

Militance

Oppression

Resistance

Aceptionism

Love

Statism

Table of Contents

Preface.....	1
1 Genesis.....	2
2 First Interrogation.....	5
3 On Terrorism.....	7
4 Women.....	13
5 Second Interrogation.....	17
6 About the Knife.....	20
7 The Public-Private Partnership and the Other Public-Private Partnership.....	22
8 Acceptionism.....	25
9 Anna and I Get Together.....	29
10 Why Act Morally?.....	30
11 ACAB.....	33
12 Life with Anna.....	35
13 In the Business of Making Money.....	37
14 A Sense of Humor.....	40
15 Anna Comes Home from Congress.....	46
16 A Positive Outlook.....	50
17 Utopia Is Impossible; Everyone Who Isn't a Utopian Is a Shmuck.....	54
18 Restorative Justice.....	57
19 The Law in These Parts.....	59
20 Emma.....	62
21 Liebe Statt Angst.....	67
22 How We Live Now.....	69
23 The Only Way To Stop a Bad Guy With a Potato Peeler Is a Good Guy With a Nuke.....	77
24 MORALS.....	80

Preface

The first thing I want you to know is that this story contains a true account of my young adult life. Minor changes to the story have been made, only to protect the identity of myself and those whom I love.

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But then again, I would be the first to tell you: break the law.

1 Genesis

Boom, boom, boom. Three firm bounces on my front door awoke me. My computer was still playing gentle music as my heart rate quickly rose. I feared that I already knew who it was, and I was afraid he was looking for trouble. Luckily Anna was not there, but far away at a conference, away from harm. Naked, and still sleepy, I rushed to put on underwear and sneakers.

"I'm coming," I yelled at him as I took a big kitchen knife from the drawer and walked to the entrance of my Kreuzberg apartment.

I was thinking, *this could be carnage*. Looking past the curtains, I saw nobody in front of my door. Another bad sign. I gripped the knife and took one step back, in fear for what might happen next.

Before I realized that I had opened the door, I was blown aback by the wave that entered my home. Unprepared for this forceful confrontation, I could only drop the knife and run in blind fear.

Did he bring an army?, I thought to myself, *Will my sweet Anna find a mutilated body, or no body at all? An army is unexpected*. There were many aggressive voices and I was quickly forced to the ground. I didn't struggle, as there were simply too many of them. I couldn't even move my arms. They rose me to my knees to face one of my assailants—a bold, white man. He was around 40 years old and had great excitement in his eyes. As I tried to constrain my panic, I noticed the man was wearing a kevlar vest, as were my other assailants.

"Are there any weapons in the house?" the bold man asked.

"What?" I thought out loud, "No, there are no weapons in this house. I see you brought guns, but I don't have a weapon."

Then I saw he was holding ... a piece of paper? I still couldn't move my arms and discovered my hands were cuffed behind my back.

The bold man told me, "You are under arrest on the suspicion of providing material support to a terrorist organization. Are you Max Nowak?"

Good god, I thought. It was just the police. As I looked around for confirmation that it was in fact the police, I counted ten of them. Six were wearing vests and were there just for security while two were bringing in forensic gear (computer, photo-camera, containers), and the last two seemed to just be observing. I was relieved to discover it was the police, but wondered what they were arresting me for.

"Do you have identification on you?" the bold man asked while I was on my knees, wearing nothing but my underwear and sneakers.

"You think I did what?" I replied.

The two that had put the metal on my wrists now made me stand.

"You are under arrest on the suspicion that you have provided material support to a terrorist organization."

"And so you bust in here on a Sunday night?" I asked.

The situation seemed to be under control. The police had me and I was not fighting. We just needed to get to the police station. There, I would ask for a lawyer before speaking with the police. A lawyer won't show up on a Sunday night, and I would be able to leave the station the morning

after, around noon. Then it would take 2, maybe 3 months before everything would be cleared up and the paperwork done.

“Are you Max Nowak and do you have identification?” the bold man asked again.

“Yes, that's me!” I finally answered him. “My wallet with driver's license is in my jeans, next to my bed. I would like to see your identification as well, pro forma” I told him.

The word 'pro forma' was a bit difficult for the police officers; they all had to learn it shortly after signing up for the police force.

There are some tensions that naturally arise during a home invasion and terrorism related arrest. These tensions arise even with the very best police officers and during arrests for very minor offenses. Although all police officers have voluntarily joined the police force, they are always stressed-out when performing these routine arrests. To ease the tension, I made two remarks: “On a Sunday night?” and “pro forma”. I felt like both remarks were light and slightly humorous while not showing my disrespect. Still, this officer seemed set on keeping an unfriendly atmosphere. He maintained an ugly face and said that he did not have to show his identification to me.

I was escorted out of my house towards an undercover police car by the two officers that had been holding my arms since the moment that I hit the ground. One of them sat behind the wheel while the other was nice enough to sit next to me on the backseat. The three of us drove off, presumably towards a police station, although they didn't tell me. Being an outgoing and very optimistic person, I tried one more time.

