. A bird's croak catches my ear and drives me to stare vacantly at an energetic lady in the place where we cooked food. One could call this space a kitchen yet it seems to be the case that granola bars are usually preferred over the minimal effort to make a cooked meal. A storehouse for granola bars is an apt name for where this woman stands preparing a meal for a group of folks who lay upon a rodent gnawed futon that someone must have dragged up the hill. I feel ill staring at the contrast of the divine movements of this babysitter stirring a pot of cheesy noodles with this group of cigarette soaked folks who are of some privilege to never feel inclined to aid in communal matters as they are in possession of a walkie-talkie.

O the walkie-talkie, the universal sign that you have made it within the vicious surreptitious hierarchy of the mountain. There are a golden few who have worked long and arduously to gain insight and expertise, these people see the walkie-talkie as a tool. Although, there are those that chanced upon this tool as signifying authority. This bunch on the futon being spoon fed dhal from the newly arrived arrestable fodder are the elite of the mountain. They have a language of superiority that would drive anyone they saw as an arrestable drone to do as they wished. People from long and far venture to the mountain to be seized by the law in the name of old growth, indigenous sovereignty or whatever their motivation may be. Being seized by the law may not have been in their interests but the mountain elite have their recruiting channels. Every day down at HQ various representatives of the elite go to meet the virtuous and naive townsfolk fresh from their urban settings, just as the scout had tried to do with me. The townsfolk would be fed stories of their importance and how they would help the cause by locking themselves in some crude apparatus to buy the movement seconds, in return they would unknowingly receive unforgettable trauma and be lodged into the legal system as a dissident. Whatever the case, I have forged a way to refrain from engaging in this tactic of climbing the social ladder and not be placed into the precarious state of being arrested. At least I think I am innocent, but it is difficult to know when no one holds you accountable. What is it though that drove these people to act with such superiority over others and still frame the movement as anti-hierarchical? The

illusion of language can cause even the most scrupulous of people to act with authority if they believe they are not culpable. Fame is promised to these poor arrestables, as well as victory over state-backed-industry and most importantly the honour and respect of their fellow comrades. The artillery is stocked with people who could be used as the non-violent means of closing the road. The ultimate dehumanisation, treating the newly recruited environmentalist as a means to retain one's camp, in turn one's home or a place where one feels a sense of social prestige. As I get up from the dhal sharing circle that I am not invited to, most likely due to how much sleep I have had the night before, I question what is driving people to come up to lock into this road? Do people want food or clothing donations or a rent-less campsite or fulfill their lust or fight the state's highest form of executive power, the police, or feel part of a community of like minded individuals? Why must I be so cynical about humans and their motivations? Maybe these people really do love the trees and they are just humans that have contradicting behaviour once they are thrown into a social setting. Maybe it is the fact that we are all so used to acting in this manner due to the society we come from. Can we never truly escape the hyper-competitive and self-interested habits that our world shapes us into? I would like to at least think we should try with more intention.

Dust fills my socks, shoes are no longer a necessity. I walk over a trench where cloaked eyes appear to stare back at me, some muffled word is uttered my way and some unintelligible phrase leaves my lips. While surrounded by forest I wonder why I have become a misanthrope, am I not part of a blockade to help these trees, all of these people surely have some form of an environmentalist bent that has brought them here, and now the same dance occurs when we humans gather, distributing resources by necessity, communally making decisions and maintaining outright chaos. When we come to any new community we look for those who have confidence and experience to guide us. This is not an issue if we have other blockaders who can hold these people of influence accountable. If those who gain confidence and prestige are left unchecked they will turn into our managers and construct a social milieu that will subvert newcomers into allowing them to attain their sinister desire of upward mobility.

As I drift back into perception of my surroundings I realise that I am underneath a tarp lacking walls, only a rooftop that shelters from events above. Headlights shine in the front from what one could describe as the hellish rays of force. We see these people as grey and green and blue but I do not know how they see us, potentially opinionated and passionate? This deadly combination is straightforward to take advantage of, luckily there are some that can see through their own passions to not fall for the trappings of the law. As much as strong convictions towards a future may have been a motivational factor for many of us that do not fit into the neat order of the cities, they can also be exploited by the force once we are in the confines of the game that they play with us. On the other hand here I sit with pad and paper writing the confusions of a harrowing yet edifying moment with introspective ugliness. This may be an emotional exposition, no more rooted in a lack of logic and reason than those that simply act with improvisational grace on the front lines, we are all a victim of our circumstance and I cannot be one to speak for others despite these attempts. Even the events that I have scribbled down here evade me. I write of those out there that seek acceptance, those that take advantage of others, and those that work hierarchies and social currencies to bring about their security in a specific power struggle. Am I any different? This is where my confusion lies, maybe it is me who is hiding from the world surviving on donations, or maybe it is me who is the arrestable slave driver? Whatever the case I realise I come from a concrete and intensely indoctrinated way of living. To step into a radical

space that vows to eradicate the ills of colonial society will not simply wash away my culpability, it takes continual reflexive critical awareness to comprehend that one is perpetuating vile behaviour in spaces that claim to be void of this behaviour. Language acts as an opaque veil that hides experience behind it. We construct utopias in the way we speak of our surroundings but disturbingly perpetuate our antics again and again without acknowledging the harm it brings. In turn, creating an autonomous anarchical defence camp in name but in action constructing a lawless dehumanising neo-settler arrestable processing factory.

Rogue Helicopter

In early September 2021 I found myself heading back to Fairy Creek again. My destination this time was the Hive. The rain had been falling in sheets, unrelentingly. I had spent a couple hours doing the rounds and saying my hellos, and then helping with the kitchen when I heard that an individual with a helicopter was coming by with a sling (basically a big net) to carry materials in. I had experience working with helicopters as a result of my job, so I figured I could help. A couple of other land defenders and I carried bag after bag of concrete into a clearing in the center of Hive, and secured everything that was at risk of being sucked into the helicopter's rotors. This was no easy feat, given the strength of the rotors, and the slightly shambolic nature of our camp. Shortly after we had piled our supplies in position, we heard the blades of the helicopter as they cut through the low hanging cloud on its way towards us.

