

in TENSION

an anarchist agitation

Nº. 6
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Free



Creeks & Reservoirs
anarchy & Anarchism
Bobcats & Hunt Sabs
Down with Kroger
Free the Bunnies
& More

In Tension *is a journal acting as a place for anarchist analysis, dialogue, and reflection on activity that extends beyond single subcultures, issues, and social groups. Intended for people beginning to learn what anarchists are fighting and creating as well as people who have identified with anarchism for decades, In Tension is a way for us to talk to each other and report actions, issues, and initiatives that are otherwise under- or un-reported. We are interested in promoting the practice of doing things for ourselves and connecting our struggles locally, regionally, and internationally. In Tension also functions as an archive of sorts, a way to foster collective remembering.*

In Tension is published in so-called Bloomington, Indiana each season. We welcome submissions of actions, events, and analysis from different perspectives that hold true to an anti-authoritarian, anti-state, and liberatory lens.

Please keep submissions to a length of ~1500 words or fewer. See InTension.noblogs.org for instructions on how to submit anonymously and securely. For other correspondence, reach us at InTension@riseup.net.



To us, to live life as anarchists is not about accepting a hollow title or stagnant ideology, but is about an active, intentional, and eternal becoming. It is not just about the ideas we have but how we put them into the world, and the strength we must cultivate to weather what unfolds when living against the dominant order of this society. We live in tension with this world every day: its jobs, prisons, ideals, social roles, and identities. We notice the ways others do too, and we refuse to avoid conflict in pursuit of comfort or for an illusion of safety. We chose “In Tension” as our title as a way to embrace the difficult balance of this beautiful and painful path. We accept the discomforts and challenges of being against so much of this world, and understand it as a reality of creating lives true to our values and hearts. We embrace our hostility for this world, and learn where to channel our time and energy to see ideas come to fruition. We notice and embrace ruptures small and large, where we can see through the facade of this world. It is neither complacency, nor an ascetic militancy, but a fostering of joy through the creation of our lives and a living-against. Rejecting a finality of destination, it is choosing to stretch beyond what is familiar, comfortable, or known, in a continual pursuit of freedom.



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Tracing the Flow:

where our water comes from and where it goes

The presence, behavior, and quality of water in a region or ecosystem is one of the foundational factors defining life in that place. In this time and place, we live an extremely unique lifestyle that allows us to rarely think about where our water comes from (until there is a crisis). For most of human history, this was a primary concern; life depended on knowing and understanding the water of your home. Even if municipal utilities mediates our relationship, we should seek a collective understanding and a personal connection to the water that gives and sustains the life of this land.

Understanding the flow of water gives us insight into reading the history of the landscape. Up to the present day, we can see how the pursuit of a stable water source has influenced the creation of our cities, towns, and counties. Water is essential to what and who we are on a biological level. The water we drink as children, and the rocks through which it flows, are recorded in the chemical compositions of parts of our bodies that stay with us our whole lives. Even though drinking water is treated, it still keeps a unique local character. One of the beautiful things about tracing the flow of water is not only learning about where

we're from, but how it connects us to so much more. Rain that falls here will eventually course into the Gulf of Mexico. A raindrop that rolls off of my skin here may feed a plant along the Ohio River, or go through the gills of a fish in the Mississippi. This reminds me how we have a responsibility to each other on a continent-wide, even global, scale. Poisoning or harming the flow of water upstream affects everyone down stream, just as healing and protecting it cares for life thousands of miles from us. Here I trace the natural and man-made water features of the region and their place in the larger water system.

Underlying Geology

The geology and hydrology of a place are intimately interconnected. In simple terms, the geology is about the types of rock that are (usually) under the surface. Deeper layers are hundreds of millions of years old and top layer can be much more recent (often, in this area, from the last ice age about 15,000 years ago). The hydrology is the distribution, movement, and properties of water. The shape, size, and arrangement of rock helps determine which direction water flows in. Critically, the composition of the rock determines how quickly water seeps through

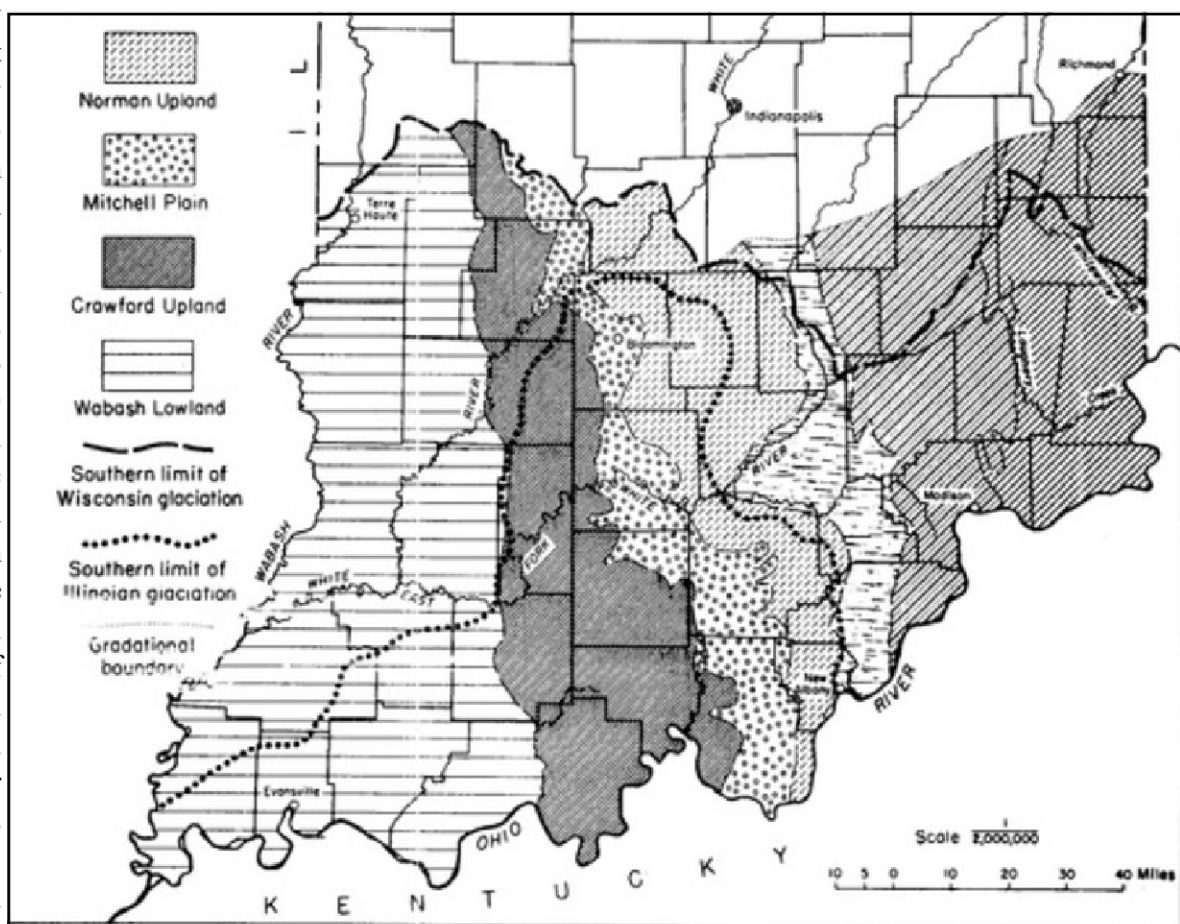


Figure 13.--Map of Indiana showing physiographic units (from Wayne, 1956).

it, pulled down by gravity, and how much it can hold. Water, in turn, slowly carves into and dissolves rock as well and moving minerals around, depositing them elsewhere to, over millions of years, create new rock.

Most of Monroe County is south of the glacial boundary for the last two glacial events. What this means is that it, and much of the southern 1/3 of Indiana is hillier than the northern 2/3, which was flattened by glaciers. To the east of Bloomington, running roughly north to south, is the Norman Upland. To the west is the Crawford Upland. In the middle, where Bloomington sits, is the Mitchell Plain. (See previous image). The Uplands are some of the hilliest terrain in Indiana. The Norman is primarily siltstone at the surface, while the Crawford is more sandstone and limestone. The contours of the siltstone and sandstone outcrops, hills, and valleys create the terrain that determines which direction each raindrop flows, shaping the watersheds and streams.

Mitchell Plain and some of the Crawford Uplands are defined by

karst hydrology. Karst is based on limestone, which is much more quickly dissolved by water than other rock. As water flows in and around the limestone, it dissolves some of the minerals and, over time, this creates things like sinkholes, underground streams, and caves and caverns of all sizes that are characteristic of karst.

The lack of glaciation here means that there is not much surface water in the form of lakes and the porosity of the limestone karst means that much of it disappears underground. As we will see, these factors have made maintaining an adequate municipal water source a challenge for much of Bloomington's history.