“So there were ten of you in my apartment of 25m2. Can you believe that in three years, I never had so many people over at once!?”

My attempt at casual conversation was met with a stare of disbelief and words that did not leave the officer's mouth.

At the police station it was the usual routine: counting the money in my wallet, removing my shoe laces, verifying my identity, no allergies, no drugs, no people that immediately depend on me, and a vegan diet. For some reason, the vegan, as well as the vegetarian diet always requires to be explained to the police. Not the motivation, but an explanation of what is and is not considered a vegan or vegetarian meal. After these welcoming rituals were performed came the more serious questions.

The officer said, “We received a request by the FBI in America to arrest you on the suspicion of providing material support to a terrorist organization. Do you understand why you have been arrested?” Of course, I didn't know the precise reason why they kidnapped me, and I doubt they knew it themselves, but I think that their willingness to blindly follow orders from people they had never met had something to do with it. “Do you understand why you have been arrested?” has always felt like a trick question to me. Answering “yes” might have implied that I thought it was somehow legitimate that they kidnapped me from my bed. I'm always afraid this could be considered a partial confession. Answering “no” just makes them repeat themselves.

So I replied, “I understand the crime that I am suspected of.”

The officer continued, “We would like to interrogate you. You have the right to consult with

an attorney and to have an attorney present during any future interrogation. If you cannot afford one, one will be provided for you. Do you understand your right to an attorney?"

"Yes", I told him.

The officer asked, "Do you agree to be interrogated now, without an attorney present, or would you like to consult with an attorney?"

Most of that was a completely standard informative announcement, except for the crime that I was suspected of.

"You received a request by the FBI?", I asked, thinking this abduction was more unusual than I initially thought.

"Yes," the officer replied, "Do you agree to be interrogated now, without an attorney present, or would you like to consult with an attorney? If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be provided for you."

Finally, I answered him, "I wish to consult an attorney before being interrogated," knowing none would show up on a Sunday night.

After waiting 30 minutes on a wooden bench in a cold cell, I was escorted to the holding cell for the night. By then, I was too tired to attempt any friendly conversations. As always, it was difficult to carry the blanket and linen while my pants were falling off for lack of a belt. The officer locked the door behind me, and I was happy to see that one of the tube lights was broken. Normally, the lights can be dim or almost bright in a holding cell. I knew that with one light broken, my sleep would be better.

"Lucky me," I said out loud.

I was hoping to spend a quiet evening in my cell. All the excitement of the police arrest and the late hour of their visit had made me tired. I wanted to sleep in preparation for whatever would happen the next day. Unfortunately, after I had spent just 10 minutes in my cell, the door opens and an officer spoke to me.

"Please follow me to your interrogation room."

2 First Interrogation

I sat down in the interrogation room and another officer, a plainclothes interrogation officer, walked into the interrogation room. Although he was wearing plainclothes, he was just another bureaucrat who was about to generate some more paperwork to be proud of. We shook hands and he asked if I wanted something to drink.

I didn't answer and ask him, "Where is my lawyer?"

"We will get to that. But first, can I get you anything?"

I just stared at the bureaucrat with a blank expression on my face, making it clear to him how this was going to go. He took a seat across from me and opened his laptop.

"We have been granted the authority to interrogate you now, without a lawyer present," he said. I rose an eyebrow and told him, "Well, I trust it is a pressing matter, but I do not agree to be interrogated."

"Actually, you are right," he said with a sincere smile on his face, "It is urgent."

Then the bureaucrat proceeded to ask me my name, date of birth, and other information they already had. To lead the bureaucrat on, I answer his first few, boring questions before he got to his pressing questions. Although I couldn't hide my fatigue, I tried to look at him without expression. I wanted to better understand what his problem with me was, but without answering his terrorism related questions.

I ignored most of the bureaucrat's questions, except for the following:

"Have you ever been involved with a terrorist group or in terrorist activities?"

Here I asked him, "What is terrorism?" and he looked at me strangely.

"You know what terrorism is," he said, and provided a few examples referencing ISIS, Al Qaeda, and the London bombings. He added, "But terrorism can include any deliberate disruption of either corporate, civilian, or state activities by illegal means."

Another question he asked was, "What do you think of people who resort to violence for political ends?" I asked him, "Could you think of such an example?" but he didn't seem to get it.

Other questions he asked were: "Have you planned any terrorist attacks in Germany or the U.S.A.?", "Are you member of an international terrorist network?", "Who are your friends?", "Who do you spend your time with?", "Why are you a vegan?", "Other than university classes and your apartment, where have you been in the past three months?"

I didn't cooperate with him, and I ignored all these questions. One of the final questions was if I wanted to give permission to the police to access my computer and cellphone. I did not. I didn't want to expose myself or others by giving them access. The aggression with which they had arranged this interrogation assured that I wouldn't cooperate with them.