The reduced visibility that came with the clouds was both an asset and a risk, as it obfuscated the helicopter, but also made it more difficult to navigate. On top of this, the pilot had illegally covered the identifying markings on the helicopter, and disabled its callsign so as to remain anonymous. The helicopter dropped the sling, and we loaded 35 bags of concrete in a layered square in the center. That worked out to be around 700 pounds, and we knew that the carrying capacity of the helicopter was around 800. We wanted to err on the side of caution. We secured the sling, and gave the signal to the pilot that they were good to leave. They disappeared through the clouds, and shortly after the sound of their rotors began to fade.

We were a little concerned for their safety, given that it was so difficult to see anything and would surely be more treacherous a flight. Our concerns were assuaged when we saw the empty sling coming back through fog and cloud. Once again, the sling was lowered, we began packing the sling the second time we put two or three dragons in alongside the concrete, while making sure that the sling wasn't too heavy. We were concerned that the sharp metal edges of the dragon may rip the bags of concrete in the sling, and did our best to pack them in the most secure way possible. We gave the signal again, and they were off without issue.

After the slings were dropped near River (slightly towards Mario), land defenders managed to cache a lot of the supplies, before the cops could confiscate what remained. For once, land defenders could actually be happy to hear the rotors of a helicopter overhead. All things considered, moving such a massive quantity of concrete to the front lines, even if some of it was seized, should be claimed as a significant success.

<https://vancouverisland.ctvnews.ca/rcmp-say-helicopter-provided-supplies-to-old-growth-logging-protesters-in-fairy-creek-area-1.5577246>

Water Falling on Granite: Deference Politics, Indigenous Leadership, and Anarchist Relationality

Critical, inquisitive attitudes will generally serve us better than any form of dogmatism. If one group or tendency can accomplish their goals alone, then let them do so... If one can only work with those one can bully, intimidate, or shame, it should not be surprising if one's allies lack conviction, courage, and intelligence. The clear articulation of differences, criticisms, and concerns is a strength in movements, but ideally, they should be articulated in a spirit of mutual education and learning, lest they become a part of the repressive landscape itself, serving police and developers as various tendencies and cliques slowly cannibalize each other. -The City in the Forest

One evening at Fairy Creek I planned to hike into the area that was once River Camp. At this time nothing remained of the camp except some debris and evidence that a grader had been working on the road. The blockades on Granite Main had held for 5 months, but the cops were now able to continually patrol all the way to the cutblocks at Heli. Consequently, the strategy was shifting to bush camps and pop-up actions as everyone remaining was spread out in the woods to avoid being seen on the roads. Communication between groups was a challenge; it was hard to tell exactly what was going on. Logging seemed imminent. Before heading out at dusk, I was introduced to a few Indigenous people who were visiting from their own distant traditional territory.¹ They had been to the blockade previously and had just returned that day. I was asked to accompany them as I had been given beta on how to navigate a possible new route. It took us until the middle of the night but we made it to our destination, having managed to elude police attention. We parted ways and camped separately.

The next morning, I was able to find some land defenders keeping a low profile in the forest, well off the road. When I mentioned who I'd hiked in with, the reply I got was a very earnest "Oh great, that means we have Indigenous leadership now!" I was puzzled by this and didn't know how to respond. Eventually, I interpreted their comment to mean that they didn't know what to do in the current state of affairs, and wanted someone else to have all the answers.

Another Fairy Creek land defender, who wishes to remain anonymous, shared this experience from being on a frontline:

Once word got around to a few people that I was Indigenous, people were like, "What do we need to do? What kind of ceremony?" I was like, don't consult me on how to do things "in a good way" just cause I'm Indigenous. I might as well be a settler here, I haven't a fucking clue. Oh, actually, I do know a good way to do something: drop the witchy woo-woo tone, grab a breaker bar and help us dig. And if you don't want

¹ I have left out the name of their nation out of consideration for privacy.

to do that, please just find us some tobacco. But stop putting me on a pedestal, it's dehumanizing.

Introduction

Building the types of relationships needed to sustain ourselves and advance anti-colonial struggles is hard and messy work. Intersectional and anti-oppression perspectives offer insight on unpacking the ways that oppression is reinforced and perpetuated not only by the mega-institutions of church, state, and capitalism, but by all of us in our daily lives. Understanding the perspectives of those we struggle alongside, especially those who experience different forms of marginalization and oppression than we do, has the potential to transform our personal relationships and what is possible in land defense struggles.

In building individual connections based on respect and reciprocity, it is vital to consider the possible power differentials of the different social positions we occupy. One important way this gets put into practice in movement spaces is by making sure that marginalized voices get heard. However, this laudable tenet can be distorted into an authoritarian ideology when it is used to claim that the most oppressed people should be leading collective struggles, and that identity categories should be the defining criteria for this kind of authority. While this would be preferable to movements being led by those *least* affected by oppression, I challenge the forms that these hierarchies take, as well as the assumption that someone needs to be in charge at all. I argue that these power structures actually perpetuates some of the very systems they seek to dismantle. By painting a morally palatable veneer onto alternative expressions of domination, the possibilities for more authentic relationships within our lives and our movements are greatly diminished. As there are no widely agreed-upon terms for this style of activism, I will be referring to it as *deference politics*.²

Deference politics inherits colonial power relations such as representational politics and an excessive deference to authority. Applied prescriptively, it is, like all ideologies, rigid and dehumanizing. Instead of working to transform settler guilt into something healthy and sustainable, it is manipulated, leading to the preservation of behaviors that tokenize, exoticize, and essentialize Indigenous peoples. It is a white savior complex built on martyrdom.

There have been excellent pieces written criticizing the inherent authoritarianism of this particular way of constructing hierarchy,³ but little has been written on how deference politics actually projects colonial assumptions onto anti-colonial land defense struggles. An anti-authoritarian perspective does much to combat these hierarchical pitfalls, but on its own a Eurocentric analysis of power only goes so far. Combining anti-oppression principles with a better understanding of Indigenous sovereignty while also focusing on more liberatory interpersonal relationships holds promise. It also raises new questions.