Watershed & Drainage Network

Monroe County's watershed is divided roughly through the middle east to west with the north draining in the West Fork of the White River and the South in the East Fork of the White River. The north part of Bloomington drains into Griffy Creek, whose headwaters are near New Unionville. North of town near the high way, Griffy joins Bean Blossom

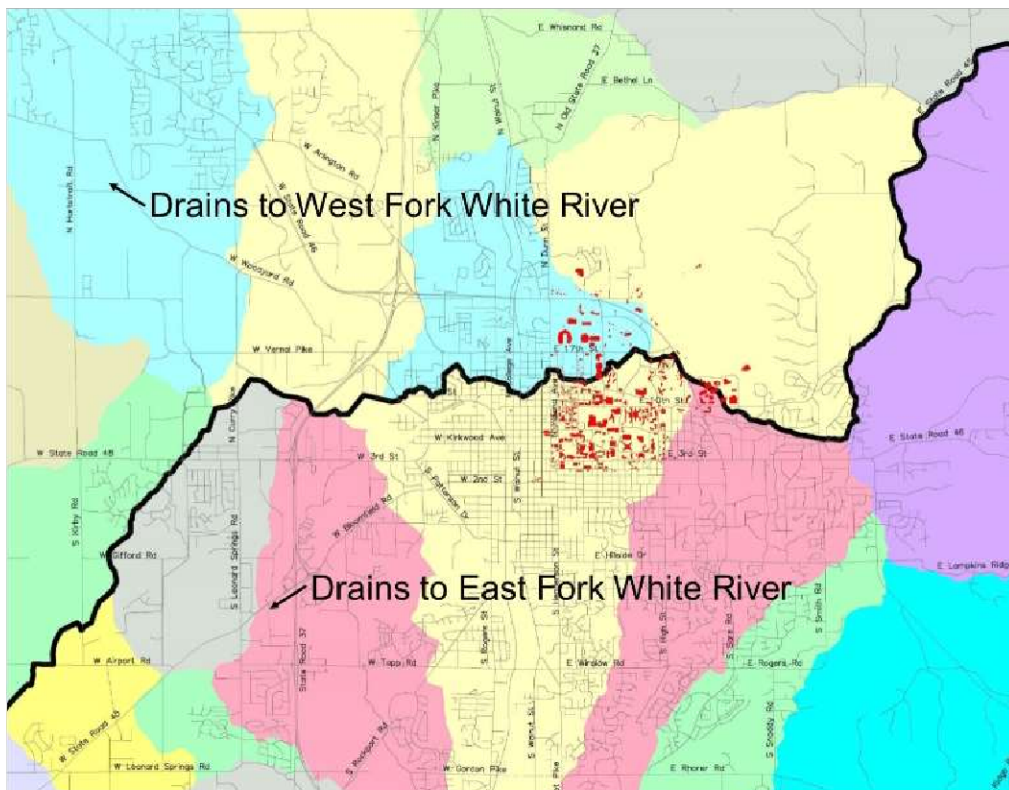
Creek which continues northwest to into the West Fork White River near Gosport.

Most of Bloomington drains into Clear Creek, which flows south roughly along the B-Line and Rail Trails to meet Salt Creek just past the dam that forms Lake Monroe. Salt Creek, so named for the salt springs that feed it, forms from three forks from the east, starting in Bartholomew, Jackson, and Brown Counties. After they merge, Salt Creek continues south to join the East Fork White River southwest of Bedford. The Myaamia name for the East Fork is Aankwaahsakwa Siippiwi which translates to Driftwood River.

The White River originated around 17,000 years ago in the retreat of the most recent glacial event. The two forks join creating the contours of Knox, Daviess, and Pike Counties. Fifty miles later, the White River joins the Wabash River, whose name still bears resemblance to the Myaamia name waapaahšiiki. It, in turn, joins the Ohio, and then the Mississippi, which ultimately drains into the Gulf of Mexico near New Orleans. Thus we are part of the third largest water basin in the world.

Changing the Landscape

Despite this rich network of rivers and streams, there are not many natural lakes in southern Indiana. This created a problem for the municipality as the city of Bloomington grew larger. As it primarily relies on surface water and not aquifers, building dams to create reservoirs is the only thing that allows modern industries and tens of thousands of people to live here. In Bloomington's early days, occasional droughts were common and effected businesses and the daily lives of residents. It took several attempts to make an adequate reservoir to meet the residential and industrial water demands of the area.



The sites of the earliest attempts are now Twin Lakes Rec Center, Wapehani Mountain Bike Park, and Leonard Springs Nature Preserve. Perhaps you have gone to the Rec Center/Sports Park and thought, what twin lakes? Here is the answer. Not real lakes, but reservoirs. The Upper Twin Lake was created by a dammed stream in 1892 and another, the Lower Twin Lake, was added in 1905. They temporarily provided water to the city, but were insufficient and eventually decommissioned. The Upper Twin Lake was drained and in 1990 construction of the sports park began on the site. A small body of water remains south of Bloomfield Road. The next attempt was Weimer Lake created by a dam of Clear Creek. It was a major water source until 1916. The dam was removed in 2018 and the site is now the Wapehani Mountain Bike Park. The name comes from what is believed to be an indigenous name for the White River, though its accuracy is up for debate. Around the time Weimer dam was phased out, an impoundment was built to collect and store water from the Leonard and Shirley Springs southwest of town. By 1943 it, too, was decommissioned and unused by the city until becoming a park in the 1990s.

All three of these attempts failed in part because they were constructed on limestone karst topography. Much of the water percolated down through the porous rock, no longer available for use on the surface.

Realizing that the limestone on the west side of town was not conducive to reservoirs, residents and industrialists pushed for construction to the east. The damming of Griffy Creek just north of town and the creation of Lake Griffy (covering 109 acres) began in 1923. The prominent Showers family, of furniture-making fame and money (and for whom the

Showers building and park are named), financed 25% of the project, as their business depended on having a reliable water source. Nearby University Lake (which is still there, between the hospital and Griffy lake) was created a decade earlier, by damming a small tributary of Griffy Creek, to create a better quality reservoir specifically for Indiana University. Lake Griffy was the main source of municipal water until the 1950s when it was joined by Lake Lemon.

Lake Lemon was created by damming Bean Blossom Creek northeast of Bloomington and upstream of Griffy Creek joining it to flow into the West Fork. Its capacity is many times that of Griffy and it served as the main water source for Bloomington until the '70s.

Monroe Reservoir

Requiring still more water, the last (so far) reservoir was created in the 1960s by damming Salt Creek south of Bloomington. Lake Monroe covers nearly 11,000 acres with a watershed of over 440 square miles. It is now the largest "lake" that lies entirely within Indiana's borders. The shape of the reservoir illustrates how it is actually a flooded river valley, extending from southeast Monroe County into Brown County. The thing about flooding a valley by damming a stream is that there is already a lot going on in the valley that will inevitably be destroyed. This includes flora and the fauna as well as whole micro-ecosystems. In the 1960's Salt Creek Valley included hundreds of family farms and the entire towns of Elkinsville and Paynestown, also. The government forcibly bought



this land under eminent domain. Three hundred homes, three schools, and ten churches were burned and bulldozed before the land was flooded. Elkinsville was actually a miscalculation; the reservoir did not end up covering the town. Many residents will recognize the name Paynetown from the recreation area along the shore of Lake Monroe.

The Salt Creek Township was incorporated in 1825, with the first land purchase recorded in 1917, a year before the Treaties of St. Mary's with which the United States government purchased this land from Native Peoples. Most of the Valley residents in the 1960s were the descendants of pioneer families who settled the area around the time of the Treaties. 3,450 people were displaced by the creation of the reservoir. There is a small irony in the families who participated in the displacement of indigenous people protesting their own displacement a mere 140 years later. One resident at the time, Herbert Lucas, reflected, "I asked that being my great-grandfather homesteaded this land around here, to let me keep a few acres, but they wouldn't. That's pretty rough, but that's the way it was. It hurt me... You know, you grown up and read about how they took the land away from the Indians and you don't sympathize

until it happens to you. Then you think about it.”

Environmental Impact

The damming of streams to create reservoirs is necessary to the scale and style of modern life and the water use it demands for both residential and industrial needs. They are also essential for flood control which becomes more important with each patch of land that is constructed upon or paved over: when surfaces become impervious to water seeping underground, it instead becomes runoff, rushing over land or through storm drains. Reservoirs can hold the extra water so the rivers and streams do not elsewhere overflow their banks.

Despite their necessity, reservoirs have their downsides. While they create new habitat, such as that for migrating water fowl, they destroy

the habitat that existed on the land that they flood and displace all the creatures that lived there. They disrupt the movement of fish and other animals through river systems. They also block the flow of sediment. Downstream of the dam, this deprives a river of the sediment needed to make riparian ecosystems. Upstream, the sediment builds up, gradually making the reservoir more and more shallow, limiting the amount of water it can hold, and increasing pressure on the dam. Even when built in areas that are naturally flood-prone or wetland, they change what used to be an area of diverse habitat, such as seasonal floodplains, mudflats, and marshes, into a more homogeneous static body of water. When loss of biodiversity is one of the great crises of our time, we must protect and restore natural areas. We must treat Salt Creek, Clear

Creek, Griffy Creek, Bean Blossom Creek and all the streams connected to them with the kinship that they deserve as essential, priceless, and foundational parts of this land.