Note that non-cooperation by ignoring questions does not mean replying, "No comment." Ignoring questions means to not answer—to not say a single word, and when the transcript of the interrogation is presented, to not sign it. I shred the first printout that the bureaucrat gave me, but he insisted I sign. The second printout I signed with "X," after an officer had forcefully brought my

wrist to the paper. The bureaucrat accepted the “X”. The bureaucrat had started by being friendly (that is, not yelling or being insulting), and remained that way until I was led back to my cell. In my cell, I was finally able to get some rest.

Before I fell asleep, there were two thoughts on my mind. The first thought was about the FBI; what the hell did they want from me? They were probably just trying to hassle me, and they did. Although many terrorist activities that the FBI carries out are publicly known, I didn't think they knew about any of my Direct Actions. And even if they did, *Since when had I become a terrorist?*

As I lied on my back in the dim, windowless cell, I had another, more comforting thought. Her name, is Anna.

3 On Terrorism

Like most people my age and older, I remember 9/11. I was about 10 years old, in my last year of primary education in Brandenburg, and my school year had just started. News of a “big accident” was shared by our teacher just before we left the school. At home, I turned on the television and saw the images that are still stuck in many peoples' minds today. Not just the collapse, but also the helicopter footage before, showing people sticking their heads out of the windows. The horror that hit me most, I remember, was the realization that people were having to choose between jumping or burning alive. Now, as an adult, I am better able to understand other horrors that took place that day, such as the many families that have been destroyed in the attacks.

The question that many people, including me—the 10 year old Max—had on 9/11 was: “Why did they do it?” But to be able to discuss the question “Why?” I will first discuss other terrorist activities that occurred in the 50 years before the 9/11 attacks.

The 9/11 that I witnessed as a child is, in some sense, not the first 9/11; on September 11, 1973, the U.S. backed a coup in Chile that overthrew the democratically elected government, reverting Chile from a democracy into the Pinochet dictatorship, which terrorized the country for many years. This 9/11, just like the 2001–9/11, was also a true tragedy, but one that the U.S. could have prevented if it were truly terror averse, or if it had been in favor of democracy, or if it had simply done nothing at all. A fun fact is that my father was the same age during the 1973–9/11 as I was during the 2001–9/11.

The awesome oppression and violence that the U.S. has inflicted throughout the world (in the 50 years prior to 9/11, mostly in the global South) has been an undeniable constant; the U.S. was the largest international terrorist organization and sponsor of terrorism during the 50 years preceding the (2001) 9/11 attacks. There are countless examples of U.S. aggression that amount to Terror, if not war crimes. Many of the U.S. terrorist activities have been documented—certainly enough to get the idea;

You probably know the photo taken during the Vietnam war of a little girl (Kim Phúc) running naked on a road, being severely burned as the result of a U.S. attack. Today, little girls in Vietnam and Laos are still getting scarred or killed by exploding U.S. cluster munition because, as with any other war, the U.S. has never helped to clean up the mess they made. Millions of U.S. 'bombies' that still need to explode or be dismantled threaten lives today. In the following section, Santi Suthinithet describes how awesome the U.S. terror effort was in Laos between 1964 and 1973:

As part of the Secret War operation conducted during the Vietnam War, the U.S. military dropped 260 million cluster bombs—about 2.5 million tons of munitions—on Laos over the course of 580,000 bombing missions. This is equivalent to a planeload of bombs being unloaded every eight minutes, 24 hours a day, for nine years—nearly seven bombs for every man, woman, and child living in Laos. It is more than all the bombs dropped on Europe throughout World War II.

Suthinithet certainly depicts a massive campaign. In the midst of this bombing campaign against Laos, there was also a presidential order to bomb Cambodia. The order was:

Anything that flies on anything that moves.

However, this only describes one specific terror tactic (cluster bombs) deployed against one country.

The U.S. was one of the last nations to support the apartheid government of South Africa, even when it was clear that a U.S. economic boycott would quickly topple the apartheid regime. DemocracyNow! has described the U.S. support and amnesia as follows:

The dominant view is that the U.S. was on the right side in South Africa, that it opposed apartheid. But nothing could be further from the truth, particularly when Reagan was president. Reagan labeled Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) a notorious terrorist organization, while continuing Washington's support for the apartheid regime. In 1981, Reagan explained to CBS that he was loyal to the South African regime because it was "a country that has stood by the U.S. in every war we've ever fought, a country that, strategically, is essential to the free world in its production of minerals."

The apartheid regime was extremely brutal against the black majority in South Africa, but it is Mandela's ANC (even when it introduced Truth and Reconciliation, absolving many Afrikaners of their murderous crimes) that was labeled a terrorist organization by the U.S. Similarly, the U.S. has given "unconditional support" to Israeli apartheid and mass-imprisonment, which has included political support as well as weapons. On 9/11, Nelson Mandela was still labeled a terrorist by the U.S. government.

