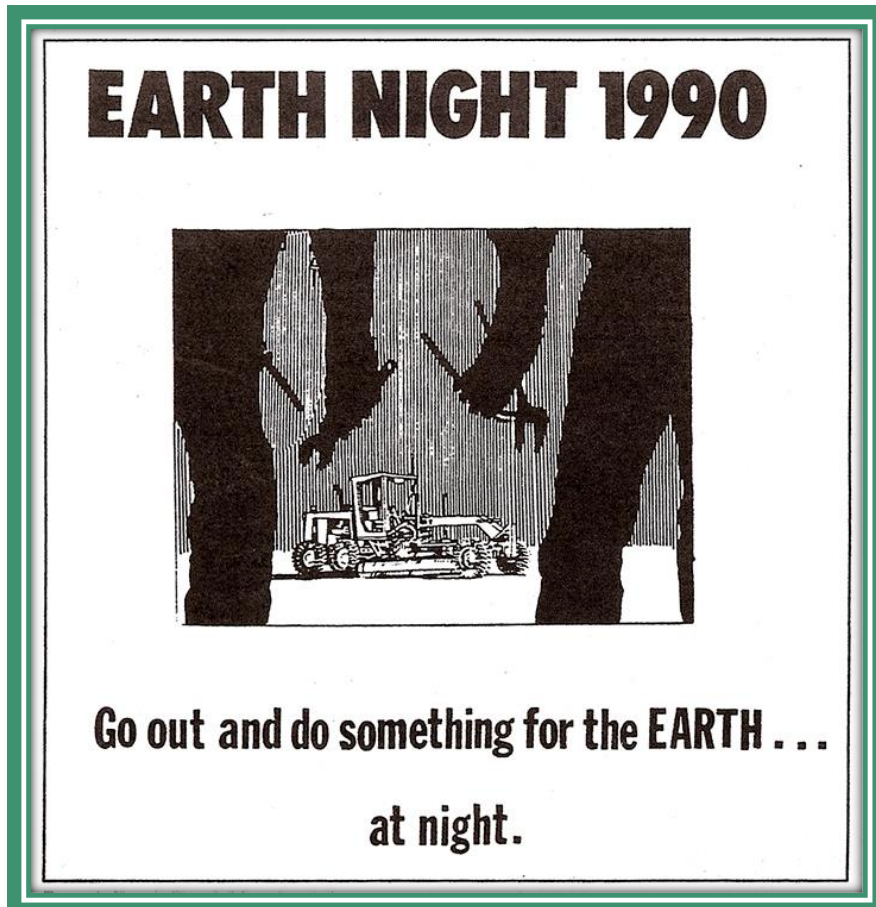


Chapter 34 : We'll Have an Earth Night Action



*Now Earth Day 1990 was Dennis Hayes' vision,
But instead of bringing us together it only caused division,
He said turn down your thermostat and recycle toilet paper,
And as long as they contribute don't confront the corporate rapers.*

—lyrics excerpted from *Earth Night Action*, by Darryl Cherney and Mike Roselle, 1990.

Amidst all of that was going on behind the Redwood Curtain, and the timber wars which were now raging nationally, the 20th anniversary of Earth Day was fast approaching, and even *that* was full of controversy. The hullabaloo wasn't over the hype building over the twentieth Earth Day, (the original having been conceived not just by Dennis Hayes, but also the United Auto Workers), but rather the growing corporate and state influence over the planning of the events commemorating it. Instead of rallies, demonstrations, speeches, and teach-ins addressing the increasing threats to the environment, in particular by the increasingly destructive evolution of capitalism, the day was shaping up to be a collection of "innocuous 'feel-good' festivals" designed by the corporations to "put a shine on the tarnished images of this planet's despoilers." The very "earth-raping" corporations whose records were most deserving of criticism had their hands on the purse strings. Worse still, control over organizing the events had been placed in the hands of the local city and county governments. In municipalities and counties where resource extraction or land speculation funded the campaigns of local politicians, there would be every incentive to soften criticism of such activities. As Earth First!er Jeffrey St. Clair put it, "If your issue is growth, how cleanly can you articulate that when the very people you're fighting are sitting on the planning committee?" The foxes were once again seizing control of the henhouse. In city after city, corporate influence was "green-washing" the event, and some of the worst offenders were the timber corporations clearcutting on California's North Coast.¹

For example, in Anchorage, Alaska, the local coordinator, Joanne Welch, was an ex-Atlantic Richfield (ARCO) employee. ARCO had offered sponsorship, and Welch had informed activists that the committee would accept their donation without condition. As a result, they chose a fancy, expensive downtown convention center for the event's location, instead of free venues available at the University of Alaska, precisely to distance the event from the 1960s image of student radicalism.²

The chairman of Hewlett-Packard, a company that had spewed at least 208,000 tons of chemicals harmful to the Earth's ozone layer, making it one of California's largest ozone depleting companies, was on the national Earth Day board, and the company

was a major sponsor of the event in southern California.³

Organizers of Earth Day in Indianapolis extended an invitation to speak to then Vice President Dan Quayle, whose environmental record was suspect at best.⁴

In Portland, Oregon, Earth Day organizers declared timber issues "off of the table", and decided to allow "primary resource extractors," namely timber and mining companies to co-sponsor the event.