² One common, but unsatisfactory term for this is 'identity politics'. It means quite different things to different people and its meaning has changed over time and place. Instead, I have borrowed the term 'deference politics' from the zine *Affinity Fraud and Exploitable Empathy*.

³ While I value the critiques offered, they are often so scathing that they're either missing a lot of nuance or they are preaching to the converted. One zine that actually strikes a balance and builds some bridges is *Lines in the Sand*.

Half-Baked Expectations of Leadership

The project of politicizing Indigenous identity produces Indigenous actors assuming roles in a political theatre that ultimately alienates our autonomy.

But if we study civil movements, this is apparently how we qualify for solidarity.

–Klee Benally

Settlers frequently bring their own unexamined colonial expectations of power into anti-colonial struggles, often based more on preconceived notions than longstanding Indigenous practices. The spectrum of leadership practices within Indigenous communities is broad.⁴ Even within a given nation, there can be multiple forms of leadership practiced across space and time, sometimes even changing season to season. Any casual attempt to extract lessons from Indigenous peoples, devoid of the context of each specific nations' practices, is inadequate. Impositions that disregard actual Indigenous traditions of collective decision making are a core part of the colonial project. Asserting that an Indigenous person in a colonial position constitutes Indigenous Leadership, whether it's Indian Act band councils or the Green Party of Canada,⁵ is a prime example of this. An Indigenous person being in charge does not make something automatically decolonial.

Facing a disconnect from community and land, it is not surprising that many settlers turn to Indigenous cultures in search of spiritual, practical, and strategic guidance. But these yearnings, combined with settler culture's lack of experience with non-colonized institutions of mentorship, can unwittingly invite the kind of shallow Indigenous representation that leaves the door wide open to grifters, "pretendians", authoritarians, and even infiltrators⁶ and predators.

There are many ways that settlers' misguided expectations of leadership fail in practice, such as an expectation that an Indigenous person, any Indigenous person, even one who is living far from their own territory, should be the decision maker for a given group. This externalizing of the existential responsibility places an unreasonable burden on those who may have no interest in making decisions for others. Even if they would accept such a responsibility, "it limits the agency of both the leader and the led. The leaders are left with the weight of logistical and strategic responsibility, unable to improvise and act in more creative ways" (Eugene).

When an Indigenous person has earned the title of aunty or elder within their community, it may confer varying degrees of leadership, but these titles imply relationships that cannot be taken for granted outside of that specific cultural context. After all, what knowledge do settlers have of "who vets, who screens, who filters people's claims to be able to assume these positions of authority?" (Harp). Even if they are a matriarch or a hereditary chief, affording someone an unquestioned following shirks the responsibility of building relationships based on a shared understanding and participating in collective decision making.

⁴ My own understanding of just how broad these range of practices are was greatly expanded from reading *The Dawn of Everything*. Another shorter example is *Indigenous Anarchic Hierarchy*. A more local recommendation is *Secwepemc People, Land, and Laws*.

⁵ After all, the C-IRG unit of the RCMP is headed by an Indigenous person, Gold Commander John Brewer.

⁶ There has been a pattern of undercover cops posing as marginalized an oppressed people in order to evade scrutiny within movement spaces. See *Courage Confidence Connection Trust*, *Toronto G20 Main Conspiracy Group*, *Damage Control*, and *How an Undercover Colorado Springs Police Officer...* These tactics and other tactics of people manipulating collective principles for personal gain are explored at length in *Affinity Fraud and Exploitable Empathy*.

Elements of Hierarchies: Fairy Creek

Leadership was continually in flux at Fairy Creek and took many forms. Some leaders were Indigenous, some not. Some were hands-off and encouraged everyone's autonomy, with no interest in establishing hierarchy, while others assumed a more top-down style. Some led by claiming to be an authority, while others claimed to act as a proxy for said authorities. Some Indigenous leaders genuinely earned the respect from those they worked with. Yet, hierarchies that positioned Indigenous people as the ultimate decision makers could be found at various times and places. Some of the factors that enabled such dominance hierarchies included settlers with ill-conceived notions of Indigenous leadership, adherents of deference politics willing to manipulate settler guilt, and *some* Indigenous people exhibiting a more top-down style, or at least being complacent with being put in such a position.

We can contrast such dominance hierarchies with the *respect-based* hierarchy of Waterfall Camp. New arrivals to Waterfall⁷ were often quick to realize they were out of their element in such an intense frontline. While many aspects of the camp were always in flux, there were people who had been around long enough to develop a complex understanding of all the variables: the geography, the ebb and flow of police enforcement, supply chains, how to build hard blocks, what strategies had been tried so far, and how to keep track of all the moving parts. Consequently, these people's opinions carried weight based on their knowledge, continual efforts, experience, and level-headedness.

Strategic decision making consisted of careful deliberation and consensus. This process was only open to those that had organically emerged as leaders, but it was not a static group. It was an ever-changing mix of people, as new people got brought in and others took breaks. While strategy meetings were closed, anyone that wished to participate in the resulting actions would be brought into the loop after a plan had formed. People could also carry out their own plans, though it was suggested that they seek feedback from the more experienced people, since so many tactics had already been tried over the months. Starhawk's description of Pacesetters is spot on:

In a crisis, when a deadline looms, when we need to put shoulder to the wheel and work round the clock to get the job done, a good Pacesetter inspires by example. She does more than just manage and drive the work; she gets her own hands dirty, digs in and does it. Bouts of Pacesetting frenzy can energize a group and get it through moments of crisis.

In other words, leadership at Waterfall was a hierarchy based on respect. Still, while it wasn't based on dominating others, it is fair to question the potentially coercive aspects that did crop up, such as the ways that personal charisma factored in and how consent practices weren't always optimal.⁸

⁷ All descriptions of Waterfall here are confined to the period from early June 2021 until the HQ raid in early Aug 2021.