In the 50 years preceding 9/11, the U.S. has also dealt great terror throughout South and Central America, for example in Argentina, Brazil, Panama, Nicaragua, and Grenada. It has also terrorized or frustrated the development of many other South and Central American countries by more and and less creative means, of which Cuba is the well known example. At the time of writing this, the first few paragraphs of the Wikipedia page describing a U.S. orchestrated coup in Guatemala read as follows:

A popular revolution against the U.S. backed dictator Jorge Ubico in 1944 had led to Guatemala's first democratic election and the beginning of the Guatemalan Revolution. The elections were won by Juan José Arévalo who wanted to turn Guatemala into a liberal capitalist society. He implemented social reforms which included a minimum wage law, increased educational funding, and near-universal voting rights. Arévalo's defense minister Jacobo Árbenz was elected President in 1950, and continued the social reform policies, as well as instituting land reform, which sought to grant land to peasants who had been victims of debt slavery prior to Arévalo.

In 1952, U.S. president Harry Truman authorized Operation PBFORTUNE to topple Árbenz with the support of Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza García, but the operation was aborted when too many details became public. Dwight D. Eisenhower was elected U.S. president in 1952 and authorized the CIA to carry out Operation PBSUCCESS in August 1953. The CIA armed, funded, and trained a force of 480 men led by Carlos Castillo Armas.

The force invaded Guatemala on 18 June 1954, backed by a heavy campaign of psychological warfare, including bombings of Guatemala City and an anti-Árbenz radio station claiming to be genuine news. The invasion force fared poorly militarily, but the psychological warfare and the possibility of a U.S. invasion intimidated the Guatemalan army, which refused to fight the invaders. Árbenz resigned on 27 June, and following negotiations in San Salvador, Carlos Castillo Armas became president on 7 July 1954.

The coup was widely criticized internationally and created lasting anti-US sentiment in Latin America. Castillo Armas quickly took dictatorial powers, banning all political parties, torturing and imprisoning political opponents, and reversing the social reforms of the Guatemalan Revolution. A series of US-backed authoritarian governments ruled Guatemala until 1996. The repression sparked off the Guatemalan Civil War between the government and leftist guerrillas, during which the military committed massive human rights violations against the civilian population, including a genocidal campaign against the Maya peoples.

This history of oppression has lasting effects on Guatemala; today, many people are fleeing Guatemala because there still is an exceptional amount of internal violence. I think it is fair to say that the Guatemalan people, by proxy of their U.S. installed and supported dictators, were terrorized by the U.S. government during the 50 years preceding the 9/11 attacks.

Similar to the Guatemalan tragedy, the U.S. overthrew the democratically elected government of Iran in 1953 to install a dictatorship. In addition to supporting a great many dictatorships in the middle east through political and military means, in the 50 years preceding the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. has fed Terror to Afghanistan, Iraq, Kurdistan, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine, Sudan, and to various extents in other countries, too. After Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait, the U.S. went to war explaining that “Iraqi soldiers take babies out of incubators, take the incubators, and leave the babies to die.” The U.S. government knew this was a lie, but the lie allowed them to ramp up support for going to war in Kuwait—and so they went with it. David Graeber described the U.S. freedom fighting activities in Kuwait as follows:

In late February and early March 1991, during the first Gulf War, U.S. forces bombed, shelled, and otherwise set fire to thousands of young Iraqi men who were trying to flee Kuwait. There were a series of such incidents—the “Highway of Death,” “Highway 8,” the “Battle of Rumaila”—in which U.S. air power cut off columns of retreating Iraqis and engaged in what the military refers to as a “turkey shoot,” where trapped soldiers are simply slaughtered in their vehicles. Images of charred bodies trying desperately to crawl from their trucks became iconic symbols of the war.

I have never understood why this mass slaughter of Iraqi men isn’t considered a war crime. It’s clear that, at the time, the U.S. command feared it might be. President George H.W. Bush quickly announced a temporary cessation of hostilities, and the military has deployed enormous efforts since then to minimize the casualty count, obscure the circumstances, defame the victims (“a bunch of rapists, murderers, and thugs,” General Norman Schwarzkopf later insisted), and prevent the most graphic images from appearing on U.S. television. It’s rumored that there are videos from cameras mounted on helicopter gunships of panicked Iraqis, which will never be released.

It makes sense that the elites were worried. These were, after all, mostly young men who'd been drafted and who, when thrown into combat, made precisely the decision one would wish all young men in such a situation would make: saying to hell with this, packing up their things, and going home. For this, they should be burned alive? When ISIS burned a Jordanian pilot alive last winter, it was universally denounced as unspeakably barbaric—which it was, of course. Still, ISIS at least could point out that the pilot had been dropping bombs on them. The retreating Iraqis on the “Highway of Death” and other main drags of American carnage were just kids who didn't want to fight.