In St Louis, Missouri, organizers accepted \$15,000 from Monsanto Corporation, one of the nation's largest pesticide and herbicide manufacturers. This act sowed a major division in the local environmental community. Environmental activist Jan Richardson noted that some adamantly opposed accepting the donation, while others believed that the company was improving due to continual pressure from environmentalists. The naysayers decided to boycott the event and even threatened a counterdemonstration.⁵

Right in the heart of the brewing "timber wars" in northwestern California, TEAM was listed *first* on the letterhead of groups working on Earth Day in *Mendocino County*. To the Earth First!ers who had been fighting Maxxam now for almost half a decade, it was bad enough that TEAM passed itself off as a "workers' group" in *Humboldt County*; now they were spreading to the south. It was intolerable that they had any connection to Earth Day at all. This wasn't the worst of it, however. The local Corporate Press dailies, including especially the *Eureka Times-Standard* routinely accepted full page paid advertisements from Louisiana-Pacific, Pacific Lumber, and Simpson propagandizing readers about each corporation's "economic contributions" to the community, now accepted ads from them touting their "contributions" to Earth Day. Pacific Lumber in particular, started publishing advertisements with the slogan "For us, every day is Earth Day!", and to emphasize that they intended to exploit this new effort at greenwashing to the hilt, they placed a sign above the main entrance to their Scotia headquarters with the exact same slogan. It was obvious to the environmentalists that Earth Day was being corrupted into something quite contrary to its intended spirit.⁶

Many of the most committed *mainstream* environmental organizations welcomed the participation

³ Turner, March 20, 1990, op. cit.

⁴ Turner, March 20, 1990, op. cit.

⁵ Turner, March 20, 1990, op. cit.

⁶ Turner, March 20, 1990, op. cit.

¹ "The Corporate Buyout of Earth Day", by Dale Turner, *Earth First! Journal*, Eostar / March 20, 1990.

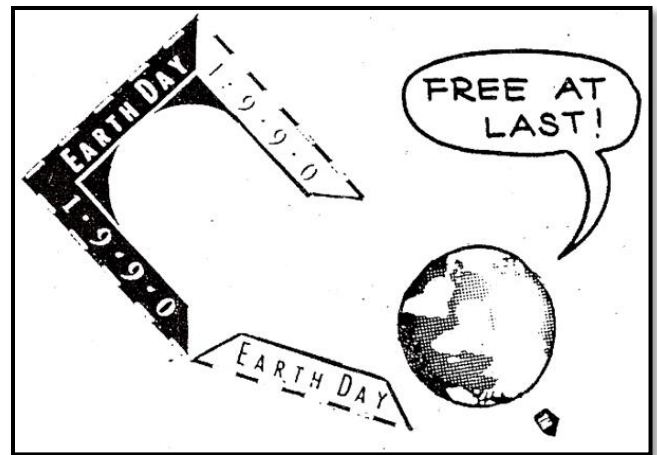
² Turner, March 20, 1990, op. cit.

of corporations and local governments held hostage to “job blackmail”. What was the explanation for the change? The answer was fairly obvious. The large, mainstream environmental organizations, including the Sierra Club, The Nature Conservancy, the Wilderness Society, and others were dominated by middle class, white collar professionals who had become utterly enveloped in Washington DC “inside the beltway” politics, namely, capitalism. Although local and grassroots environmental groups had been offered a seat at the table, they would be a minority of the power controlling the message. There were obvious class biases too. Mike Roselle had been invited to attend the first, national board meeting, which was to be held in Washington, DC, but no travel expenses were offered. For multinational corporations and large nonprofit environmental organizations, the cost of travel was no big deal. To struggling activists who live hand-to-mouth this created an inevitable barrier to entry.⁷ Roselle recounted:

“They said they didn’t have any travel money, but everybody else got there: the Hewlett Packard chairman, all these mucky-mucks who basically have enough money to travel...The only grassroots people on the board weren’t able to make it there...Nothing is being confronted except our own shopping habits...I’m really afraid Earth Day (is) becoming like Labor Day. Nobody talks of Big Bill Haywood. Nobody talks about the automotive strike...We just have fried chicken, wave some flags, and hear a few speeches from politicians...We can’t afford to let this happen to Earth Day.”⁸

Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney were determined to fight back against the corporate employer organized greenwashing of Earth Day, and after a good deal of frustration, they came up with an idea. Darryl Cherney soon publicly announced, “Earth Day has become the Christmas of the environmental movement, paying homage with a consumer orgy...The repeated message of Earth Day 1990 is buy, buy, buy.” To educate the confused masses to the “hijacking of Earth Day,” Earth First! would call for “Earth Day Free Zones,” where not only every day would be Earth Day, but every minute would be “Earth Minute,” with acknowledgement that time was running out. Taking a page from the IWW’s use of Salvation Army hymns with alternate lyrics that artfully conveyed the urgency

of class struggle and the plight of exploited workers, the Earth Day Free Zone symbol was a reworking of the Earth Day 1990 logo, which depicted the planet Earth surrounded by a black and white diamond, which read “Earth Day 1990” twice. The reworked image showed the Earth breaking free by opening the lower right hand side of the diamond while exclaiming, “Free at last!”⁹ At the very least the idea gave Earth First! an opportunity to vent their frustration, but it also offered the greater potential of a chance at education.