⁸ Regarding consent, there were a number of women in leadership positions at Waterfall that can be credited for making sure consent was a part of the culture there, but there were still shortcomings. If we take the consent qualifiers of 'free, prior, and informed' and layer that onto frontlines that have severe time restraints, the fog of war, and a constantly changing environment, it's fair to imagine people might feel socially pressured (often indirectly), or feel put on the spot without time to truly think something over, lacking all of the information relevant to make

For the final two months that Waterfall was the frontline, desperation never took hold despite round-the-clock police presence. Would-be leaders on the Granite Main side (HQ and River) however, lacked exposure to police enforcement and desperation quickly spread there once Granite became the frontline. Despite being the most qualified to bring calm and strategy to Granite, Waterfall's leaders were not well known on that side of the blockade and in the ongoing panic they simply weren't listened to. It was a frustrating lesson and left some of their egos bruised, but the Waterfall leaders did not have the necessary relationships to be leading people outside of the context where that leadership taken shape. The respect that had previously empowered them to lead had been lost in translation.

In considering the impacts of deference politics in different types of hierarchies, there was one other factor that should not be underestimated. During the peak of blockade activity that summer, any conflicts playing out on social media or in group threads were easy to avoid. Most people who were physically at the blockade weren't paying attention to anything online. As more people returned to civilization for short breaks and the number of days where there wasn't an active blockade increased (leaving those still on the ground with more downtime), they started becoming aware of the ongoing blockade-related in-fighting that had been happening online. These internet arguments and denunciations consistently proved to be more destructive examples of deference politics than anything happening at the blockades. Even though nearly all the worst exchanges took place online, they increasingly had a demoralizing effect, both on people still on the ground, as well as those who had gone home for a rest and were considering whether or not to head back to the blockades. Confidence was sapped, a fear of lateral hostility grew, and there was a decreased willingness to voice dissenting opinions.

As time went on and many of the camps were wiped out, the options in this Choose Your Own Adventure movement became limited. People ended up stuck at camps with dynamics they found frustrating (such as deference politics), and their only options were to try to endure or to go home. The strategic plans coming out of this more centralized approach simply didn't benefit from the same sort of rich, deliberative collective process that had helped hold ground for so long at Waterfall. Many came to believe that they no longer had a voice in decision making, regardless of the experience they had gained in acting semi-autonomously over many months at the blockade.⁹

The problem with the dominance hierarchies based on deference politics was not that Indigenous people were in leadership positions. The problem was a political practice that took advantage of settler guilt, transforming it into an authoritarian weapon of shame. These "Indigenous Leadership" hierarchies were less based on respect for the individual at the top and more on essentializing the social category they represented. Oppressed peoples often have important insights and experiences worth listening to, and there were many opportunities for settlers to learn from various Indigenous elders throughout the blockade, but marginalization and oppression are in no way necessary or sufficient predictors of leadership qualities.

Maintaining domination need not rely on the power of those at the top, it can also be enforced by the willingness of its participants to ensure conformity. In the context of deference

an informed decision, or that the expectations established that allowed consent to be given might unknowingly and unexpectedly be violated. For other critiques of frontline dynamics that applied to Waterfall as well as other camps, see the two paragraphs on power dynamics in *The Concrete Ceiling* in Creeker Vol 2.

⁹ Indigenous people should have as much right as anybody to be wrong. Indigenous people can make all the call bad calls they want, just like non-Indigenous people can. What matters is how people decide who to listen to.

politics, creating and maintaining a power-over apparatus is partially accomplished by conditioning one's peers into compliance through a logic of punishment that threatens shame against those that would speak out. Some of this happens regardless of one's position within the hierarchy. Frequently though, one of the driving forces of deference politics are activists that see other people as a *means* to secure their own advantageous position in a power structure, rather than understanding each person as an *end unto themselves*. It should be no surprise when their practice consists of building their own social capital at the expense of others. Installing oneself in a middle management position in this type of power structure bears a strong resemblance to the politicians of the prevailing order who also base their careers on false claims of representation.¹⁰

Feedback Loops

Power tends to concentrate, and even the most benevolent and empowering leader may unconsciously begin to hoard power over time. When power becomes permanent and static, the group often stagnates. –Starhawk

A defining feature of dominance hierarchies is not only the reduced influence of lower status people, but the personal risk in questioning those who are in higher positions of power. People bite their tongues, those at the top remain out of touch, and a negative feedback loop ensues. This basic separation dooms its asymmetrical relationships to inauthenticity.

Putting a marginalized person on a pedestal is racist, dehumanizing, destructive to group dynamics, and reduces people to a singular aspect of their identity. Positioning someone as an authority in this way, sometimes without them even consenting to that position, stifles possibilities for meaningful collaboration and reciprocal accountability. When movements lack relationships strong enough to handle friction within the group, “fear of conflicts causes problems in itself, with hesitation breeding inappropriate levels of deference” (Barker/Pickerill). One of the ways this excessive deference comes up is people who “seek power, not by achievement but by association”:

They attempt to get close to powerful people, hoping some of that charisma will rub off and that they will gain respect by association. We all get a bit of a thrill from connecting to someone we admire... But some people seek contact and favor from the powerful as a means to gaining power themselves. Such behavior can be destructive to the group, because it decouples power from responsibility and creates channels of power that are not open or transparent. Vicarious power-seekers are also dangerous to the people who hold power. Sucking up is also sucking out, and it can drain energy and attention. The more power you accrue, the more you must fend off people's projections and assumptions — and that gets exhausting. While you seem to be in the center of the spotlight of attention, you may actually feel very invisible as a real person. (Starhawk)

Sucking up has other unforeseen consequences. When settlers always say yes and never disagree with Indigenous people in leadership positions, there is less space for any critical Indige-

¹⁰ Many strong advocates for deference politics seem to be young, middle class university students looking to transfer their class position and privilege into their activism.

nous voices that present. In addition, people already on the fringe are further marginalized if they aren't well accustomed to activist norms of what is considered proper language and etiquette.

