

# **I was a Teenaged Ecoterrorist**

by  
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30/05/07 ([www.mountainsentinel.com](http://www.mountainsentinel.com)) When I was a child, I spent much of my time exploring forests and wetlands. I learned to forage, hunt, trap and fish in the woodlands of the community where I lived. But I learned much more than that. I learned of the bonds that tie an ecosystem together. I learned that the web-work of life extends to all living things and that everything is important to the wellbeing of the whole. And I learned the true taste of freedom.

Next to my backyard was a stand of brush and trees where I could pick blackberries, boysenberries, strawberries and mulberries to my heart's content. Beyond this berry patch was a field bordered by woods. At the far end of the field were wetlands, a lake and forests.

Out there was an enormous willow. The base of this tree was so big that three people could not link arms around it. Its branches, some of them extending nearly horizontally, were bigger around than many trees. Two kids could easily pass each other on these branches, which had housed many a tree fort through the years.

This willow was ancient, dating back to the time when this had been hunting land of the Ottawa. Perhaps Chief Pontiac had once sheltered under this tree. All who saw this willow were awed by the sight. Without a doubt it was hollowed.

In the late 1970s, the woodlands where I had spent much of my youth were gobbled up by housing tracts. The forests were cut down, the wetlands were filled in, habitats that had once been home to deer, fox and bobcat were destroyed so that developers could make a profit building McMansions.

Witnessing this devastation pained me terribly. It was not simply a matter of watching the gardens of my childhood vanish to the bulldozer. I could feel the anguish of the woodlands as they were ripped up without so much as a blink from the perpetrators.

Unable to simply stand by and watch this senseless destruction, I took action to halt the insanity. At night, I would sabotage the developers' equipment and use the very trees that they had cut down to block their access roads. And I do not think I was alone.

I am sure others — mostly youths in their teens or a little older — did their share to halt the madness which was destroying the woodlands. They may not have known what they were really doing, but I am sure that deep inside, they were rising up in defense of their homeland. That is how I felt about it.

Yet the housing tracts went up in the end. Our resistance may have slowed them a little, but once the decisions were made, the outcome was inevitable. The developers

complained of the costs of vandalism as they pocketed their obscene profits. Maybe it was vandalism in their eyes, but I know that I did the right thing. My only regret was that I did not succeed.

If I had those days to live over again, I would do the same, with one change. Now I would try to organize a resistance to the developer's bulldozers. Perhaps an organized resistance would have had more effect. And perhaps, by making the community aware of what was being lost, we would have spurred them to rise up and put an end to this insanity before it overwhelmed them.

Despite being labeled as such, I did not feel like a vandal. Instead, I felt like I was following the path of Thoreau, of the mountainmen and explorers, and of the Indians who once peopled this land. Rebellion against this subjugation to profit was an almost sacred duty, akin to the resistance of the American Indians.

I was fighting for my homeland. Yet, beyond that, I was fighting for freedom, for quality of life, for the inalienable rights of all life, and for the very planet. Perhaps this struggle is doomed when pitched against the inexorable drive for profit, consumption and dominion of the free market. However, in the end, if the exploitation and impoverishment of the natural world is not halted, the economy will be laid low by ecology.

Now there are people who will spend decades in prison for doing the same things I did all those years ago. Corporations and lawmakers have labeled them ecoterrorists. The FBI has identified them as the number one terrorist threat in the United States. And prosecutors are seeking to apply special terrorist sentencing guidelines to them.

The number one terrorist threat in the US is not a threat against people. Environmental guerillas are very careful not to harm human lives in their activities. Their target is property. Hundreds of rightwing plots have been uncovered where the intension was to kill large numbers of people. Hate groups are actively engaged in striking out against minorities and immigrants. The courts have even released a known terrorist, whom the US refuses to extradite to Cuba or Venezuela in order to stand trial there for mass murder.

Yet, these crazy environmentalists need to be prosecuted to the fullest extent for their assault on private property. Leading US corporations and politicians reap huge profits from the arms trade, the sole purpose of which is to murder and injure people. And the US-led consumer market economy is threatening the continued viability of the planet. Yet our corporations, politicians and criminal justice system would have us think that the biggest threat to our safety comes from a few tree huggers who burned down a ski lodge or destroyed some construction equipment.

It would be nice if the US public would wake up and join these so-called "ecoterrorists" in demanding the stop of the wholesale destruction of our planet. But I do not see that happening. The majority of the US public has completely lost touch with what freedom truly is and the importance of the community of life on this planet. They have been

domesticated into bovine complacency. Even if they see that anything is wrong with the established order, their instinct is to go along with the herd, following the chute into the slaughter house.

No, my only hope in writing this little essay is to wake up a little compassion in a few of my readers, making them aware of the new political prisoners in the United States who have been branded as terrorists just because they dare to defend freedom and homeland against the threat of the rapacious market. I urge you to follow the links below and learn about these heroes who are being imprisoned as terrorists. Be aware of their plight. They fought for us, now let us not neglect them. And maybe a few of us might even make the effort to reach out to them personally and help to console them as they face the overwhelming machinery of state terrorism.

The willow in my hometown is no longer there. It was cut down decades ago to make way for tract mansions. The wetlands were filled in, the forests and the fields were eradicated, the wildlife was forced out of the area or exterminated. The small town where I grew up is now one vast suburban sprawl, and most of the residents are not even aware of what has been lost. Yet I resisted, and I would do so again if I saw that some positive result would come from my resistance.

So, anybody for bulldozing a corporate headquarters to make way for a forest?

To learn more about the various eco-activists being held in US prisons as terrorists, please follow these links:

<http://www.ecoprisoners.org>

<http://bombsandshields.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.greenisthenewred.com/blog/>

<http://www.spiritoffreedom.org.uk/>