The Earth Day Free Zones message was that while it is okay, in fact vital, that corporations *attempt* to clean up their act, it was unacceptable for them to sit on the boards of environmental organizations and control the Earth Day message in order for them to clean up their image and do nothing substantive to *actually* clean up their act. Besides, it was highly unlikely that the economic class and system that had led the world into the mess in the first place was suddenly going to lead the world out of it. Judi Bari summarized this thought by saying, “The only way Dow, DuPont, Exxon, Maxxam and Hewlett Packard are going to become environmentally safe is to shut down...We must challenge the divine right of corporations.”

Darryl Cherney wasn’t satisfied, however, and in a moment of literal dark humor, he suggested an alternative to Earth Day, called “Earth Night.” The idea was stated simply, “While people must make every day Earth Day, not every night can be Earth Night, because people must sleep. We’re asking people to pledge to go out one night a year and do something for the Earth.” To promote “Earth Night”, Darryl Cherney cut and pasted the black and white image used on the cover of *Ecofense*. The graphic depicted

⁷ Turner, March 20, 1990, op. cit.

⁸ Turner, March 20, 1990, op. cit.

⁹ “Earth Day 1990”, by Darryl Cherney, *Country Activist*, March 1990.

two shadowy figures in the foreground, each holding a wrench of a distinct sort in one of their hands. In the background is shown a silent and empty earth moving machine. While it can be inferred from both the statement and the image that Earth First! was suggesting monkeywrenching of some sort, no specifics beyond that are given.¹⁰ No targets were listed, and no suggestions on tactics were offered. And, to everyone's knowledge, there were no actually organized "Earth Night" actions by Earth First!. In fact, Darryl Cherney insisted that the leaflets were "never more than a joke; typical tongue-in-cheek Earth First! Humor",¹¹ and never meant to be taken literally—such was certainly true of many Earth First! songs, slogans, and images, which were designed mainly to provoke discussion through shock value rather than action "by the numbers." In this case Cherney was just venting, and as far as anyone knows, he only sent the leaflets to his list of Earth First! contacts in early April.

However, this time *somebody* took the leaflets literally, their actions had significant consequences, and they set off a mysterious chain of events. Somehow, somebody, perhaps a member of TEAM, WECARE, the Yellow Ribbon Coalition, or even—more ominously—the FBI, managed to intercept a copy. They may have even been one of the contacts on Darryl's list working as an undercover agent, either for Corporate Timber or the government. The leaflet was reproduced, en masse with Cherney's phone number on it (which hadn't been there originally) and mailed to as many hostile gyppos and Corporate Timber supporters as they could find. Almost instantly, Cherney received dozens of threatening, accusatory phone calls. Most of them included threats of violence, but there were a handful of new death threats among the messages as well. At least one caller denounced Cherney as "a terrorist squirrel".¹²

A few weeks later, the situation turned from merely bad to outright disastrous. On the night before Earth Day, some person or persons still unknown to this day, sabotaged power lines in Monterey, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz and Counties, leaving as many as 100,000 residents without power.¹³ While the sabo-

teurs were never positively identified, the targets and the controversy surrounding them bore an eerie resemblance to the sting operation in Arizona that took place one year earlier.



It's not even entirely clear that actual deliberate sabotage was carried out. Damage to power lines, even high voltage electric transmission lines, due to wear and tear, earthquakes, storms, or fallen tree branches is quite common. Sometimes, even repair crews themselves inadvertently caused damage. For example, on Sunday, April 22, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) crews accidentally ignited a small fire while attempting to repair a cut apart wooden power pole near Watsonville. While the wooden pole may have been sabotaged, the disruption it caused was minimal. On the other hand, the inadvertent fire caused a two-hour outage affecting 92,000 Santa Cruz residents. A second cut apart pole was found nearby at 2:58 PM, but crews repaired it without incident or outages. Early in the morning on April

¹⁰ "The Media and the Earth Night Power Pole Sabotage", by Zack Stenz, *Anderson Valley Advertiser*, September 5, 1990.

¹¹ "Eco-Terrorists' Cut Power: Group Says it Caused Santa Cruz Area Chaos", by Michael Benson, Christopher Plummer, and Lee Quarretrom, *San Jose Mercury News*, April 24, 1990.

¹² Harris, David, *The Last Stand: The War between Wall Street and Main Street over California's Ancient Redwoods*, New York, NY, Random House, 1995, page 302.

¹³ "1990: A Year in the Life of Earth First!", by Judi Bari, *Anderson Valley Advertiser*, January 2, 1991.