Non-natives often choose which Indigenous voices to privilege by defaulting to Indigenous activists they determine to be better known, easier-to-contact or "less hostile." This selectivity distorts the diversity present in Indigenous communities and can exacerbate tensions and colonially imposed divisions between Indigenous peoples. (Walia)

The Ally-Ship Wreck

In many instances a support role might indeed be the appropriate option for someone engaging in a particular movement, due to a variety of factors specific to either the individual or the particular struggle. It is only when models of allyship are predicated purely on service, where settlers are expected to participate solely as supporters and never as full accomplices, that this becomes problematic. Such separation leaves little space for reciprocal relationships. Sometimes this resembles charity, sometimes a cult.

Liberal activism keeps its aim low, merely trying to get a bigger piece of the pie for the excluded. It is a partial struggle, incomplete in its understanding of power, and compounded by its own unintentional othering that reduces to an abstraction those it claims to be in solidarity with. It seeks solely to mend institutions of colonial power in order to better include everyone in the democratic task of selfdestruction and ecocide. A system built on dispossession will never allow more than crumbs of decolonization.

Deference politics is based on a domination that inadvertently reproduces extractive logic by using people for their identities, reinforcing binary thinking in the process. It is not only bad politics but, like liberal activism, it becomes another partial struggle by perpetuating the systems it wishes to dismantle, further entrenching the status quo in the process.

It is imperative that we acknowledge the impact of oppression within systems of domination. When members within a group have unequal access to power, this changes how they show up, including whether they show up at all. Too many movements of the past have failed to take into account the voices of the most marginalized, while other movements have promoted listening without any expectation for meaningful relationship building. This reduces the agency of each group member into pre-assigned roles, such as saviours and victims, instead of potential collaborators.

Let us be done with trying to grow the quantities of comrades without attending to the quality of our relationships to one another, and to whether we're acting as we wish to act. -(Eugene)

Relationality – Kinship, Friendship, Affinity

In pursuing relationships that undermine the separations inherent in colonial social conditioning, deference politics is not the only hurdle. Anti-authoritarian perspectives can bring a balance to land defense struggles, provided they are grounded in anti-oppression principles, but even so, there remains the inherent tendency of settler culture to project itself onto Indigenous

practices.¹¹ For example, settlers lacking an understanding of traditional Indigenous leadership often question the legitimacy of hereditary chief governance models, as this is often an unfamiliar and easily misunderstood practice to them. Understanding the potential conceptual overlaps, and disagreements, between settler land defenders and Indigenous cultures is important work. Given certain “ethical commitments and strategic commonalities, it appears possible and preferable to (re)create relations that sustain differences, rather than trying to deny or eliminate them” (Lasky).

There is undoubtedly a contrast in how anti-authoritarians and some Indigenous peoples conceptualize leadership. The former tends to have a ‘don’t tell me what to do’ allergy to leadership, while for the latter, respect for elders can be a fundamental cultural value. These values may seem incompatible at first glance, but “the lack of coercive power in traditional Indigenous political structures circumvents many anarchist objections to government and nationhood” (Barker/Pickerill). For many Indigenous nations, relations lacking domination “were the norm, wherein authority was not exercised through force... but through exemplary conduct, oratory skill, and according to traditional protocols” (Lasky). However, in understanding the ways that some indigenous nations eschewed domination-based hierarchies, we shouldn’t deny that there were nations that did have more hierarchical traditions, nor should we assume that we can always tell the difference at first glance:

Of course, some forms of Indigenous government can also be read as inherently hierarchical. This reality may cause tensions between anarchist values such as reciprocity, respect, dialogism and flexibility of authority: these may exist simultaneously with seemingly ossified forms of domination and class oppression. However, in countless Indigenous contexts, these forms of governance are structured in ways meant to be consistently re-invigorated, negotiated, and challenged through ceremony – rather than as the static modes of hierarchy often wrought by colonial interventions. (Kauanui)

A land defender who wishes to remain anonymous offers this:

Non-hierarchical relations are not easily perceived by outsiders of Indigenous communities. The practice of, and value placed, on non-hierarchical relations are often embodied in subtle expressions/ceremonial times/daily practices/ways of being on the individual/family level. These are more/less unspoken, inherent traits and aren’t usually obvious to the outsider looking in. And of course, within the communities, there’s variation of this within families. Some participate in their own colonization, others actively resist every day in small ways. For the most part, ways of being go unrecognized.

What kinds of relationships form the strongest decentralized resistance communities? Some writers have urged anti-authoritarians to grapple with Indigenous realities of relationality to “alter their basic practices of solidarity and affinity with respect to Indigenous communities... by

¹¹ “Anarchist analysis alone is not protection against participation in dominating power dynamics.” (Barker/Pickerill) “Though there are important intersections between anarchism and indigeneity, there might also be a relationship between anarchism and settlement as well. And, if we acknowledge this is an uneasy relationship, then we need to ask more difficult questions, such as how anarchists have at times slipped into upholding the structure of settlement in the effort to advance anarchist politics” (Warburton).

pursuing deep understandings of place-based relationships” (Barker/Pickerill). Indigenous relationality can be defined as being in reciprocal, consensual, and sustainable relations with all the natural world, including humans, land, plants and animals.

When it comes to relationships between people, Indigenous relationality places the basis of community within extended family ties. Anti-authoritarians however, often locate the basis of community within friendship and affinity, frequently as a reaction to their negative experiences with families of origin. Yet some indigenous and non-Indigenous anarchists have pointed out that family ties tend to form stronger bonds than any based on voluntary association.¹²

Many land defenders at Fairy Creek underwent the type of intense bonding that occurs among those who endure extreme experiences together. Perhaps this creates a type of hybrid relationship based on combined elements of family, friendship, and affinity. What other family-but-not-family relationships could be experimented with to inform an anarchist relationality?

The challenge for anti-authoritarians “is to find their own new way of looking at — and being in — place that compliments but does not replicate what Indigenous peoples are attempting to do. Replication of relations, as with appropriation of voice, is an unwelcome and unneeded imposition... We can never exist in the Indigenous part of place-based networks, but we can interact through the network as separate, respectful, and vitally inter-dependent elements” (Barker/Pickerill).

