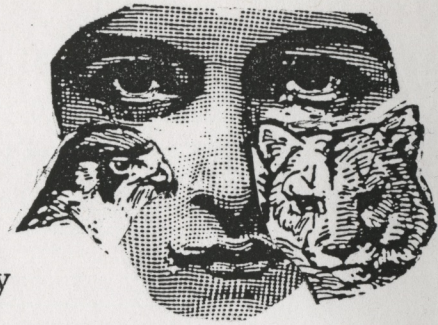


DIRECT ACTION! 101

A primer...

El Lobo Solo



"Sentiment without action is the ruin of the soul." -Ed Abbey

EARTH FIRST! is a verb, not a noun. In order to be an environmental movement, you've got to move! Get up and do something for the Earth! There are no "50 simple ways to save the planet." There are innumerable very difficult ways. Recycling and "setting a good example" doesn't cut it when you are the last generation with any chance of implementing a human-engineered cure. Direct Action means personal, focused efforts on the front-lines of the war against the Earth.

EARTH FIRST! is defined by its actions, the purpose of which is to:

- ACTUALLY HALT THE DESTRUCTION, force the companies to quit, the Forest Dis-Service to withdraw its sale, the bulldozers to halt. Our primary purpose is to personally intercede, to "stop the bleeding." The most "symbolic" action stops the saws, and leaves the log-trucks lined-up empty.
- RAISE THE STAKES. Even once removed from the tree platforms and the blockades, we have upped the ante. A clear message to the Earth rapists: No more "business as usual."
- GARNER MEDIA. You can't hope to change people's minds or put pressure on politicians without calling attention to the damage. Civil Disobedience or a clever banner-hanging exposes the issue on the front page of papers that normally hide a single paragraph on ecological catastrophe next to the ads. Arrests, in particular, sway sentiment by impressing others the depth of your concern and sacrifice.
- STRENGTHEN RESOLVE. An action is the most empowering imaginable event, a rite of passage that fills the participant with pride. There is the special satisfaction of a David defying the Goliath, doing the right thing, acting out what Bill Devall calls the will-of-the-planet. We learn to work in concert with others with life-affirming values.

DEMOS "Demonstrate" to the culprits, and to the world, that when all our letters are ignored, our arguments mitigated, and our legal appeals denied, we still refuse to accept the accelerating destruction. We put our bodies and our time where our mouths are—
at the front! We demonstrate our fear, hurt, and just rage against the despoilers. Now with humanity itself endangered by suicidal "progress", we deny it power, refuse to acquiesce, refuse to be stilled! There is no such thing as "risk-free" environmentalism, but demos are protected under the constitution. (A fortunately rare exception is when the police give you "five

minutes to clear the area" and then herd you up thirty seconds later.) In general, there is no need for any unplanned arrests. Civil Disobedience, even when decided on spontaneously, is a deliberate, thought-out act of conscience. DEMOS Include marches (street dances!), costumes, topical skits ("loggers" pursuing "trees" or "all-species court" convened to try "corporate plaintiffs"), presenting our position to reporters, making demands of corporados and government lackeys, appearing as "endangered species" at public hearings, making a show to timber sales/dam building/condo construction sites... I have fond memories of two-hundred pound stumps deposited on ranger's desks, manure from public lands grazing cattle stacked against air-conditioner vents, helium balloons with the appropriate message released inside convention centers, hundred-foot banners strung across rivers, down smokestacks, across the face of buildings. I remember women and men of all ages finally and emphatically saying "no!". Not one more tree. Not one more road built. Not one more species banished into extinction.

To be most effective, a demo should be:

- DYNAMIC & UNCOMPROMISED, with clear intent, clear tactics.(identify the perpetrators and target them, not the "system" in general)
- COLORFUL & CREATIVE, unique, surprising the destroyers while you amuse and challenge yourselves.
- INFORMATIVE, getting out the simple message of your campaign with handouts, skits, songs and chants...
- FLEXIBLE, ready on a moment's notice to change plans as the situation changes (taking advantage of the sudden appearance of an offending executive, or an unwatched piece of equipment just waiting for someone to lock their neck to it with a Kryptonite bike-lock; and coming up with alternatives when the governors no in, the building sealed-off, the cops in a bad mood, the meeting moved to some other location...)

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE can be the most effective actions of all, involving situations where arrest is anticipated and possibly desired. These include, but certainly aren't limited to:

- Office Occupations (Make yourself comfortable. Marcy once put up a dome tent in a Senator's office)
- Blockades of logging roads, dam sites, uranium mines polluting the Grand Canyon, radioactive waste being transported through your town...(Methods have included locking down to gates, cementing feet directly into a channel dug in the road, and being buried up to the neck.)
- Tree-Sits on platforms fifty to ninety feet above the ground in ancient trees marked to be cut. (To make the removal of the activists more difficult, cables have been attached from their necks to surrounding trees, or the platform set up to fall away and the activist slides across a transverse cable to another...)

-Variations have included blood on statues, billboards artistically doctored to get out a relevant message, rafts floated in front of dolphin-killing vessels, hot-tub "soak-ins" at the homes of corporados, reggae in the aisles and theatre in the rotunda.

STRATEGY is planned by an "affinity group", which is a small group agreeing on intent and tactics at a particular time. Your circle may want to go into a particular building and occupy it, while others form an affinity group around entertaining the crowd outside and handing out flyers. All affinity group decisions are made by consensus. Failure to agree necessitates working with another circle with similar ideas and limits.

NONVIOLENT CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE requires a code of integrity:

- At no time should anyone physically or verbally assault anyone, resist arrest, or act in a way that contributes to violence by the other side.
- Once committed not to move even if it means your arrest, to break and run defeats the purpose of the action.
- Anything that could possibly be construed as illegal (weapons, pipes, drugs or booze) should be kept away from possible actions.
- Identify potential arrestees ahead of time, and assign each of them a support person who can keep their keys and identification, monitor their arrest and stay in the area however long it takes to insure their release on bail or their "own recognizance."

Plan the actions well ahead of time, preparing the skits, chants, costumes, signs and handouts. Make up a press release for all every radio, TV and newspaper in the effected area (keep it simple, or they will quote your least relevant lines and leave out the most important stuff. Stick to a few sentences describing the destruction you plan to stop or the wolves you want to reintroduce, making clear the desired result of your impassioned actions). Follow up with phone calls to the various stations and papers the day of the action, never assuming they read or recall your release.

Hint at the more radical (photo op!) aspects of your action, but don't tip them off to anything the cops shouldn't have details of ahead of time, or promise a more radical action than you can really come up with (or the press will quit coming). Meet a half hour before the action to circle up and focus on the emotional and spiritual motivations for our urgent work. Circle up after to make sure no one is unaccounted for, discuss what did and didn't work, and plan a time to meet and do it again!