The list of U.S. terror activities is still far greater than the short overview that I have given.

On September 11, terror was brought to the U.S., but these terrorist attacks pale in comparison with what the U.S. had been doing to other peoples consistently for years. Has every U.S. government since the second world war not been the largest international terrorist organization of its day?

Besides thinking, “Why did they do it?”, another question that arose in American discourse after the 9/11 attacks was: “Why do they hate us?” Luckily, it did not take long for president George W. Bush to explain why “they” hate “us.” During a joint session of Congress on September 20th, 2001, Bush explained the 9/11 attacks:

They hate what they see right here in this chamber: a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms: our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other.

First of all, the list of countries where the U.S. has, in the last 50 years, prevented democracy from establishing is enormous, particularly in the middle east, and they have even overthrown democratic governments and installed their own dictatorships. This legacy continues today with their support (sometimes “unconditional”) for almost all dictatorships in that region. All evidence shows that almost all people in the middle east would prefer to have a democratic government than their current dictatorship; too bad the U.S. was preventing this as much as it could.

Second, the “freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other,” is largely prevented in the middle east by the very dictators that the U.S. supports. The two exceptions to this are the Kurds and the Palestinians (living somewhat aside from dictatorial rule), who are examples for working successfully for all the freedoms that Bush mentioned. Too bad the U.S. was helping to exterminate these peoples.

At the republican presidential debate in 2011, Ron Paul drew boos from the crowd as he had the following to say about terrorism and the U.S.:

We're in 130 countries; we have 900 bases around the world. [...] We're there, occupying their land. And if we think that we can do that and not have retaliation, we're kidding ourselves. We have to be honest with ourselves. What would we do if another country, say China, did to us what we do to all those countries over there?

[...]

So, this whole idea that the whole Muslim world is responsible for this and they're attacking us because we're free and prosperous, that is just not true. Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda have been explicit, and they wrote and said: "we attacked America because you had bases on our holy land in Saudi Arabia, you do not give Palestinians a fair treatment, and you have been bombing..." [crowd boos at Paul's comments] I didn't say that; I'm trying to get you to understand what the motive was behind the [9/11] bombing. At the same time, we had been bombing and killing hundreds of thousands of Iraqis for 10 years. Wouldn't you be annoyed? If you're not annoyed, then there's some problem.

The U.S. has terrorized the global South during the 50 years preceding the 9/11 attacks (and in fact many years before that, too). But these acts happened mostly outside the U.S. borders. Not enough people in the U.S. cared to stop the terror that their country was creating, and the U.S. government as a whole certainly didn't give a shit. To the extent that the U.S. is a democracy, to the extent that its residents can influence government actions, its peoples are responsible for the terror that their government creates.

In 1993, the U.S. Federal Drug Administration almost received the authority to implement "truth in labeling" regulation for food supplements. This was prevented by the American electorate because, according to Dan Hurley, "more people wrote to Congress about the supplement bill than wrote about the Vietnam War." I am not saying that letter writing is the best or most effective form of activism, but could the American people, if they had wanted, have done anything more in the 50 years preceding 9/11 to halt the terrorist elements in their own government?

The awesome Terror that the U.S. has inflicted has not inspired an American movement large enough to stop that Terror. The American people as a whole remained passive enough for the U.S. government to continue creating terror around the world, terror that is so much greater than what was delivered to America on 9/11.

What do the American people now think of the terror that the U.S. is inflicting around the world? Americans are as likely to die from terrorism as from being accidentally crushed by their own television or furniture. I think that 9/11 is a missed opportunity. Instead of finding the answer to the question "Why do they hate us?" the American people have allowed their government to increase terror both inward and outward. The American people have now accepted being governed under Martial Law, their hailed constitution effectively suspended because of an otherwise completely insignificant (terrorist) incident.

Americans are not the only people that hate terrorism; Arabs and other peoples hate terrorism just as much. The difference is that, contrary to popular believe in the U.S., almost all terror that has anything to do with the U.S. is the U.S. inflicting terror elsewhere, and not the other way around.

How painfully ironic that the most powerful terrorist organization in history has decided to come after me, an anti-war activist and environmentalist, supposedly because they want to stop

terrorism.

In this chapter, I have singled out the United States because that is where 9/11 occurred, the event that, in the West, comes to mind first when thinking about terror and because the U.S. (government) has been the largest and most effective terrorist organization in recent history. But I would like to point out that the way the U.S. relates to terror (taking on the near-exclusive role of terrorist) is not significantly different than that of the European countries since WWII (and long before); I suspect that, if the European governments would be governing societies of similar size and wealth as the U.S., they would have a comparable record of terrorist achievements. So yes, the European peoples are also responsible for awesome terror that occurred throughout the 50 years preceding 9/11.