Permission is Complicated

Indigenous people are a small minority in Canada overall, often even on their own territory. Many settler land defenders do not have personal relationships with local Indigenous people, especially with modern segregation intensifying this separation. It’s not like someone could just post an ad online looking for accomplices. This is a tough bind, where settlers interested in exploring overlapping affinity with Indigenous people often can’t find opportunities to do so.¹³ Without these relationships, it becomes hard to ethically navigate taking action on Indigenous territory.

Some activists prioritize seeking permission from local nations before engaging in disruptive public actions. Yet, there frequently seems to be no difference between seeking permission and cherry-picking, in which case the value of such token permission is that there has been a modicum of communication rather than none at all. Nobody seems to ask permission to live on stolen land or to go to work in a capitalist economy. Perpetuating the cycle of colonization and resource extraction is built into our daily lives. It seems that only when someone suggests disrupting the status quo that people suddenly want to consult with protocol. This leads to a sort of gatekeeping where everyone who does not have the necessary relationships feels paralyzed. There needs to

¹² Gord Hill in *Indigeneity, Sovereignty, Anarchy* and *Aragorn!* in *Towards a Non-European Anarchism* and *Locating and Indigenous Anarchism*. Sever in *Land and Freedom*: “It is time to forget about affinity. Those who currently call themselves anarchists tend to be the warriors and messengers of communities that do not yet exist... The concept of affinity has done enough damage. It is a thoroughly rationalist notion, based on the idea of sameness as prerequisite for equality, and equality as something desirable... What holds the group together is not affinity, but a collective project. Only amidst a generalized scarcity of trust and sharing does it become possible to confuse these two binding forces. The community, as a collective project, does not need affinity to hold together. What it needs is sharing, a common narrative, and above all, difference.”

¹³ For some settlers, exploring a relationship with the land comes easier, though this risks perpetuating the undermining of Indigenous relationships to land, an erasure that has always been part of the strategy of colonization.

be other choices besides zero action and action only on the condition of permission gained by tokenizing Indigenous people.¹⁴

In navigating permission, it can be useful to parse out how the differences between anti-colonial actions and decolonization might lead to a more informed practice that increases options for action. For our purposes here, I would define “anticolonial action” to mean action that either intentionally, or incidentally, destabilizes colonial logistics, perhaps even if the action isn’t explicitly anti-colonial. Within land defense, this could mean, for instance, pushing state and industry off the land, such as defending old growth forests. Contrast this with defining “decolonization” as a process that repeals the authority of the colonial state and re-centers Indigenous land-based cultural practices in a way that directly increases Indigenous sovereignty.¹⁵ There is a rich history of Indigenous people actively engaged in cultural resurgence and land defense on their own territory. In these cases, intact traditional Indigenous leadership practices often form an integral part of the landscape. Settler involvement in those struggles necessarily depends on building close relationships with local Indigenous people, becoming familiar with protocol, and sometimes, accepting a support role.

Given this distinction, decolonization is always anti-colonial but anti-colonial actions aren’t always decolonial. But when all anti-colonial actions are expected to be fully decolonial, this chokes off many possible actions that could otherwise be complementary. An informed perspective recognizes the spectrum between the two and how one requires more close relationships with and permission from local Indigenous communities than the other. At their best, anti-colonial actions create space and possibility for decolonial efforts to occur. Ideally, settlers can take stock of their own openness to various hierarchies and their own relationship networks, then exercise agency in deciding how and where to act. This decision would be based in a sense of humility, consideration of what range of actions is appropriate, and always seeking to increase their understanding of local Indigenous place-based relationships and struggles.

Conclusion

Deference politics claims the path to justice requires putting oppressed people into positions of power. But attempting to invert the usual colonialist identity pyramid within would-be radical spaces only refurbishes coercive hierarchies. How can blindly following someone that you don’t have a close relationship with lead to anyone’s liberation? Subversive alliances based on organic relationships are far more promising than prescriptive spectacles of allyship. We can choose, each of us, to prioritize mutually-nurturing “intimate relationships of reciprocity, humility, honesty, and respect” (Simpson).

Settlers wishing to be in alignment with anti-authoritarian principles and still be in solidarity with Indigenous struggles have their work cut out for them. Coming to terms with personal colonial baggage, building better relationships, and being mindful of the types of hierarchies

¹⁴ While wanting a blanket indigenous endorsement of an undefined action in order to confer legitimacy is often problematic, I do want to acknowledge that there might often be a relevant protocol for these situations and I that the consequences of disruptive actions on marginalized people should be taken into consideration.

¹⁵ There is something potent in refusing to use the term *decolonization* in the vague metaphorical sense that is common, instead reserving the term only to mean something like “Land Back”. For the background on this, see *Decolonization is not a Metaphor*. This means finding different language to describe the things that decolonization has become a metaphor for.

we participate in, is tough work! Yet even when the types of relationships being sought elude cultivation, there still needs to be the possibility for action.

Inevitably, in trying to navigate all these considerations, “there will be difficulties and failures in attempts to find the role of anarchist [practice] in these relational networks of place; that is why it is important to pursue relationships with the ethic of radical experimentation firmly in mind. Settler anarchists must in part be willing to transcend activist spaces and identities, to seek creative alliances, to literally ‘give up activism’. There is no perfect way to engage in solidarity with Indigenous communities, to understand networks of place, or pursue decolonization” (Barker/Pickerill).

As Tawinikay says in *Reconciliation is Dead*:

You are not just cogs in the solidarity machine, you too can take up struggles... you can fight parallel battles towards the same goal... Don’t romanticize the native peoples you work with. Don’t feel that you can’t ever question their judgment or choose to work with some over others. Find those that have kept the fire alive in their hearts, those who would rather keep fighting than accept the reconciliation carrot. Don’t ever act from guilt and shame... And don’t let yourself believe that you can transcend your settlerism by doing solidarity work. Understand that you can, and should, find your own ways to connect to this land.