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Vultures and a heron at the Monroe Reservoir tailwaters, where water flows past the dam and Salt Creek is reborn.

Just Burn Down the Castle: Attacks on Technology and Power

13 Rounds fired into councilman Ron Gibson's home, and a note on his doorstep against local data center construction. The Indianapolis attack made national news, but it is not an outlier. Personal attacks on CEOs and other authority figures are on the rise, as is an anti-tech fervor. While assassination attempts are of course already illegal, the attempts to criminalize criticism of advancing technology is part and parcel to the Trump administration's criminalization of anarchism, anti-capitalism, and other ideas that threaten their hoarding of money and resources. But they are not wrong to fear us.

"A law enforcement intelligence hub in New Jersey fretted that the growing class divide in the U.S. could drive a wave of lone-wolf attacks on high-flying corporate executives, according to a report obtained by The Intercept."

Our fight against this digital technology is predated by the fight against industrial technology. One such famous predecessor were the Luddites of 19th century England. The introduction of automated looms threatened their livelihood as skilled craftsman, and so they organized to smash them. It is often argued that they were not against technology *per se*, but they certainly saw the way new technology was intended to undermine their ability to live in a commercial society while making

the property owners more wealthy. More to the point might be the vast majority of indigenous resistance to colonization and the advances of civilization the world over that sought to conquer, extract, and impose control over life-ways that were based on living as a part of the natural world instead of separate. That both predates, run concurrent, and follows the fight of the Luddites up to this very day.



Some of the earliest fights against the approaching digital Goliath, like the attacks on computer centers that were prominent in the 1960s and 70s, spoke directly against technology's bolstering of authority. From *Subterranean Constellations* (Tinderbox, Issue 7):

"At the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where the Army Math Research Center played a central role in the development of the 'electronic battlefield' in Vietnam, the forerunner of today's AI-

powered computing for military situational awareness and target selection — a van full of ANFO explosives parked outside the building destroyed four of their mainframe computers, wiping out 13 years of work. The latter action was eventually claimed by 'the New Year's Gang,' which took its name from the attempted bombing of the Badger Army Ammunition plant near Baraboo, Wisconsin, on January 1 of [1970]."

The scale of attack against the infrastructure of empire has long spanned the gambit in the United States, and the period of upheaval 5-6 decades ago was quite notable. Farmers and others calling themselves "bolt weevils" knocked down high power electrical lines in rural Minnesota in the 1970's. The George Jackson Brigade was burning electrical substations in affluent Washington suburbs in the 1970's in opposition to rising utility prices, but also targeting the means by which the wealthy maintain their control. *Subterranean Constellations* reminds us that "...there was an average of eleven bombings and arson attacks per week in 1970," at every conceivable scale across the United States, intending to disrupt and incapacitate this empire from the inside.

The unclaimed damage to the new techno-military infrastructure buildings (The Forge, The Mill, and The Kiln) in Bloomington last year would appear to be of a similar mindset.

Seeing the writing on the wall, it was known then as much as now how advancing technology had and would bolster military operations. So when we see someone like Open AI CEO Sam Altman's home attacked this year with an incendiary device, it should come as no surprise. AI systems not only threaten jobs, but also set out to collude with the US Department of War—they have government contracts to that end. Google, Meta, Palantir, and so many more are obviously no better with their contracts for warfare and expanding the surveillance society we are subjected to. When we see paint on the lenses of the ALPR flock cameras several times before the city of Bloomington began removing them, we know people are standing up. We remember a time too, when reports on Anarchist News claimed responsibility for punching a tech bro in his google glasses on the west coast. A video recently went viral of a woman who allegedly did the same to a man on the subway in NYC.

Normalizing hostility to the centralization of power by any means, but particularly their constant monitoring and advancing the weapons of war, is in our interest. Not only for survival, but also in favor of life, creativity, and joy. The effects of the AI slop they serve children, to the contrary, will notably come to haunt us in the future.

It appears that Councilman Ron Gibson's support for the proposed data center in Indianapolis' Martindale-Brightwood neighborhood is to blame for putting him in the cross hairs, but there is more to be acknowledged here. He is also a Navy veteran, meaning he has facilitated if not carried out state-sanctioned murders himself. He also supports keeping "assault weapons" solely in the hands of the cops and military. His liberal stances are fairly common in this regard, and

he wants to increase the power of the state in attempts to reform. We should be reminded through this that liberal solutions will ultimately never serve us.

On the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of his death, Freedom News alternatively reminded us of the time Mikhail Bakunin and a companion came across a group of peasants demonstrating outside of a baron's castle. Bakunin famously suggested that "a more effective way to air their grievances would be to just burn down the castle."



*Broken windows at The Forge.
From The B Square Bulletin. April 2025.*

Anarchists like the Volcano Group have been burning the energy infrastructure outside Tesla factories in Europe in recent years, and others have attacked the grid and transportation infrastructure in opposition to large summits. Clean rooms of arms manufacturers have been painted and smashed by activists in the UK, and Eleventh Hour disrupted rail infrastructure outside Rock Island Arsenal (along the Mississippi River) last April. Warehouses have begun to burn again, and many threaten data centers will be next. In fact cars outside of a data center in Georgia were set alight in April of 2025, according to the counter-info site Unravel.

Even the disparate attacks on Tesla trucks and charging stations in the US last year, including in Bloomington,

target some of the same issues in addition to posing a general opposition to the new oligarchs.

While we are afforded some luxury through the electrical grid, it is a fact that it most benefits the ruling order – and we expect them to continue prioritizing themselves. When unexpected winter weather crashed parts of the grid in Texas in 2021, it was the business sectors and the wealthy that kept their lights on, itself a microcosm of the discrepancies in access across the world to this day. As of this summer, teachers in Virginia are already being expected to limit their energy use to benefit data centers, per a recent report in Newsweek, in addition to putting the additional costs onto the average consumer.

The scale of attack decades ago fell off in part from successful repression and divisions sown by the government, but there are incredible amounts of unclaimed actions that persist and can expand. All this infrastructure supports the logistics by which the powerful do harm and maintain their control. It can be overwhelming to consider the wealth of targets, but let it be known that it can be simple to begin.

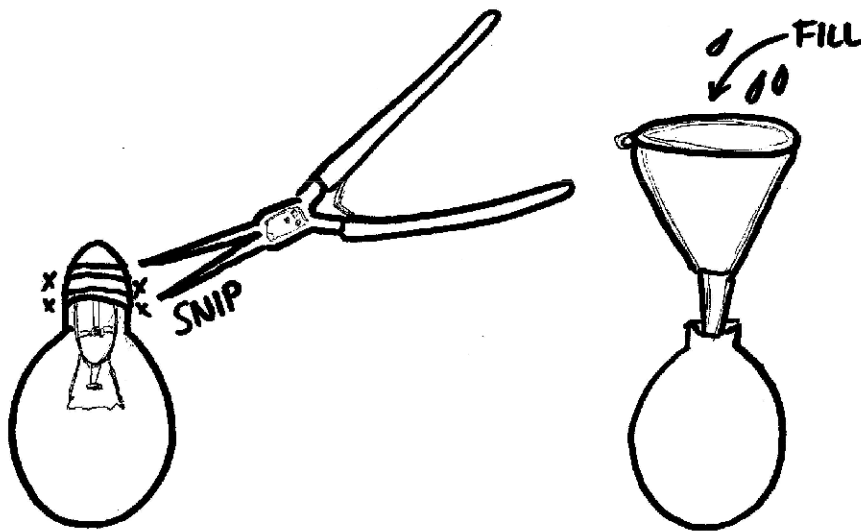
“Our work must therefore be in the direction of continually clarifying and extending the class attack by identifying and striking objectives that are easily attainable and comprehensible in the perspective of breaking down the walls of the ghettos and opening up a perspective of mass action against the common enemy.”

— Jean Weir

How To: Make Paint Bombs



At a protest on Inauguration Day 2017 the School of Informatics building and the jail were hit with paint bombs.



Tools:

- An old towel or newspaper
- Work gloves
- Light bulbs*
- Needle-nose pliers
- Funnel
- Paint
- Tape (Duct or electrical)

Laying down some newspaper or an old towel helps to catch any sharp debris created while working, protects against spilled paint, and protects the light bulb from breaking.

Wear gloves so that you don't leave any fingerprints on the light bulb. Gorilla Gloves or other heavy-duty work gloves are good; avoid nitrile gloves.