23, a 100-foot high metal tower, also located in Watsonville was knocked over, cutting power to approximately 92,000 customers for four hours. Later, at 8:55 AM, a power line in Morgan Hill broke and left 95,000 Santa Cruz and Santa Clara County customers devoid of electricity. Whether or not this was the result of sabotage, incompetence, human error, or natural causes was unknown.¹⁴ PG&E even admitted there was no evidence linking the damage to any specific group, let alone Earth First!¹⁵

If it *was* sabotage, there *may* have been a connection with Earth Day. One of the corporate sponsors attempting to muscle in on Earth Day Santa Cruz *was* PG&E. At least a week before Earth Day, copies of the “Earth Night Action” leaflet were spotted around the University of Santa Cruz campus. Alison Bowman, a writer for the Santa Cruz based progressive and activist oriented *City on the Hill*, predicted possible acts of sabotage in an article published in that periodical on April 19, 1990.¹⁶ An anonymous group, whose members have never been identified—if there ever was such a group—calling itself the Earth Night Action Group (ENAG) wrote a *handwritten* letter in a plain white envelope to the media claiming responsibility for the sabotage. Their letter included statements like “In defense of Mother Earth, we say no thanks to lip service from corporate Earth rapists like PG&E.” Delivery of the letter was preceded by a phone call from “an unidentified man with a youthful voice with no discernible accent,” alerting them of the actions. The ENAG was a mystery; *Earth First! Journal* editor Dale Turner told the media that he had no knowledge of the group.¹⁷ FBI spokesperson Duke Diedrich stated that, “he had never heard of the group before” either.¹⁸

¹⁴ “Complete Protection of Powerlines is Impossible Goal”, by Thomas Farragher, *San Jose Mercury News*, April 24, 1990 and Stenz, September 5, 1990, op. cit.

¹⁵ “Vandals Cut Power to 92,000; Ecology Protest Hinted”, by Betty Barnacle, *San Jose Mercury News*, April 23, 1990.

¹⁶ Stenz, September 5, 1990, op. cit.

¹⁷ “Environment Group Says it Caused PG&E Sabotage”, by Paul Avery, *San Francisco Examiner*, April 23, 1990; “Saboteurs Cut Power to Santa Cruz”, *Oakland Tribune*, April 24, 1990; “Eco-Terrorists’ Cut Power: Group Says it Caused Santa Cruz Area Chaos”, by Michael Benson, Christopher Plummer, and Lee Quarnetrom, *San Jose Mercury News*, April 24, 1990; “Group Claims Responsibility: Letters Say ‘Sabotage’ Directed at PG&E”, by John Robinson, *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, April 24, 1990; “Environmental Group Claims it Cut Power Line”, *AP Wire*, *Ukiab Daily Journal*, April 24, 1990; and “Outage This Week Underscores Vulnerability of Modern Society to Saboteurs”, by Elizabeth Fernandez, *San Francisco Examiner*, April 25, 1990.

¹⁸ “Earth Day Protests Turn Violent: 49 Arrested in San Francisco”, staff report, *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*, April 24, 1990.

The name Earth Night Action Group quite likely took its name from the Earth Night Action posters, but beyond that any connection to Earth First! is tenuous at best. It may have been a small group or even one individual. It may have been an actual group of monkeywrenchers, including, perhaps, even Earth Firsters from the Santa Cruz and/or Watsonville area. The group may have actually carried out the sabotage, or they may have merely written the letter to make something out of nothing, especially if the power line sabotage had been accidental or natural causes. A more sinister possibility exists, however, and that is that ENAG may never have existed *at all*, and somebody, perhaps Candy Boak—in yet another attempt to monkeywrench the monkeywrenchers—or even the FBI (in yet another COINTELPRO-like act), conjured them up to paint a much more sinister picture of Earth First! and perhaps implicate Darryl Cherney.¹⁹ Given the lengths that the FBI had gone to the previous year to set up Dave Foreman and Peg Millet, this was well within the realm of possibility.



Confusing matters still further, the name, Earth Night Action Group also sounded suspiciously similar to an actual group called the *Earth Day Action Coalition* (EDAC), which was based in Berkeley. EDAC was hardly created in the spirit of ENAG. It was open and aboveboard, choosing to openly declare itself. It included Earth Firsters and IWW members from the Bay Area, but it was a much larger coalition

¹⁹ “The Earth First! Car Bombing”, by Judi Bari, *Earth First! Journal*, Brigid / February 2, 1990.

which included many other activist tendencies, organizations, and affinity groups united around the common themes of environmental sustainability, workers' rights, peace and social justice, anti-imperialism, and ethnic diversity. EDAC planned, and carried out a successful, multifaceted series of direct actions on the cold and rainy morning of April 23, 1990 at the Pacific Stock Exchange in San Francisco in protest over the corporatization of Earth Day. These actions were only remotely and indirectly connected with Redwood Summer (although EDAC later reorganized as the "Earth Action Network" and *did* participate in Redwood Summer).²⁰

On the aforementioned morning of April 23, over 600 demonstrators took part in a blockade and protest at the Pacific Stock Exchange in San Francisco. The demonstration consisted of various autonomous but federated affinity groups conducting a series of coordinated, but individually planned actions, including a blockade of one entrance by a group all dressed in bear costumes. The blockade succeeded for three hours. The police, in their attempts to reestablish control of the scene actually intensified the disruption by placing their metal crowd control barriers across Bush and Montgomery Streets, thus stopping the flow of automobile traffic, which was made worse by the complex system of one-way streets, trolley, and cable cars in the city's northwest financial district. Ultimately 49 people were arrested on a variety of mostly misdemeanors. It was only at this juncture did the demonstrators grow rowdy, and a handful broke windows at the nearby Bank of America, while a few others pitched golf balls, rocks, and eggs at the police.²¹

This entire affair was, in turn, carried out in coordination with similarly organized direct actions at the New York Stock Exchange in New York City, conducted by a coalition of over 60 organizations who mobilized over 2,000 protesters. 700 riot police arrested 200 demonstrators at the latter protest. At

the latter event, police arrested as many as 204.²² But neither were connected with ENAG or even directly to Earth First!