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Play Soggy Games, Win Stupid Prizes: Movement Defense and the ENGO

by some anarcho ex-soggies

The History of Save Old Growth: by means of an update and epilogue

In the Creeker II article “Know Your ENGO Enemies”, it remained to be seen the trajectory of the organization Save Old Growth (SOG). For the sake of movement history, it shall be reiterated here.

In late 2021, Roger Hallam, newly exiled from Extinction Rebellion (XR) for his inability to work with others, began unofficially leading an international offshoot of XR: the A22 Network. While a distinct entity from XR, A22 receives funding from the same source—the Climate Emergency Fund (CEF).

Similar to XR London, XR Vancouver was split between those who wanted more arrestable actions and those who needed a chance to heal. The A22 Network, desirous of a Canadian chapter, wooed the most eager members of XR with an opportunity to be paid for more headline grabbing actions. Within the A22 Network, 10 other countries compete with one another for a limited money pool: mass numbers of sacrificial arrests are required for media attention, and mass numbers of arrest are required to be competitive for funding.

In its first two iterations from January to April, SOG convinced dozens of people to surrender to the state in a multitude of barely-disruptive highway actions. SOG’s actions were generally to block the Trans-Canada Highway by gluing hands to pavement, obtaining fifteen minutes of block time at great personal cost. By April, two of the five founders left because of the pushiest central organizer: Zain Haq (King Push). In the run up to the June Blockades, King Push fought the combined wisdom of the rest of SOG, who argued that there were insufficient humans and resources to sustain three blockades. The June blockades were a fiasco and King Push managed to push out two more central organizers. Thousands of hours of organizing went into marketing, recruiting, and planning the blockades. Originally conceived of as three highway occupations, solicitations went out to sustain camps of dozens of humans, bands were hired, cars for hard-blocks purchased and modified, and hundreds of posters announcing the June blockades were wheatpasted throughout the cities. With little security culture practiced—King Push rolled his eyes at any mention of subterfuge—law enforcement was well aware of both the location and times of the blockades. Any criticism by volunteers was chastised as negativity: build it and they will come! At the Massey tunnel, fifteen minutes of block time was achieved before everyone on the action was arrested and the campers on the Tsawwassen beach chased off. A very hesitant protestor climbed a hastily constructed ladder structure near the Swartz Bay ferry terminal, and

had that structure assaulted by a motorist. After breaking his pelvis and being arrested, the mood was too dour, and everyone left camp. At the Iron Worker's Memorial Bridge, action participants arrived to find that three of the four cars parked near the blockade were already being towed away by police. A single car managed to careen onto the freeway in pursuit, but none of the passengers were able to lock in quickly enough. It was a humorous sight indeed to watch the musicians scattering around the sidewalks of the bridge as they rapidly realized there was not going to be a blockade, let alone a rock concert. Someone in active psychosis, who had attended only two meetings, was seen giving press interviews and had to hastily be squirreled away... unadulterated fiasco.

King Push would not apologize nor take any responsibility, and all the remaining organizers asked him to leave. At this time, new organizers emerged creating a more consent-oriented culture recognizing the need to properly vet candidates and proactively provide information of the consequences of arrest, as well as take better care of people in the court aftermath. But it was too late. As the court system requires months to grind their injustices, new media stories emerged from individuals about manipulation, push culture, and of people feeling abandoned. The remaining organizers could not deny full-throatedly the veracity of the stories coming out. They recognized the SOG brand was toxic and deserved the reprobation and scorn it was receiving. They realized that it was no longer recruiting and—as the crown prosecutor was increasing the carceral outcome—SOG would only increase the penalty to any group fighting in the streets of Vancouver on this (or any other) issue, without moving the legislative needle. Most of the organizers came to realize that SOG was doing harm to the entire movement and decided to shut it down. They were unable to shut it down. So many people had swallowed Roger Hallam's Kool-Aid on "nonviolent civil disobedience" so thirstily, that they were literally convinced that if this specific tactic—whether it was succeeding or not—was not being used, all resistance was at a stand still and the world was over. The A22 Network would not let this tactic disappear in Canada, and King Push had started a new campaign with identical tactics and the backing of Roger Hallam, and that's where you get Stop Fracking Around.

Push Culture: An Arrest MLM

Sitting in a Save Old Growth action-planning meeting, an organizer looks around at all the people who have been arrested too many times and their eyes furtively avoiding capture, awkwardly worried about their continued role in the organization. The organizer asks: *Are you willing to be arrested? If no one is willing, we can't have an action tomorrow. And if no one is willing, who can we call, spend all night frantically calling?*

At a recruitment meeting, an organizer jokes about how they miss getting arrested, miss the feeling of handcuffs; it's been too long. *Are you willing to participate? Are you willing to risk arrest? If so, are you willing to glue?*

Fresh meat needs to be informed a little bit about the consequences of arrest but not too much. We don't want to scare them away. The prosecutor is increasing the sentences. We're not sure what the sentences are if they get arrested now. We could tell them that we're unsure or we can tell them old news... just some community service. We need an action tomorrow after all. We need arrests.

Months and months after the actions, lonely arrestees wish they had more support in court. Where are those organizers now? Meanwhile, King Push gets hailed by national media as a hero, facing deportation, but is never seen at any of the legal solidarity meetings. For King Push, these humans were resources, necessary collateral damage. He didn't really care. At the recruitment meeting, he was so interested when you told him you'd consider arrest, but now, at the courthouse, where did he go? Students facing months-long curfews, fines they cannot afford, and King Push smiles and looks away. It's for the greater good, he'll say. Intermediary arrest-convincers now recognize the damage they've done, the friendships they've burned, resistance members they've pushed away. Organizers find out that King Push had threatened to end friendships for the sake of one more arrest... tomorrow's arrest. Like the CEO looking at quarterly profit, King Push knows the attention economy and his funding depend on every other tomorrow. A trail of burnt-out resisters, broken promises, and too many arrests. The state's eyes fully open to the once possible future insurrectionary fighters. So many resisters are now registered with criminal records with the state, probationary conditions, and all the fear and trepidation repression brings.