In Europe, it is common to think that after the genocides that took place during WWII, the European countries realized how wrong it was of them to abuse, if not exterminate, brown peoples overseas, and they kindly freed their colonies. And luckily, Western European countries have not oppressed any peoples since. But of course, this is European exceptionalism, which is not different from American exceptionalism in its deliriousness.

4 Women

To understand where Anna (my partner) and I are now, I should tell you something about how Anna and I came together. We met on our first day in university. She wore almost no make-up and carried herself on pointy, high heels, which looked surprisingly good under her wide, straight jeans. I took an instant liking in Anna. After our eyes made a connection, but before we had our first real conversation, I made a public attempt to flirt with her. Her reaction was more absent than positive and I was unsure what she thought. Throughout our first week in university, she would seek me out while continuing to be ambiguous about her interest in me. She definitely had a sparkle in her deep blue eyes whenever she would look at me, but dodged any chance for flirtation.

At the time I had a casual, long-distance relationship with Alice, but she was mostly a hangover from my summer vacation between high school and university when I had met her in a hostel in Barcelona. We discovered the city together during the day, and each other during the night. Barcelona was the last city of my trip, and Alice was about to start a two month internship in Strasbourg. I have always been open to Anna, and within the first week we met, she had discovered that I had someone in Strasbourg. She expressed a general interest in my life, and I discovered she still lived with her parents, a two hour commute away. When I asked if she had any romantic aspirations, she told me that she still had a crush on a close friend from high school.

The long-distance relationship with Alice would not last as I was too busy at the time with other things. I managed to pass my courses, but studying was about the last think on my mind. By the end of my second month of university, I had one week wherein I was maintaining three relationships in parallel. Anna was not one of them.

A week before my first semester started, I was back from my trip and moved away from my parents to an apartment near campus where I met B, two weeks after the start of the semester. She was my 5 year older neighbor, and she was much more experienced than me at the time. Sexually, B was a liberated woman, but she compensated for this by having absolutely no original thoughts or inspirations. We immediately started sleeping together about 5 days a week; the other two days she would go back to her parents' place, and I would stay in my apartment. During that period, I was also having daily Skype conversations with Alice that would take about 40 minutes on average.

At the end of the second month of university, I was doing some groceries at a nearby supermarket. There is where I met Dagmar, 6 years older, who turned out to be living two floors above me and B. Dagmar was finishing a second master while lecturing at the same university she was studying at. And, she was a theater actress. I did not return to my apartment the afternoon that I met her, not even to deposit my groceries. Instead, I chose to stay over at Dagmar's apartment. That was two weeks before Alice was supposed to fly over to Berlin, when her internship would end. She would be expecting sufficient attention for an entire 8 days.

I decided to write Alice an email one week after I met Dagmar, seven weeks after I had met my neighbor, wherein I understated the number of women in my life. We had one Skype

conversation after that, but I was so ashamed that I could barely speak. After that, I was alternating contact with Dagmar and B while trying to keep up with my university courses.

Maintaining multiple relationships at once was very demanding. I had different, but similar conversations with all three women during the same period. Sometimes, I confused with whom I had discussed current events, or I told a story to the same person twice. During this time, the student apartments of Dagmar, me and B all looked alike, adding to my confusion.

Meanwhile, I had kept Anna up to date with all of my promiscuities. It was like a soap to her. She would dare to ask no more than once or twice a week, but never did she request me to give less details. Anna and I worked together on some school projects, and I started to like her more and more. But, when I had come to understand that she was a virgin, I did not actively pursue her anymore.

Three weeks after I had met Dagmar, one week after Alice was supposed to come to Berlin, B found an unfamiliar pair of light green, petite-sized socks in my apartment. By some unfortunate coincidence, B was momentarily smart enough to first ask if my sister or some other relative had come over recently. Only after I denied did she confront me with the socks. She showed only a slight uneasiness, but it was sufficient for her to pause our affair.

Dagmar and I continued to enjoy a good relationship. The first week that I was with Dagmar, I was in three relationships. Then, two weeks with her were shared only with B, and 7 more weeks would go by wherein we were exclusive, because B had found Dagmar's socks. Whether or not Dagmar had left her socks there intentionally remains unclear to me.

After 10 weeks of Dagmar and I, there came an unfortunate understanding. Dagmar had met a mutual acquaintance of ours, named Frank. The last time I spoke to Frank, he heard that Alice was coming over. Somehow, Dagmar and Frank started talking. That evening I received a message from Dagmar asking, "Who is Alice?" I don't fault Frank; I think he was just making conversation. By the time Frank met Dagmar, Dagmar and I were sleeping together most nights. But this night, she insisted on not seeing me, and instead meeting at 8 in the morning. I knew Dagmar was going to break up with me, and the same evening, I did something I very much regret. In a moment of weakness, I approached B, who was still living next-door. It was just so easy. I knocked on my neighbor's door, and she opened. I told her I had bought the wrong kind of canned beans, the one that requires a can opener. She gave me a can opener while I tried to look as sad and as ready to cry as possible, hoping she would inquire. I said that I was a bit depressed since I had broken up, "two weeks ago," I lied. Then, she invited me in.