Meanwhile, the *actual* Earth First! organized protest (in northern California, at least) of the selling out of Earth Day took place on the Golden Gate Bridge, where a group of eight trained tree climbers, led by Greg King, scaled halfway up the cables of the bridge and attempted to hang a banner reading "Save This Planet: (1) Defend Ancient Forests; (2) Ban Fossil Fuels; (3) Earth First!" from its north tower.²³ The climbers parked on the bridge in the middle of a temporary lane closure at 3:15 AM. They then glued the locks shut to the doors leading to the bridge's tower elevators.²⁴ The banner hanging was thwarted by the ironworkers who maintained the bridge, but the event did receive substantial media coverage.²⁵ Thirteen Earth First!ers, including the ground support crew were arrested on the northern end of the Golden Gate Bridge, on the Marin County side in Sausalito.²⁶ Among those arrested were Darryl Cherney and Karen Pickett, even though Cherney and Pickett—who had stayed near a payphone at Vista Point on the northern bridge landing in Marin County to provide media coverage—hadn't even been close to the action.²⁷

The arresting officers were not from the Sausalito or San Francisco Police departments however.

²² "Earth Day Protests Turn Violent", *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*, April 24, 1990.

²³ "Environment (sic) Radicals Scale Gate Bridge; 13 Arrested After Trying to Fly Banner", by Perry Lang, *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 25, 1990; and "Why We Climbed the Bridge", by Jennifer Grant, *Country Activist*, June 1990.

²⁴ "Harris, op. cit., page 319.

²⁵ "Protesters Climb Span; 12 Arrested", by Maura Thurman, *Marin Independent-Journal*, April 24, 1990; "Earth First!ers Scale the Golden Gate Bridge", *AP Wire, Ukiah Daily Journal*, April 24, 1990; "Activists Occupy GG Bridge, 13 Earth First! Militants Seized: Ironworkers Pluck Environmentalists From Atop Bridge", by Eric Brazil and Paul Avery, *San Francisco Examiner*, April 24, 1990; "Backlash to Bridge Protests: Local Officials Call for Harsher Penalties", by Alex Niell, *Marin Independent-Journal*, April 25, 1990; "Earth First! Protest Atop Gate Bridge", *AP Wire, Oakland Tribune*, April 25, 1990; and "Earth First! Climbs the Golden Gate: 13 Arrested in 'Nonviolent,' Pre-Dawn Banner Unfurling Attempt on Bridge", by Mike Geniella and Clark Mason, *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*, April 25, 1990.

²⁶ Bari, January 2, 1991, op. cit.. The thirteen arrestees included Christine Batycki, Darryl Cherney, Lyn G. Dessaux, Michelle Dulas, Brian Gaffney, Jennifer Grant, John K. Green, Mark Heitchue, Tracy Katelman, Greg King, Larry Mayers, David Parker, and Karen Pickett. Judi Bari had chosen not to participate in the event, because she felt that—while dramatic—the arrest risk for such a miniscule payoff was not worth the effort.

²⁷ "An Interview With Redwood Summer Strategist and EF! Musician Darryl Cherney", by Sharon Seidenstein, *Ecology Center Newsletter*, October 1990.

²⁰ "Earth Day Actions at the Pacific Stock Exchange", by the Earth Action Network, *Earth Action Network Newsletter*, June 1990.

²¹ "49 Arrested in Earth Day Protest: Financial District Becomes Target of Howling Crowd", by Jane Kay and Dennis J. Opatruy, *San Francisco Examiner*, April 23, 1990; "Protesters Snarl Wall Street; 150 Arrested", *AP Wire, Ukiah Daily Journal*, April 23, 1990; "Earth Activists: Noisy Protests in S.F., New York", by The *Tribune* Staff and News Services", *Oakland Tribune*, April 24, 1990; "Save the Gerbils, Lose the Enviro-Thugs", column by Rob Morse, *San Francisco Examiner*, April 24, 1990; "Demonstrators Target Financial District", by Miranda Ewell, *San Jose Mercury News*, April 24, 1990; "Not-so-Happy Post Earth Day in SF and NYC", *AP Wire, Santa Cruz Sentinel*, April 24, 1990; and "Earth Day Actions at the Pacific Stock Exchange", by the Earth Action Network, *Earth Action Network Newsletter*, June 1990.