Arrests aren't even enough for King Push: his mentor, Roger Hallam, requires remand. Protestors must be herded through symbolic arrests continuously until they are held on pre-trial detention. What happens to their apartment or their bills? That's not King Push's problem. More souls for the grinder.

When XR Montreal realized his serpentine tactics they told him where to go. When Save Old Growth realized his unscrupulous nature and amoral character, they told him they could no longer work together. Then he founded Stop Fracking Around, hoping to hitch his civil disobedient tactic to the Shut Down Canada movement and the Wet'suwet'en struggle. Getting paid to find all the revolutionary fighters in an area and get them arrested is what cops do!

Militants new to this movement, don't listen to those who try to convince you to surrender happily to the state. Form affinity groups with people you trust, cause actual disruption with the goal of disruption, not the goal of arrest. The logic of Save Old Growth/Stop Fracking Around, a crooked 'mean/ends' analysis which seeks to treat those considering resistance solely as a means to leadership's end, is not constrained to this organization. We see it, usually walking hand in hand with the NGO industrial complex, in so many spaces of resistance. It is the logic of XR and of Earth First!, and we've seen it practiced recently far beyond the streets of Vancouver (Stop Line 3, Fairy Creek, etc.) The crown of King Push is worn widely by many would-be kings. The cannon fodder of these movements cannot sustain the repression (dozens of trips to court, fines & legal fees, probation conditions, the trauma of arrest & detention), and are often pushed out of the movement and back into the system. Disruption and anonymity are sustainable, and anyone putting on uncomfortable pressure is not building sustainable movements. "How comfortable are we all with this" should be a paramount concern of action planning, as it is only "we" who keeps "us" safe.

Removing the fangs of a movement: the emergence of the professional messaging class

Just as the Stand.Earth types became the spokespeople at the end of Clayoquot Sound, so too did the Last.Stand types eventually become the curator of the memory of Fairy Creek. What was

once a message of Land Back and radical resistance became a narrative of liberal reform and a social media awareness campaign. There is a certain creeping type who, with smiles and offers of assistance, sneaks its way in the door promising a professional media expertise: *I know all the reporters and politicians. I can get your message out. I can be in charge of your social media.*

This class claims to be professional and for a small stipend they'll provide their assistance. Who knows how many campaigns they are working for simultaneously? How many banners of dead campaigns do they hold like so many crumbs in their talons? At first they assure they won't lead, only advise. But their moderating presence is felt almost immediately: *Oh, that sounds too militant. You should be courting good citizens in good standing. And no masks... masks make you look like an eco-terrorist.*

This class has its own agenda. They are unwilling to risk arrest themselves, though they recognize that arrestees have a sincerity in the minds of the public. They use these arrestees as their mouthpiece: *is it ok if I use your name to quote my lobbyist playscript? I need the names of my 'honorable arrestees'. I need names to speak for.*

Before you know it, they are asking if the radicals would be willing to work with the politicians. *Maybe since you land defenders are trusted, you could work on an NDP campaign.* And paid as this class is, by multiple nebulous ENGOs simultaneously, when everything is crested and the banner is being dropped, it is this professional messaging class who still holds the microphone, still asks for funding for curating a dead media abandoned by militant land defenders. Ada'itsx, Rainforest Flying Squad, Save Old Growth all controlled by those who are the non-militant spokespeople of ancient movements all sounding eerily like one another. These media experts continue to be paid, as they now control the donation boxes, while the radicals who fought in these movements materially struggle to keep fighting. And these experts, be they messaging professionals or unarrestable, careerist, parachuting photographers, position themselves as the reformist authors of movement epitaphs.

Stop Fracking Around will attempt to do this with Shut Down Canada if we let them. Shut Down Canada cannot and will never be liberal reformist. If King Push asks you to get arrested, tell him to frack the frack off.

Editor's Note: Not long after this piece was submitted, the group that had been SOG and SFA had re-branded yet again, this time calling itself On2Ottawa

Legal Update

Creeker Vol 1 erroneously reported that over 400 different people got arrested, but it was actually closer to 1100 different people. Some were arrested up to 5 times, but the overwhelming majority were single arrests.

As of publishing (May 2023), several hundred people have now been convicted and sentenced. The harshest sentences have been either 10 days in jail, fines of \$2000, or 120hrs of community service. Of the 200+ people still in court, over 150 are expected to have their charges dropped on a technicality. Basically, an RCMP commanding officer had prepared a short script (based on the injunction) to read to land defenders before arresting them, but this script has been ruled to have not constituted an adequate notice of the injunction details. In cases where those arrested were not offered a copy of the full injunction, their charges will likely be withdrawn (many already have), though this decision is not retroactive for those that have already been sentenced. This technicality has been referred to as the “Henderson decision”.

There was a legal effort to have an unprecedented Abuse of Process (AoP) group case put forward to challenge the legality of arrests due to civil rights abuses, but a judge decided he was not prepared to put the RCMP on trial and that it was outside of the court’s scope to do such a large review of CIRG. So the larger, more ambitious AoP is now dead and only a handful of the AoP cases will be proceeding on an individual basis.

The Civilian Complaint Review Commission for the RCMP (CRCC) has launched a systemic review of CIRG as a whole. This will cover Wetsuweten struggles, Fairy Ck, and the Argenta blockades, but strangely, not TMX/Tiny House Warriors. The CRCC is a weak body. It is supposedly independent, but of course not really. The review could take years and will result in recommendations that will not be binding.

The injunction is currently in place until Sept 2023 and Teal Jones will continue to appeal for its renewal, ultimately seeking a permanent injunction.

There are also several other minor legal initiatives that are ongoing as well.

We give our lives away for money
and I hate it

Do not ask me about my dream job
For I do not dream of labor

I dream of following the ridgelines to its summit
And the creek winding through the valley

I dream of stalking deer with my lover,
Our heartbeats loud and footsteps silent

I dream of skinny dipping in clear
lakes with friends
and stories by the campfire

I dream of rising with the sun
and howling with the moon

A dream of life in the wild

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