Using needle-nose pliers, snip the metal fitting along the side of the light bulb. Sometimes one side is enough, sometimes you need to snip both sides. Once the casing is off, work to remove the glass stem and filament from the bulb. Sometimes you can get it out, sometimes you need to push it into the bulb (using the pliers or a screwdriver) and leave it there.

Grab a funnel or repurposed bottle to fill the bulb. House paint is a good choice! Mixing in a little water makes it easier to fill, and helps the paint spread farther when used. You can fill the hole with paper and then tape it in place, or just wrap the top with enough tape to make sure it won't leak.

Make as many as you want, and finish with wiping the bulbs down with rubbing alcohol to remove any possible prints. Have fun!

* Stores heavily stock LED bulbs which are NOT recommended for this project. They're difficult to get open and to access a proper hole without breaking the light bulb. I used an Appliance light bulb found at a discount store (Dollar General, Dollar Tree, Biglots, etc.) It's worth getting a few different types and playing around with how easy it is to get a particular brand/type open.

A Lexicon

anarchy & Anarchism

anarchy is already here, it never left. Look around, do you see the state? The strings it uses to rule you like a puppet? The ever-present miasma? The borders between townships, counties, states? Maybe your mind conjures up cuffs and ankle monitors, surveillance cameras, and those dilapidated green signs, but when we go looking for the State, all we'll find are people doing "jobs"—the bureaucrat at the desk, the cop on the beat, the C.O. at the cell door. The State, rather than some force of nature, is instead constituted by social relations, how one person relates to another. Understanding the State is an illusion, one thing becomes apparent, anarchy is now.

Thomas Hobbes, in his famous work of post-hoc monarchist apologia *Leviathan*, creates a mythological historical period he called "the primordial chaos," in which there are no rules and everyone is free to act however they wish in the moment. Hobbes uses this to argue everyone should submit to the violence of a single authority who will somehow be neutral on every issue. To illustrate this idea, on the cover of every copy of *Leviathan* for the past 400 years has been an image of a man composed by thousands of other people. Of course Hobbes's argument conveniently leaves out the existence of the other hundreds or thousands of

these leviathans that covered Europe alone. Each one an individual still unconstrained in the primordial chaos.

If, in fact, Leviathan isn't physically real and we all still exist in anarchy then how does a king, or president, or boss affect change in our world; compel the populace to act as desired? Of course at some level it's simple violence: cops will beat, torture, or murder you if you fail to comply. But most people will never know the direct violence of the police. Instead they submit, not even always out of fear, not just to the cop, but the news anchor, the politician, the teacher, and the law. It's social relations which compel them. A desire to not upset authority or create friction in the day-to-day. Our social relations define how we interact with one another, where the horizon of possible actions lay with those around us.

A social relation must reproduce itself and, at every possible point of departure, reinforce itself or else it will ultimately be replaced by another. Every single time a group chooses how to address a situation, if they do not choose, consciously or subconsciously, to reproduce that social relation, eventually it will go extinct. If a property owner tries to block off an alley and is not contested, eventually nobody will remember

it's not theirs. So too if the middle manager allows their employees to act autonomously, the foundation of their status is undermined.

The state rules not from above, as it would like to have us imagine, but within. Each member of the president's cabinet is just another constituent of the contemporary society. No matter how fancy technology has become to obscure the mechanisms, ultimately information and orders must pass from one person to another. It is the same formal social relations of boss and employee that allow the state to function at its core as the small restaurant does on the corner. It's the same social relation of accumulation which reward hoarding titles, responsibilities, degrees and certificates, and employees that cause states to wage wars of conquest and multinational corporations to chase infinite growth. It's the same social relation of property that produces homelessness and shoplifting, that defines the alienation of workers in their workplace.

If a new set of social relations were to redefine our lives, maybe ones of sharing rather than accumulation and consent rather than coercion, we would still find ourselves in the unavoidable reality of anarchy: the natural state of the world. All other conditions of existence, be they monarchy,

liberal democracy, and fascism, can be thought of as illusory to some extent. What ultimately stops you from acting freely is and always has been the violence of maintaining order.

Anarchy, with a capital A this time, is the collection of social relations and beliefs which reproduce a society managed by voluntary association rather than violence. Anarchy is not some primitive form of antiquated society waiting to be replaced by natural progressive forces, but a choice forged in response to Archic society. Across our histories there are countless examples of groups around the world rejecting state forms and developing Anarchic ones—rejecting authority, the right of one to decide for another, property, the legitimization

of violence that excludes who can and can't use land, goods, and resources, and many other forms of Archic social relations in exchange for consensus and voluntary association, mutual aid and the commons.

Anarchism is an ideology which asserts the possibility and desire to create the social relations which will reproduce an Anarchist society, one defined by mutual aid, voluntary association, direct action, and consensus decision making. An ideology which actively critiques and seeks to abolish any form of domination or coercion by living out these new social relations in opposition to the old.

An **Anarchic** society is not necessarily an Anarchist one. If it is

to last, it's members must reproduce the Anarchic social relations that constitute the society, but these don't need to have any ideas or critiques around authority beyond their contemporary. An Anarchist society on the other hand, is defined by possessing critiques of all authority and working to abolish it. Anarchist Anarchy is inherently unstable serving as a transition from Archic and Anarchic societies. While an Anarchic society may hold critiques of authority and seek to uproot it whenever it might develop, once this is no longer a conscious choice to build something new but instead a healthy (on its own terms) society preserving itself, can it still be said to be anarchist.



Hunting the Hunters

Trying to return to the falls by memory, I found myself slightly lost, and faced with the dilemma of whether to push ahead on an unfamiliar road, or turn around and start again from a familiar point. I'd only been to the Cedar Bluffs once. I had not yet dipped myself in the cool creek, only scrambled up its precarious bank to look out over the meandering water. I doubled back to my car and found an old utility road to idle in, to consult my paper map, and there they were: I startled at their size and unexpected presence, then again when I realized they were not a lost dog or coyote, but in fact a bobcat, heading away from my rumbling steel box, back into the woods. They sauntered away slowly, looking back once, before disappearing into the brush.

I had never seen a bobcat before, and certainly didn't expect to in Indiana. Bobcats are the only resident native wild cat in Indiana. A small predator, roughly 3-4 feet long and 2 feet tall in adulthood, they are stealthy and adept in their camouflage. They have a short tail, less than 6 inches long, that is white on the bottom and has black stripes atop. Their fur is generally reddish-brown or tan, they have pointy ears, and they have large tufts of fur on their cheeks. Their vocalizations are almost never heard by people.

In the early 1900s bobcats were almost entirely eradicated from Indiana due to hunting and habitat loss. Bobcats were on Indiana's Endangered Species List from 1979

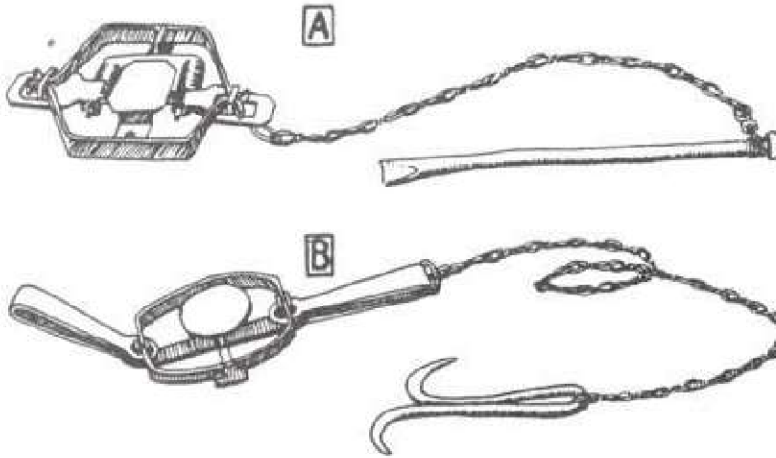


to 2005. The bobcat population has slowly grown, not due to planned reintroduction but the animals' own migration from nearby states. Despite, or maybe because of, the relatively new rebounding of the population, in 2024 state lawmakers passed a bill that required the Department of Natural Resources to allow bobcat trapping in the state. The bill's author, Republican State Senator Scott Baldwin (R-Noblesville) has worked in law enforcement and is also the executive Vice President and owner of Indianapolis-based construction and real estate company Envoy, Inc, as well as IT company Cloudapt, LLC.

The bobcat season in Indiana runs from November to January and currently only permits trapping. Bobcat trapping is regulated, requiring specific trap types, permits, and regular trap checks. That's not to say that hunters necessarily follow these laws, or that it's clear how they're enforced. This year, efforts are underway to expand beyond trapping to include bow and gun hunting and to increase the permitted quota from 250 to 400 bobcats. Bobcats are hunted as trophies and for their

pelts, which are popular in high-end markets in Europe and Asia, as well as for threats they allegedly pose to farmers and their livestock. Back when they were on the Endangered Species List, residents could still apply for a "Nuisance Permit," which permitted killing bobcats if they were threatening livestock.