They were from the FBI and the *Oakland* Police force. For those not familiar with the geography of the San Francisco Bay Area, Oakland is located a fair distance away from the north end of the Golden Gate Bridge. In order for a police squad to get to that point, they would have to either cross the San Francisco Bay Bridge, a distance of five miles on Interstate Highway 80, a major commuter artery, then proceed through the surface streets of the city's northwestern Financial District, the North Beach area, and the Presidio, and cross the Golden Gate Bridge. Alternatively, they could have driven north on the Eastshore Freeway through Emeryville, Berkeley, and Albany, picked up Interstate 580 west in Richmond, traveled across the Richmond San-Rafael Bridge to Larkspur and Corte Madera, and then south on US 101 for a distance of five miles or so. And yet, nobody at the Stock Exchange action reported the presence of Oakland Police there, which was substantially *closer* to Oakland than the Golden Gate Bridge.²⁸

Either way, the Oakland Police were substantially outside of their normal jurisdiction. Oakland is in Alameda County. Marin County is at least two counties distant from Alameda County whichever route one takes to get there from Oakland. 13 arrestees is a tiny number for such a display of force. However they seemed to have a particular agenda, as they searched and impounded Darryl Cherney's vehicle and searched his backpack, without a warrant, and confiscated the master copy of the Earth Night Action flyer. They also searched through his notebook, learning the contact information for every person involved in Redwood Summer. Oddly enough, the police and FBI had released Cherney without any comment on the master for the leaflet.²⁹ Yet, they held on to his possessions, as well as those of Tracy Katelman and Karen Pickett indefinitely.³⁰ Within hours of all the hubbub, Hill & Knowlton distributed the packet of bogus Earth First! press releases (including those made by Candace Boak and David Cruzon) to the media.³¹

There was no connection between Earth First! and the ENAG actions either, nor was there any connection between the Stock Exchange Action or the Golden Gate Bridge Action and the Santa Cruz power line sabotage. The corporate media certainly went

out of their way to suggest one, attributing the demonstrations, vandalism, and power outages to "radical environmentalists", only conceding that the three actions were unrelated to each other deep in the closing paragraphs of the news articles.³² Naturally, ignorant and reactionary readers contributed their share of speculation, such as one reader, who compared the ENAG action to the tree-spiking injury to George Alexander, blaming both on radical environmentalists (even though neither action was attributable to environmentalists at all).³³ Another reader denounced both the unknown power line saboteurs and the EDAC stock exchange protesters as "terrorists" and suggested that all of them "should have their welfare payments stopped" repeating the already hackneyed canard that all antiestablishment activists were "unwashed-out-of-town- jobless-hippies-on-drugs."³⁴

Individual Earth Firsters didn't help matters or win any supporters by speaking favorably of the act. Darryl Cherney wrote a tongue-in-cheek song about the incident called *Earth Night Action*, which is featured on his 1991 album, *Timber*. Santa Cruz Earth First! activist Karen Debraal declared, "I think they are heroes and what they did is great," but she later clarified her statement when she discovered the scope of the outage and the public reaction to it by stating, "I feel they really quoted me out of context."³⁵ Judi Bari herself declared:

"If somebody took (the Earth Night Action leaflet) seriously, it was not our fault. It was never meant to be a serious call for action... I think they were pretty heroic... Who's the terrorist? The person who takes down a couple of power lines, or a corporation that operates on an earthquake fault? A corporation that used their political and economic might to force the opening of that plant against massive public opposition and scientific testimony?... Better melted ice cream in your freezer than a melted reactor core at Diablo Canyon."³⁶

This was certainly a valid point, but given the corporate media's ability to spin such events effectively

²⁸ Stenz, September 5, 1990, op. cit.

²⁹ "Saboteurs", letter to the editor by Gene Warnick, *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*, May 1, 1990.

³⁰ "Terrorists", letter to the editor by O. W. Jackson, *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*, May 2, 1990.

³¹ Stenz, September 5, 1990, op. cit.

³² "Eco-Terrorists' Cut Power: Group Says it Caused Santa Cruz Area Chaos", by Mitchel Benson, Christopher Plummer, and Lee Quarntrom, *San Jose Mercury News*, April 24, 1990.

²⁸ Bari, February 2, 1994, op. cit.

²⁹ Bari, February 2, 1994, op. cit.

³⁰ "Cherney", Seidenstein, October 1990, op. cit.

³¹ "Eco-Wars: Battle for Environment is Heating Up; Outage This Week Underscores Vulnerability of Modern Society to Saboteurs", by Elizabeth Fernandez, *San Francisco Examiner*, April 25, 1990.

against environmentalists, it did not make strategic sense to even issue statements in support of poorly thought out acts of sabotage—even if the supporters had no connection to or knowledge of those who carried them out—that ultimately did not significantly alter the operations of the intended target when far more effective means to do so existed that would not alienate end users. Letter writer Meredith Bliss excoriated Judi Bari for her ill-chosen statement, arguing that Santa Cruz had already suffered enough damage due to the Loma Prieta Earthquake in October of 1989.³⁷ (The *Santa Rosa Press Democrat* went as far as comparing her to Marie Antoinette and her infamous and asinine “Let them eat cake” statement, though this was grossly inaccurate, because Bari was hardly a member of the ruling class).³⁸ To her credit, Judi Bari acknowledged this mistake by stating, “Given what Santa Cruz has been through with the earthquake, they were a bad target for an action like that. Now, if they would have cut the power to the Pacific Stock Exchange, that would have been different.”³⁹