B and I decided to recommence our affair just as easily as it had been halted. But, B's zombie-like mind was a far cry from the intellectually challenging Dagmar. Dagmar was a high-achiever, just like Anna is. The difference is that Dagmar was mostly borderline psychotic, as, I suspect, are many from the theater and arts. She would exaggerate a lot, and sometimes she would be too neurotic to hold a conversation with. I think this made for an exiting relationship with

Dagmar, although slightly frustrating at times. Dagmar was a beautifully erratic woman, and I had the impression that her mother was the same way. (I had met her mother once in the theater after Dagmar's only performance that I attended.) Dagmar was wonderfully insightful in her field of study, but she was nuts and impulsive when it came to managing her personal life. Dagmar's deranged personality was in sharp contrast with Anna, who has a near-flat and cold personality and is someone to build something stable with. I should have pursued Anna from the moment Dagmar and I broke up, instead of visiting my neighbor, B. This is something I regret whenever I think about it because I knew I wanted to be with Anna. B and I would take six weeks to finally break up at the end of February.

After Dagmar broke up with me, and I had approached B, I again told Anna about it. This time, she did not show her usual interest in the soap. She was happily surprised as I told about how Dagmar had found out about Alice. She nodded in agreement when I cited Dagmar's grievances. She bit her lower lip in positive anticipation of the continuation of my soap, her big blue eyes pointed straight at me. Then I told her about B, that we were sort of back together. Her emotion quickly changed to that of shock.

"I don't think that is wise of you, Max," she said as soon as she heard.

Dagmar and I slept together another 4 nights during the first two weeks after the breakup. The other 9 nights were with B. Neither one has found out.

During my (second) time with B, my brain did not get any stimulation. For this I turned to Anna, with whom I was growing increasingly close. Anna frequently visited me after classes, as my apartment was on her route to her parents' home. I discovered she had a passion for reading books, while I couldn't be bothered to read a quarter of our courses' required readings. She claimed to be fascinated with my usage of the German language, which she alleged had a unique vocabulary and word ordering (perhaps influenced by my mother tongue). On Fridays, B would typically go to her parents in her home town for the weekend, drinking it up with her old friends from high school. Anna must have caught onto this quickly, as she would seek out Fridays to come and visit me after school. These would easily turn into late nights, so that she would have an excuse to sleep over, although I felt she didn't need one. During dinner, I once asked her if she was going to stay the night, to which she replied that she never planned such a thing and only did so when it was too late to make the two hour commute home. She did, however, pack slightly more toiletries.

The first of February, Anna made some excuse and told me she wanted to sleep over on valentines day. I said her she was welcome. I wanted to have her company, but got pulled away from it at the last minute when B found out what was up. B immediately put me at a crossroads between a continuation with Anna or her. I again made the wrong choice. I felt it wasn't right what I was doing to Anna, but in a strange way, I felt scared. Scared that Anna was not actually into me, that I'll end up sleeping alone if I didn't go along with B.

Then, two weeks later, B and I broke up. Oddly enough, she decided to kiss someone else,

right in front of me, while we were going out with a group of her friends. And I don't mean a kindergarten kiss; these two were drooling. And I was hurt. This B and I obviously had no future, but the way she decided to end it was just brutal, even vicious. A simple 'goodbye' could have sufficed. As anything else, I spoke to Anna about this incident.

5 Second Interrogation

At around 8 o'clock in the morning, I was woken to receive my vegetarian breakfast. Although I had ordered vegan, I was content because these wishes are often not met at all. After finishing breakfast, I came back to my comfort of last night, the thought of Anna. I felt extremely lucky that she was at a conference in Switzerland. Normally, Anna and I were together all day, every day. Her going away to a conference could not have come at a better moment. If she would have been home the night of my abduction, that would have been traumatic for her. She would have faulted me for it by default, only hearing the story later. We both are lucky that she was away.

There is a reason that they take away your belt and shoelaces before placing you in a cell; it is a really depressing experience, every single time. But I managed in the cell, even on a terrorism related charge; I had Anna to go back to at some point.

One fond memory I recalled of Anna and me was our train trip to Paris for a week long vacation. I remembered I slept with my head on her thighs while she was reading a book. When I woke up, there was a big, wet stain on her jeans. She laughed and said she could feel me drooling on her while I was sleeping! Then she kissed me on the lips, smiled, and just continued reading.

At around 11:00, I was taken from my cell to meet my lawyer in a private room. He was a white man in his early thirties with short hair and a well fitting suit. He handed me his card, and told me he had briefly spoken with an officer. He confirmed to me that the FBI and the German police were both investigating my involvement with terrorism, and he told me that the FBI was expected to file an extradition request. The police did not want to tell my lawyer what they think I did exactly.