Bobcats can journey across long distances, but move cautiously as they do. Being agile and well-camouflaged, the wisdom is that a bobcat will see you before you see them. Fond of thickets and dense forests, hunters might be more likely to set traps in overgrown areas, covering the trap with lots of brush to conceal its presence. Bobcat hunting involves mimicking the sounds of prey in distress and waiting in the area for a bobcat to arrive to shoot them, or lure them into a trap. For this reason many hunters favor hunting bobcats on private land, so as not to be disturbed. On public land, traps are still set away from areas where hikers or children may stumble upon them, and are generally discouraged in areas visible to the public to avoid any backlash against trapping should someone find a trapped and wounded



A) Coil spring-type trap attached to stake.

B) Long spring-type trap attached to hook-type drag. Drags are also made from scrap metal, heavy rocks or combinations of all.

the reification of wild nature into *resources* is a major source of the problem, too.

Ecology thrives on diversity and balance. Civilization relies on taming the wild to create its domesticated agricultural monocultures and fence in their animal husbandry practices. It is common practice by the civilized to kill en masse any threats to those easily eaten monocultures and domesticated animals. As the bison can attest, it is not just the predators either. The “enclosure of the commons,” as it is often called, also threatens any humans living outside of its control. This separation of some humans from nature, in attempts at domination, is the source of environmental crisis, indigenous genocide, the significant absence of bears and wolves (and formerly bison) in Indiana, and the advocacy for hunting of bobcats. Subsistence hunting is one thing, but the form predator hunting takes in the US is largely different.

These are the sort of reasons that any time a bear is seen crossing a border into Indiana it is major news, and the bear is either killed or escorted back out of state.

Wolves are a common topic in predator discussions, and their reintroduction is often credited with “saving” Yellowstone National Park in the western United States. It is more complicated than that, as it often is with the natural world – wild nature refuses to be put in

animal. Hunters favor areas that are dense enough to attract animals but still proximal enough for the hunter to check their traps, like alongside service roads. When setting traps, hunters may utilize trail cameras set up near the trap to check-in on activity.

Common traps include foot-hold traps, body-traps and snares.

Foothold traps and snares are intended to trap the animal until the trap can be visited and the animal murdered, whereas a body-hold trap is intended to kill the animal on impact. Foothold traps are either staked into the ground or connected to a hook, which is supposed to grab an anchor point as the animal flees.

Traps like this are quite old, and there is a long tradition of trapping in North America – in fact it was a major part

of the colonial industries. Something called Hunt Sabotage, on the other hand, also goes back a long way. Not strictly an animal rights practice, it is also common among hunters who recognize the necessity of predator animals for the environment. “Hunt Sabs” have long been commonly practiced in large groups in the UK, usually in opposition to literally bougie red coats killing foxes, and other culls. North America has its own practice, though largely a bit more clandestine.

While the Indiana Department of Natural Resources may from time to time prevent things like over-hunting, it obviously is angling differently on this occasion. Last year’s quota of 250 bobcats was met, and in fact exceeded by 3 individuals. We can imagine that there were more animals killed than those reported. Of course, the existence of *departments* and

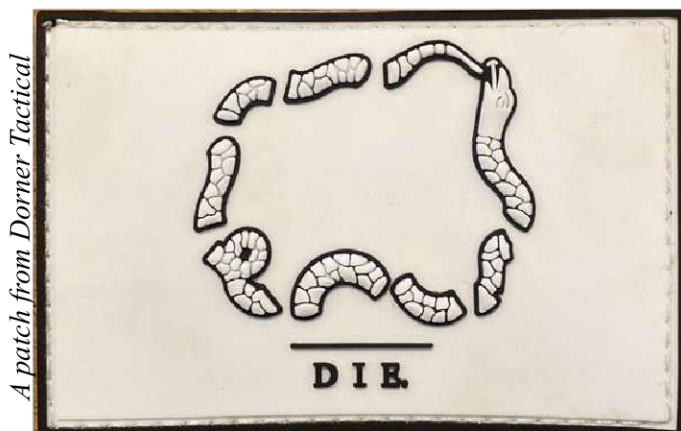
a box – and that is part of what we respect about it. To get to the point, overhunting of megafauna like the bison mentioned earlier helped jumpstart the degradation of the Americas as it left the wolves to pillage the elk population and livestock. In turn, early Yellowstone rangers exterminated the wolves to protect those species, and then the elk eviscerated the willow population on which beavers were dependent. The beavers, who were also a common target for the trapping and fur industry, no longer thrived in a place where they couldn't build their dams that actually also protected the landscape and its inhabitants from things like wildfires, and generally expanded important ecosystems like wetlands (which are commonly drained and paved over today, since they are naturally flat). While there has been an increase of some of these populations after the reintroduction

of wolves, it has been selectively studied to the point of exaggeration of the data. We should also credit the return of bears and wildcats that also hunt elk, but also recognize that great stands of willow trees have not returned. The new “alternative stable state” is still more of an elk/grassland state than the beaver/willow that was. Wolves have increased biodiversity, but it is still an uphill battle even without the Obama administration stripping wolves of a protected status and Trump and others declaring open season on (nearly) the whole of national parks.

This is why we don't accept the DNR's standards. Every compromise has ultimately furthered the expansion of toxic industries and destruction of habitat that we are hard-pressed to ever get back. That we will never get back so long as these practices continue.

There is a great zine on *Wolf Hunt Sabotage* by the Redneck Wolf Lovin' Brigade available online and in the finest infoshops that is relevant to these interests. It advises on the best ways to conceal your tracks when entering and leaving a trapping area, finding trappers and their traps, breaking and dismantling traps, and even safely freeing wild animals caught in its indiscriminate jaws. Some animals should be euthanized rather than suffer the drawn out death from infection – a professional trapper will use a .22 rifle to do the deed, but I'm sure all sorts of other calibers would be better than the clubs the average trapper uses in order to protect the fur.

“The wild beckons and thanks you.”



Armed & Trans

While the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco & Firearms (ATF) has decriminalized some aspect of gun ownership recently, it is also entertaining the culture wars in favor of limiting some second amendment rights. Arm the Dolls has been reporting that the “sex field” on form 4473 (necessary for purchasing most firearms) may have to reflect

gender assigned at birth in the near future.

“The issue now is that this can create a catch 22 for people who have had their gender marker legally changed on their government ID, such as the one they will be using in their background check. While a mismatch between what an affirming ID says and what’s on the 4473 may not result in a failed

background check, the dealer could potentially use that mismatch as a reason to reject the sale. We don’t know what discretion will ultimately be left up to dealers, but they always have the right to refuse a sale.

“If you simply ignore the proposed ATF directive and do not enter your assigned gender at birth so that it reflects what’s on your ID, you run the risk of being charged with a

felony for a firearm purchase with an improperly submitted 4473.

“All this said, these are PROPOSED changes, and the public comment window on these proposals ends on August 4th, 2026 before they can even go into motion.”

–Tacticool Girlfriend
via ArmTheDolls.com

Implementation on the final rule is likely to go into effect later this year or early in 2027. So if you’ve been on the fence, and wanted to avoid some hassles or obstructions, this year could be the one to purchase your first firearm. The ubiquity of Glockes (a brand of pistol) and AR 15’s (american style carbine rifle) mean that there are a lot of spare parts around for them. This and their general versatility keep them very functional for all kinds of purposes. If you have friends that already own guns, further considerations could include having the same model or close enough that you can share parts when servicing your equipment. Similarly, getting a pistol chambered in 9mm or a rifle in .556 (these numbers are bullet sizes), are very functional and effective choices.

Ultimately pistols offer us a broader variety of options for carrying due to their small size, so if it’s your first gun (and you’re over 21) this might be the way to go. For the last few years we here in Indiana have lived in a “constitutional carry state” that allows any adult over the age of 21 with no felonies to conceal carry, no matter where they’re from. Concealed carry is in most instances better than open carry for safety’s sake, but in any case getting a Kydex holster with good retention is the standard – it’s just more functional to have a way to carry your gun around safely, anyway. If you want to conceal a

pistol, something no bigger than a Glock 19 is advisable. Guerilla Tactical is a good holster company that has expressed condemnation of such a rule going into effect, for what that’s worth. This is a start, and Tacticool GF’s guide (on armthedolls.com) and the website armyourfriends.com have a lot of good guidance on further points and questions. This is not at all comprehensive, but meant to direct you toward better resources.

“We strongly recommend that trans people rely on Constitutional Carry and decline optional permit applications unless they have a specific, essential need that cannot be met any other way.”

– Arm The Dolls

In closing, I can’t imagine willfully submitting my finger prints to the police to get a concealed carry license. I don’t believe it’s really in anyone’s interest to do so. That said, there are further work-arounds to legally obtain firearms with even less government intervention, if you’re willing to put in the labor. CtrlPew.com is a website with a great deal of resources on 3D printing guns, but a great deal of assembly is required. There are also “80% arms” manufacturers that do the printing, and leave the remaining labor to you. And no, the local library won’t 3D print gun parts for you – they have a policy. As always, if you don’t want the possibility of it becoming public knowledge what websites you’re perusing, downloading and using Tor Browser (on a laptop or desktop) is also a good idea.