The mainstream media completely ignored the connection between the sabotage (or rather ENAG’s taking *credit* for the sabotage) and the inherent dangers of using nuclear fission power and its negative side effects. They also neglected to discuss PG&E’s less than stellar environmental record and the inappropriateness of having that (or any) corporation sponsoring local Earth Day events.⁴⁰ Only the *Los Angeles Times* discussed the issue in any meaningful way and quoted *City on the Hill* writer Alison Bowman who declared, “Some people think it’s wrong to write about this in a way that’s not critical (of the ENAG).”⁴¹ For the record, even Bowman didn’t endorse the sabotage, but she considered PG&E’s crimes far worse than the ENAGs act of downing power lines. The continued operation of the Diablo Canyon nuclear plant was a much worse form of “eco-terrorism”.⁴² However, in the eyes of the corporate media, corporations and capitalism are never the bad guy—just individual corporate executives or capitalists “who give the free market a bad name”. Taking

a page out of Louisiana-Pacific’s book, PG&E and the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors offered a 25,000 reward for the apprehension of the ENAG.⁴³

Residents of Santa Cruz County whose electric power was interrupted were none too happy about the outages, even though the damage was minimal. Most letters to the editor of the *Santa Cruz Sentinel* were negative towards the ENAG and the power line sabotage (especially given the fact that the *Sentinel* published reports of people inconvenienced by the outrage)⁴⁴, although the “On the Street” interview section featured more mixed responses.⁴⁵ In the latter, only two out of the five respondents were outraged (one of whom was upset because he was unable to have his coffee), one had mixed feelings (he received a day off from work—which he welcomed—but still considered the sabotage selfish), and the two remaining respondents declared that the sabotage was done for valid reasons and taught people a valuable lesson about the environment and taking energy for granted.⁴⁶ There were no human injuries reported resulting from the power outage, although one woman’s power driven respirator failed, and she had to have it hand pumped when its back-up batteries drained.⁴⁷ The only death was that of an exotic parrot whose life sustaining incubator lost power.⁴⁸

Nevertheless, given events that took place in Arizona a year previously and the recent renunciation of tree spiking, the targeting of power lines would have been the height of strategic stupidity. On the other hand, if one assumes that the Santa Cruz County power line sabotage was an act of COINTELPRO, it makes perfect sense, because it only really benefitted Earth First!’s detractors. Indeed, the damage to the power poles caused disruption to Earth First!’s efforts in Santa Cruz. Lisa Henry, one of the principle organizers for Redwood Summer among the student population at the University of California campus there had no connection whatsoever with the ENAG, but after the incident, she was the person that everyone seeking information from press, to law enforcement, to other activists contact-

³⁷ “A Dangerous Game”, letter to the editor by Meredith Bliss, *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*, May 8, 1990.

³⁸ “Stretching the Limits of Wretched Excess”, editorial, *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*, April 26, 1990.

³⁹ Stenz, September 5, 1990, op. cit.

⁴⁰ Stenz, September 5, 1990, op. cit.

⁴¹ “Some Decry, Some Salute Sabotage of Power Lines”, *Los Angeles Times*, April 25, 1990.

⁴² “Will the Real Eco-Terrorist Please Stand Up?”, by Alison Bowman, *City on a Hill*, April 26, 1990.

⁴³ “PG&E Sabotage Reward Grows”, by Steve Perez, *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, April 25, 1990.

⁴⁴ See, for example, “Vandals’ Acts are Disgusting”, column by Wally Trabling, *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, April 25, 1990.

⁴⁵ “People Outraged by Power Outages”, by Jamie Marks, and “Manmade Disasters Not Welcome”, editorial, *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, April 24, 1990.

⁴⁶ Stenz, September 5, 1990, op. cit.

⁴⁷ “Outages Cut Woman’s Lifeline”, by Marie Guara, *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, April 24, 1990.

⁴⁸ Stenz, September 5, 1990, op. cit.

ed. This caused considerable tension between Henry and her housemates, which was made all the more worse when they discovered through the use of a phone tap detecting device that the FBI had bugged their phone. Henry's housemates had already expressed discomfort with her radical politics and told her, in no uncertain terms, not to perform any more of her organizing work there.⁴⁹ Had Humboldt or Mendocino County Earth First!ers actually carried out Earth Night actions, one would have expected them to do so locally and likely chose a target closer to their immediate concerns, such as a feller-buncher or logging equipment, and logging and lumber mill facilities were especially heavily guarded the night in question, but no such equipment sabotage took place.⁵⁰

Several years later, Judi Bari blamed herself for the naïve statements she initially made about the Santa Cruz power lines, where she called the unknown Earth Night Action Group activists "heroes." She later understood that the entire affair may well have been a setup, not dissimilar to what had taken place in Arizona, and it effectively undermined the positive effect that the tree spiking renunciation and the nonviolence code had brought about, at least in the eyes of many who accepted the Corporate Press's biased reporting against radical environmentalism uncritically.⁵¹ In a clear case of fear-mongering, the *San Francisco Examiner* even posited, "The scenario: Terrorists, whether religious fanatics or political zealots attack the Bay Area. They plant explosives on the transmission towers of key electric lines. They bomb telephone switching stations. They poison the water..."⁵² The article then discussed the EDAC Stock Exchange action, the ENAG power line sabotage, Earth First!, and Redwood Summer, giving readers the impression that all of these scenarios, incidents, and actions were attributable to Earth First!.⁵³