There are also local places to get training, but the publicly advertised ones are no better than “progressive.” If you can hang it is often worth it. There’s also many other (slightly internet-brained) anarchists and radicals with websites offering good

training advice, like Yellow Peril Tactical. Like any sport, having the fanciest gear doesn’t mean anything if you haven’t practiced with it. There’s ranges around, but you could always find an out of the way spot (with a good back stop) in the National Forest. Focus on getting at least the bare minimum of what you need to get started and practicing with that. That means a gun, ammo, spare magazines, and a way to carry you gun (holster or sling). There’s plenty more very useful accessories, and you’ll find that out soon enough.

“Rights are not real. They’re an abstraction. They’re granted, they are never given, and they’re never guaranteed. A right is simply someone saying they will allow you to do something until they don’t.”

– Tacticool Girlfriend

Enemy Territories

Update on LEAP

Anticipating higher demand for water resulting from the development of Limited Exploration Advanced Pace (LEAP) Lebanon, Lebanon Utilities considered “discharg[ing] treated wastewater directly into Eagle Creek Reservoir,” according to Indiana Audubon Society. Thankfully, Lebanon Utilities has stopped pursuing this option, which was welcome news. To provide a sense of how unwanted this option was (not to recommend resisting through drafting and/or signing a petition), I’ll share that a petition on change.org, titled “Prohibit the LEAP Project from Using Eagle Creek Reservoir,” gained more than 18,000 signatures. Birders who frequent the Eagle Creek Ornithology Center surely feel relief for the bald eagles, double-crested cormorants, multiple species of herons, and more birds who could have suffered from increased water pollution in Eagle Creek.

In mid-June Indiana Audubon Society reported that “a study is underway to determine whether future wastewater flows can be directed to Prairie Creek, the current discharge location for Lebanon’s existing wastewater plant.” Prairie Creek doesn’t have an ornithology center, but the eBird page for Prairie Creek Park includes sightings of eagles, cormorants, herons, and 60 (yes, 60!) white pelicans. May these birds also be spared from increased water pollution due to development that no animal needs.



Mergansers at Eagle Creek Reservoir from Reddit user Aniican

Eli Lilly construction at the LEAP District



Enemy Territories

Kroger

The Robot Is Not The Problem

It was a Sunday afternoon in May when I first heard about the new Kroger robot. My first encounter was later that same day. I turned the corner and there it was, right in front of me. I stopped for a second, surprised, then I turned tail and scurried off. Fuck that. The first few times I ran into it, I avoided it. I don't trust that thing. Slowly I started getting closer and closer, always giving it a dirty look. Just today I finally got close enough that I'm pretty sure I heard it whistle, like a happy servant from a Disney movie kind of whistle. Now that I know about how much of Kroger's business is collecting customer data, analyzing customer behavior, and selling that information to other businesses, it does not surprise me at all that they would take steps to make this robot seem more charming to us, like naming it "Tally" and giving it a cute little whistle to make it seem "happy." While Tally is only scanning the shelves and checking inventory, not recording us, I think a lot of us have the same instinctual anti robot-in-the-grocery-store reaction. Kroger knows that and has planned for it. But we cannot let their tricks work on us. Look, I get it, I was raised on Furbies. They scream when you turn them upside, training us, intentionally or not, to be emotionally responsive to machines. Even if they are cute, we must refuse to normalize the imposition of unwanted, profit-motivated technologies into every mundane aspect of our daily lives.

So, yes, it was Tally that flared up my resentment of Kroger. But what I found is that Tally is the least of our problems.

Corporate Greed

Kroger is a "family" of companies. Nineteen different grocery stores that go by different names, mostly of regional variation. In total, it is 2,750 stores across most of the United States. In addition to grocery stores, it owns pharmacies, gas stations, Home Chef meal delivery service, 35 food production facilities, and even a jewelry store. In 2022, Kroger attempted to merge with Albertson's, another grocery giant, but was blocked by the Federal Trade Commission over fears that the merger would raise prices and limit choices for customers. Here, Kroger seems unavoidable, even though we have other grocery stores. Aldi and Walmart don't have as much of a selection and Fresh Thyme and Bloomingfoods are more expensive. Its ubiquitousness is demonstrated by the (not very clever) nicknames Bloomington has for the different Kroger locations.

In addition to the grocery stores and consumer products, the corporation includes Kroger Personal Finance (financial services), Kroger Precision Marketing (retail media and advertising), and 84.51° (retail data science).

Kroger is guilty of the treatment of workers you would expect from any large corporation. About 2/3 of Kroger

store workers are unionized under the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW). Earlier this year, the Director of the Teamsters Warehouse Division said, "Kroger is advancing plans to replace hardworking, skilled union workers with low-wage, nonunion labor supplied by third-party contractors, many of the same companies long used by Walmart to drive down wages and undermine labor standards." The median wage for a Kroger employee is \$15/hour, or \$31,000 yearly salary. The CEO makes at least \$17 million. That is over 500 times as much! Grocery prices have inflated 31% since 2020 & Kroger has maintained gross profit margins over 20% for the past several years. Kroger's revenue per employee (a data point that stock market assholes look at, apparently) is \$366,357.

As offensive as it is that a corporation would exploit its employees and maximize profits off of the most basic of human needs – food – there isn't much of a story there. Of course they are. And they will continue to until we stop them. What is less understood is all the ways Kroger profits from us besides us buying their products. Kroger has positioned itself to collect, analyze, and sell data about us and our behavior. In the data economy, we become the product.

The Data Economy

The data economy is the large-scale network of transactions of corporations and institutions

collecting, organizing, analyzing, and selling data. Often this is data about consumer demographics and behavior that can be used to guide production and marketing decisions. If a company has thorough and accurate data they are more likely to make decisions that increase efficiency and maximize profit. A version of this that many of us are familiar with by now is targeted advertising. If companies have enough data to know who their advertising is most likely to work on (i.e. successfully get them to buy whatever is being sold) and how to get their ads in front of those people, they can be most efficient with the ad dollars, not wasting it on people who are uninterested. While some version of this has been around for a long time, the ability to collect, store, and organize massive amounts of data is relatively new. Instead of an economy based on products, or even services, we now have a whole economy based on the exchange of data points.

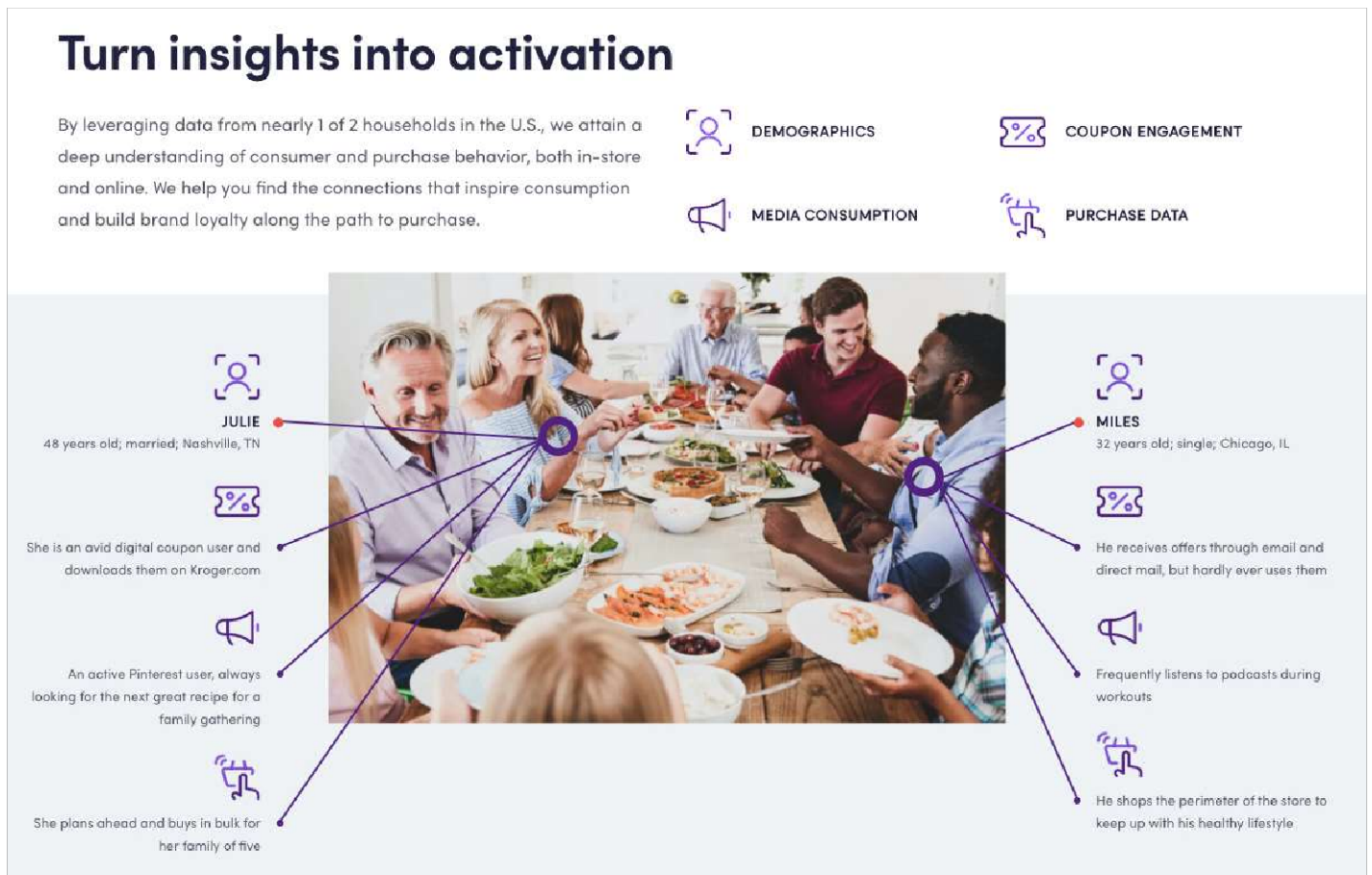
Every one of us is caught in and commodified by this web. There is a whole other side to Kroger adjacent to selling groceries that revolves around gathering information about us, the customers.

Data Collection

While Kroger is far from the only corporation to collect and sell our data, what makes them extra predatory is that it's based on an interaction that is nearly impossible to avoid: buying food from a grocery store. The Candy Crush app or whatever that sells your data is more optional. Even if individuals can limit their exposure by growing food or trading directly with farmers, etc, that is not a large-scale disruption.

An extreme amount of detail gets caught and categorized in data collection, things we would never consider anybody being interested in. Somehow, they can find a way

to contextualize it with other data points and monetize it. Kroger tracks what you buy, how often, and when. When shopping online, it includes your internet browsing history and what products you look at even if you don't purchase them. Signing up for accounts gives them personal information like phone, email, address. Phone apps track location and save mobile device info like IP addresses. Payment information is saved. The Kroger Pharmacy gives them additional insight into your health-related information. Certain in-store technology can use facial recognition. With all of these details, they can infer a lot about you: age, race, gender, financial status, health conditions, family composition, and other lifestyle factors. When combined with other data from other brokers, strong behavioral inferences and predictions can be made.



from TheMarkup.org, an image posted by 84.51° in 2023 and since removed.

A “Loyalty” Program is Worse Than You Think

The worst culprit of Kroger’s data collection is the Kroger Plus card. They claim that 96% of purchases are tied to a Kroger Plus account. The incentive for them to collect as much data as possible means they, in turn, put a lot of incentives on us to use the “loyalty” program: the card-only discounts, coupons, and, crucially, the fuel points. Launched in 2003, Kroger now has decades of data on some of us. It tracks all purchases, their frequency, and changes in behavior over time. Using the Kroger App or Kroger.com collects additional digital data and allows third party trackers. The app knows when you’ve entered a physical store and tracks you. If you’ve ever wondered why every business, from retail to fast food to gas stations, is pushing you to download and use an app and a loyalty program, this is why! It creates a whole new revenue stream for them, selling data about you. With some privacy laws going on the books about ad trackers, cutting off some sources of data collection, these programs are more valuable than ever.

In addition to the grocery stores, under the Kroger parent company is Kroger Precision Marketing and 84.51°, named after the longitude of Kroger’s headquarters in Cincinnati, Ohio. 84.51° is a data and behavioral analytics company. They take all the first-party data collected by Kroger and additional data bought from other brokers, contextualize it, and turn it into usable “insights.” They have over 1,400 client companies, including many of the brands that sell products in Kroger stores. 84.51° claims to have over 35 petabytes of first-party data. One petabyte is equivalent to one million gigabytes! Kroger Precision Marketing is the component that puts these insights to work. It creates highly targeted advertising aimed at specific

shoppers, both for Kroger itself and for its client companies. This looks like digital coupons, special sales, targeted commercials, etc. As the one running the physical and online stores, Kroger has massive access to sell to brands and advertisers.

Implications

On an individual level, Kroger uses your data to build a personal profile on you that they use to make targeted ads and to covertly influence your shopping choices to increase their profits. Kroger also acts as a data broker, selling your data, profiles, and retail “insights” to other companies so they can take advantage of you too. Most people do not understand that by using a Plus card or shopping online, they are opting in to this sprawling data network.

However, this is not just a decision we can make for ourselves about whether or not we want our data used in this way. There are larger demographic and regional implications that each of us feeds into. By aggregating data, analysts build audiences and segments based on shared behavior or demographics that puts us collectively at risk of targeting and exploitation. A common segment is one based on geographic region. An extreme example of what kind of harm can come from these aggregated data sets is the Purdue Pharma’s choice to debut and aggressively market OxyContin in specific rural towns in Appalachia. These places were chosen based on rates of unemployment, poverty, and disability. The release of OxyContin started the opioid crisis that continues to this day, claiming hundreds of thousands of lives. The initial areas in Appalachia are some of the hardest hit. While this might sound far removed from grocery shopping data, remember that Kroger has a pharmacy component as well. In fact, Kroger was implicated in the National

Opioids Settlement alongside Purdue Pharma and many others and was ordered to pay \$1.2 billion into the settlement money.



Surveillance Pricing

Another new piece of technology you might have noticed at Kroger (and Walmart and Aldi) is the electronic shelf label (ESL). They are designed to have a paper-looking screen like on an e-reader, another design choice that’s supposed to make us hate it less. ESLs are little screens replacing paper labels. They can be changed remotely using a Bluetooth or Wi-Fi connections. They save on labor costs, as employees no longer need to go aisle by aisle replacing labels every time a product or a price changes. Some have little LED light spots on them. They can be programmed to flash in different ways for different purposes, for example, helping employees find a specific label/item more quickly. Consumer advocates are worried about the proliferation of ESLs as they create the possibility of surge and surveillance pricing. Surge pricing is the raising of prices in times of high demand. For example, raising the prices of shovels during a snowstorm. This, of course, already happens in some ways, but these labels that can be changed instantly make it a lot easier. Prices can even be changed multiple times a day, increasing during busier shopping times. Kroger’s proprietary Electronic Display for the Grocery Environment (EDGE) technology is a little bit different and I haven’t seen it show up locally yet. With EDGE, instead of each product having its own little

label box, the whole edge of a shelf is a long smooth screen. It works the same way as the ESLs.

Surveillance pricing is the practice of targeting different shoppers with different prices based on their data profile. Based on the customer data, analysts make inferences about the highest price each person (or group of people) will be willing to pay. Surveillance pricing is, right now, more common online where it's easier to target each individual and most devices are associated with some data profile. ESLs hint at the possibility of this technology being implemented for in-person shopping. It is not hard to imagine tags communicating with smart phones, telling the system who is looking at the product, and selecting a price especially for them. We are moving toward a world in which there are different prices for each person and we are extorted for the things we need the most.

What We Can Do

Kroger is still, to most people, seen as a traditional grocery business. But it has substantially transformed

into a sophisticated broker in the data economy with its own data and behavior analytics component. We are now as much of a product as the snacks we get at the store. We would do well to interact with it as such. What we truly need is a completely different relationship to food: what we eat, where and how it's grown, the nature of agricultural labor, and what our relationship is to the production of food and the land that is required for that cultivation. In the meantime, a proliferation of mutual aid networks that live off excess/food waste and food justice projects that connect people to the food they eat, address inequities, and heal land destroyed by monocultures and ranching, could reduce our dependence on brokers like Kroger.

While that dependence remains, there are still things we can do to disrupt the technological exploitation. To limit our digital data profiles, we can avoid getting apps and making accounts for everything. No loyalty programs. If a program like Kroger's provides too much savings to ditch completely, we can share accounts with friends

and family so the profiles are less precise. Let's make them work off of bad data! Not bringing your phone on errands or into the store with you can prevent them from getting certain data points. Wearing medical masks while shopping can limit video surveillance and facial recognition. Vandalize the ESLs. Knock Tally over; somebody's gotta do it. Support shoplifting. They can't track your purchases if you don't pay! If you're not into shoplifting, provide cover for those who are. Look the other way. Distract the loss prevention officer. Shoplifting does not have to be an individual solution. Instances in both Greece and Montreal demonstrate mass looting: dozens of masked people raiding a grocery and sharing with food with the neighborhood. Whatever form it takes, let us proliferate open hostility to exploiters and imposed technologies.