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When Darryl Cherney learned of the fate of his notebook, "frightened" was only his *initial* reaction. Within a day he had a full-on panic attack followed by a near total emotional meltdown. After returning to the North Coast, upon meeting with Judi Bari—with

whom his romantic relationship was nearing its unceremonious end—he proceeded to engage in a fit of paranoia and rage. This was all that Bari needed to convince her that, while they might still be comrades politically, they were indeed through as a romantic couple. She was also convinced that Cherney needed a vacation. She contacted the Earth First!ers in Arizona and asked them to take Cherney in for a week to help him clear his mind. They had survived FBI infiltration almost a year ago. Cherney would also, and a good talking to would help. Cherney calmed down and eventually agreed. He had not been wrong about the FBI's involvement in their affairs, however.⁵⁴

The day after the Stock Exchange act, the Golden Gate Bridge banner hanging, and the mysterious acts of sabotage in Santa Cruz, the FBI carried out a mock exercise involving a car bombing crime scene. At first glance, this might not have seemed unusual. The FBI and local law enforcement conducted an annual week-long Bomb Investigators' training course through the auspices of the College of the Redwoods in Eureka.⁵⁵ Only this particular day, the class convened on private land owned by Louisiana-Pacific (a clear-cut no less) in Humboldt County. Included among the attendees were Special Agent Frank Doyle, Supervisory Special Agent Patrick Webb, SA John F. Holford, Oakland Police Sgt. Myron Hanson⁵⁶, and L-P security chief Frank Wiggington.⁵⁷ The attendees practiced investigating three different scenarios involving a vehicle that matched Judi Bari's car perfectly. In each of the three examples, an antipersonnel bomb was exploded under the car driver's seat.⁵⁸ Something very fishy was taking place, and only time would tell what it was.

⁴⁹ "Lisa Henry on her 22nd Birthday", Lisa Henry interviewed by Beth Bosk, *New Settler Interview*, January 1991

⁵⁰ Stenz, September 5, 1990, op. cit.

⁵¹ Bari, February 2, 1994, op. cit.

⁵² "Eco-Wars: Battle for Environment is Heating Up; Outage This Week Underscores Vulnerability of Modern Society to Saboteurs", by Elizabeth Fernandez, *San Francisco Examiner*, April 25, 1990.

⁵³ Bari, February 2, 1994, op. cit.

⁵⁴ Harris, op. cit., pp 319-20.

⁵⁵ Harris, op. cit., page 317.

⁵⁶ "FBI Bomb School and Other Atrocities", by Judi Bari, *Anderson Valley Advertiser*, October 19, 1994.

⁵⁷ Public comment by Darryl Cherney following a showing of *Who Bombed Judi Bari?*, July 29, 2012.

⁵⁸ Harris, op. cit., page 317.

Earth Night Action

By Darryl Cherney & Mike Roselle, 1990;
featured on Timber, 1991
(lyrics used by permission)

Now Earth Day 1990 was Dennis Hayes' vision,
But instead of bringing us together it only caused division,
He said turn down your thermostat and recycle toilet paper,
And as long as they contribute don't confront the corporate rapers.

Now there were these griping dissidents holed up in Santa Cruz,
They were pondering this problem smoking joints and drinking booze,
They said Earth Day has sold out thinking they would not get caught,
So we've come up with a concept one we know that can't be bought.

Chorus

*We'll have an Earth Night Action,
Yeab it's a splinter faction (2nd time—It's instant satisfaction),
We're gonna take down power lines tonight,
We'll have an Earth Night Action,
It's an Earth Day reaction,
Yeab Santa Cruz ain't gonna have no lights.*

Now some folks said hey Santa Cruz just had a big earthquake,
And toppling their power lines is a tactical mistake,
But Big Mountain's feeding them their coal,
Prince William Sound their oil,
Hey I'm sorry if their fridge went dead and their TV dinner spoiled.

Chorus

Now in San Luis Obispo, they've got Diablo Nuke,
But the best that they could fight it with,
Were some songs that made me puke,
PG & E has gotta go, but it seemed so damned complex,
But Earth Night has the answer, Diablo Canyon's next.

Final Chorus:

*We'll have an Earth Night Action,
It's a felony infraction,
We're gonna take down power lines tonight,
We'll have an Earth Night Action; it's an Earth Day reaction,
Yeab Santa Cruz ain't gonna have no lights,
San Luis Obispo ain't gonna have no lights.....
L.A. ain't gonna have no lights (oh my God or like totaly)
Houston ain't gonna have no lights (yee ham)
New York ain't gonna have no lights (whadafya?)
Gay Paris ain't gonna have no lights (sacre blue or oo la, la)
Moscow ain't gonna have no lights (hey, hey, bey)
Tokyo ain't gonna have no lights (osso or bonsai!)
Sydney ain't gonna have no lights (mate)*