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“Free the Bunnies!!!”

by Maricela Rueda

I remember the first time I saw
 a hanged trophy kill
 Driving in a work truck on country roads
 in so called Paradise or Springtown
 one -or- the other
 The coyote hanging by her rear leg
 on the fence line
 made me slam the brakes
 I was so confused and afraid
 Telling someone about what I saw
 they chose to say “It’s only humane -
 to warn the rest of the pack...”
 My attorney closed trial with a statement:
 Maricela is not a lab rat
 The court room is not a laboratory
 I’m not sure that was ever true
 I identify a lot with bunnies
 that labs wrongfully test on too
 I refuse this - humanity
 that does such things to us creatures,
 choose to deny nature,
 so we will fear our right to freedom

Mari has been sentenced to 70 years in prison as part of the Prairieland case. Her husband Des was sentenced to 50 years. She has a 13 year old child. She had 2 bunnies, Daisy and Daffodil, who have not been seen since their house was raided and their fate remains unknown. The bunnies were referenced at trial, when prosecutors claimed that empty cardboard boxes were proof of evidence tampering. They were, in fact, boxes for the bunnies to hide and play in. Even the bunnies made the state look like fools.



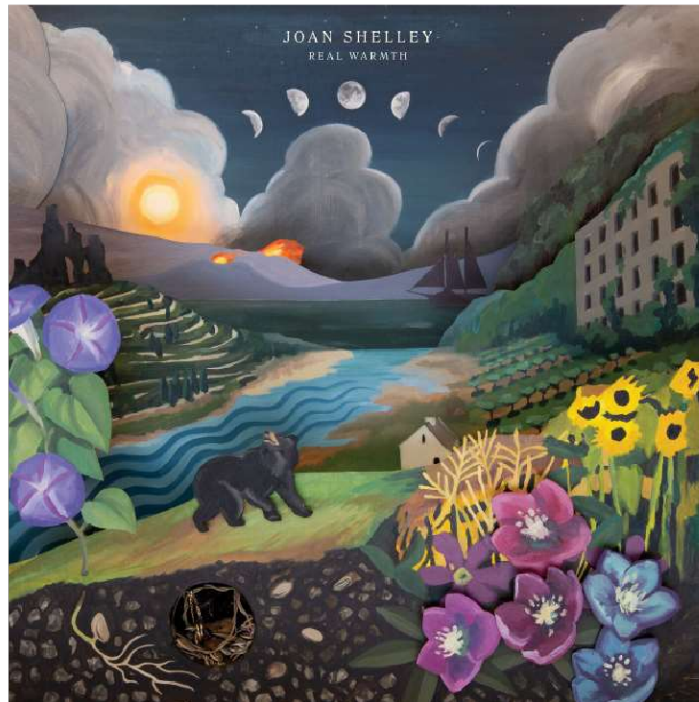
Visit PrairielandDefendants.com for more information and instructions for writing to Mari and the others.



Substance for the Shadow:

A Column of Art and Culture

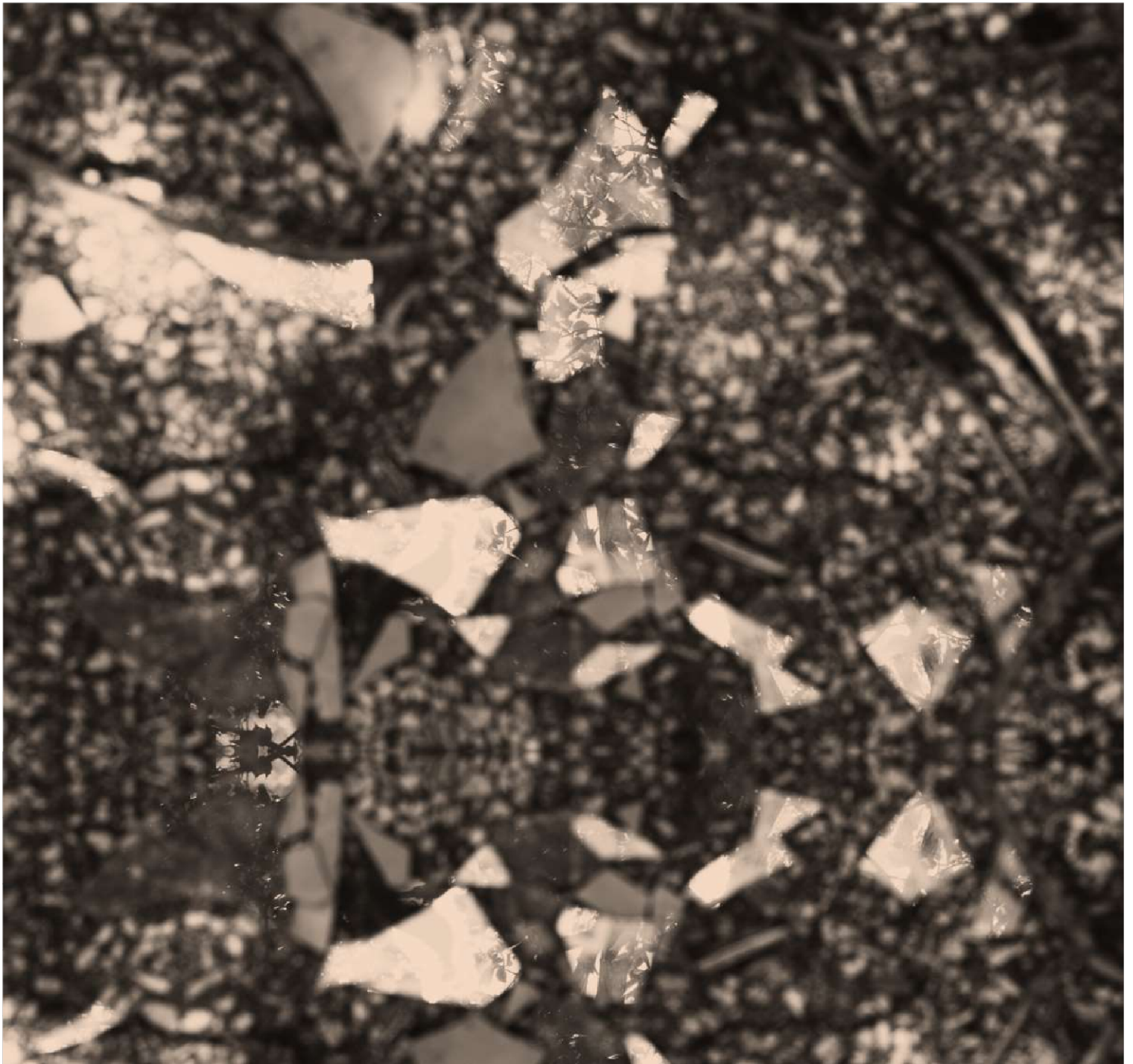
“Field Guide to Wild Life” by Joan Shelley



Observing a young human child, it's difficult to deny that humans are animals. In “Field Guide to Wild Life,” Joan Shelley sounds at peace with our animality, singing about her daughter. It's the third track on *Real Warmth*, a folk album released by No Quarter in September of last year. I remember listening to this song the first evening it was out, walking alongside a creek, goldenrod in bloom around me.

When Shelley sings of walking, she's “watching, tracking” in “a steady line.” Her daughter, by contrast, is “dancing, spinning.” Among the joys of observing human children and animals at play is the nonlinearity: they often move for what the movement gives them in the present, absorbed more in process than product, freed from the pursuit of efficiency. Early childhood expert Heather Bernt-Santy, speaking recently about adults' misunderstanding of children's play, offered that some adults confuse a focus on process, rather than product, for chaos. Joan Shelley does not judge her daughter's spinning as chaotic. She watches in awe. Likewise, in the next verse, which describes her daughter's emotional experiences – “every emotion in one small hour / a raging ocean, a meteor shower” – Shelley chooses not to regard the child as dramatic or unreasonable. Instead, she marvels at “the fire in her.”

I've relistened to “Field Guide to Wild Life” many times since last September, partly for how the texture of the song floats, also for the trickling guitar riff in the last third or so. But I return mostly for Shelley's appreciation of what she sees in her daughter. I wish more adults took Shelley's approach toward the children in our care: observing, admiring; observing something else, admiring it, too. If adults appreciated how young children moved without trying to rush them toward a predetermined end; and appreciated kids' attunement to what's happening around them, evident in their squeals and clenched fists, without retreating to apathy and calling it calm – wouldn't we have a culture with more pleasure, more rightful fire? I like to think Shelley sounds at peace with our animality because she knows it's worth holding onto, beyond childhood.



*In Tension aspires to be a place-based project, and as such, we must state that “Bloomington” and “Indiana” should not exist. At the deepest fulfillment of our liberatory project, these entities would be dissolved. The devastating impact of European colonization, settlement, and industrialization on the land, its human and nonhuman inhabitants, and the way in which we relate to it cannot be overstated. This land is unceded territory of the Myaamia, Kaskaskia, Kiikaapoi, šaawanwaki, Neshnabek, Wandat, Waayaahatanwa, Peeyankihšiki, Peewaareewa, Lenape, and others.
Toward the end of the U.S. and every empire.*