My lawyer asked me, "What do you think is the reason they arrested you?"

I started by telling him I was not involved in "terrorism" in the sense that people usually think of, but that I was involved in various forms of activism, including Direct Action, in Germany and other European countries. I told him that I suspected that my activism was what they called terrorism, but I didn't know what they were referring to exactly as it could be one of a number of things. I also told him that the German police had arrest records showing that I am an environmental and peace activist, and that I have never been arrested for a violent offense.

"What groups are you involved in?", asked the lawyer.

I told him I was involved in various groups of 20 or more people and that all these groups were likely under investigation already. I also told him I am involved in two small, separate Direct Action groups which are even more 'radical,' but that I had reason to trust the handful of members that I was working with. The two smaller groups operated only within Germany, but that U.S. economic interest was affected by both. I gave the lawyer some more information about my activities without being too specific (we could have been listened to), and I told him about the questions I had received from the bureaucrat during the interrogation. The lawyer was not at all surprised that I was interrogated against my will without a lawyer present. He was content with the way I acted during the interview and agreed that my arrest could be for anything.

“Hopefully,” the lawyer told me with a heavy sigh, “we will find out more during the interrogation.”

The lawyer and I went to the interrogation room where a bureaucrat was waiting for us. It was not the bureaucrat that interrogated me last night but a new one. I shook his hand while trying to keep my belt-less shorts up. The first part of the interview was formalities regarding my legal rights and identity. Then the bureaucrat asked the same questions I heard last night and more.

Suspects are not allowed to take notes, they are obliged to have a lawyer present to get a transcript. This time, with my lawyer present to take notes, I was more willing to answer the questions. I mostly denied any illegalities, or replied by saying, “No comment.” I tried to show that I am a loving person, but without sounding like a “radical”. From the bureaucrat's questions, it became clear to me that they had been investigating me for some time already because they knew where I have been even when I was not carrying a cellphone. But it is entirely unclear to me what I am exactly suspected of having done. I told them I was not planning or aware of any future terrorist attacks.

When asked about the reason for my participation in one particular cause, I respond, “Mostly to find new friends and free food.”

The bureaucrat informed me that they had been authorized to investigate my equipment, but that they were having difficulties because, as he told me, “your USB-computer uses a secret encryption code that our forensic team cannot read.” Then, he asked me if I could “provide the password to the Tails encryption code,” so that they could “clear me of any suspicion.”

Basically, the bureaucrat tried to ask for the password to the persistent volume of a USB stick with Tails on it, which they had stolen from my home. Tails is 'the amnesic incognito live system,' an operating system optimized for security, which I had been using to perform my research, planning, and communications for some direct actions. If I would have revealed the password, they would have found evidence that I was involved in, what they apparently call, a “terrorist network,” and it might have exposed other activists, too. If they would somehow get the password, I would be in serious trouble. The way the bureaucrat posed this question revealed that he had no idea what he was talking about. I told him that his instructions were not clear enough, and that I did not fully understand his question. He replied by asking if I was willing to provide any passwords that could further their investigation. Luckily, I was reasonably sure that they could not crack the password without investing a tremendous amount of resources.

After I signed the transcript that the bureaucrat printed out, I was led straight back to my cell so that I couldn't discuss the interrogation with my lawyer. The bureaucrat told me that he needed to make a phone call and that he hoped to be able to release me after that. Half an hour later, I was told I could leave. The lawyer was already gone by then. It took another half an hour to get my wallet and some clothes back. I did not receive my computer and telephone, which I knew they had also taken. Finally I took the tram home, in my shorts, in mid December. I hoped I wouldn't be extradited to the U.S., but who knows. Those American bureaucrats are known to be radically crazy.

When I got home, I found a messy apartment. They stole a few things and really showed no consideration. I decided that I couldn't feel comfortable in the place I was abducted from the night before. Luckily, I had the key for Anna's apartment, where I felt slightly safer.

6 About the Knife

The police had come to my house to abduct me. Armed with the law, they forced their way into my home and threw me to the ground. They wore bullet-proof vests, and they had their guns drawn. They were, in fact, not policing me anymore. They were a violent, organized mob, sent by the state to aggress a person for being involved in Direct Action against more war and against further damage to the environment and for a peaceful and livable world. They were completely militarized, faces covered, ready to kill—not policing, but pointing guns at someone whom they did not know. They were soldiers; this was the military, fighting for the state's right to conduct war and pollute the planet.

When these soldiers knocked on my door, I thought it was someone else. That is why, before I opened the door, I took a large kitchen knife. All parties are lucky that no one got killed. Maybe if I wouldn't have been so sleepy or if my reflexes would have been slightly different, I'd have taken out the first soldier. My intention was to go for the throat if I'd feel threatened. At the throat, there are two carotid arteries, and puncturing one would suffice. Even if I would have missed both arteries, I could have sliced through the respiratory tract. This would mean that the soldier's lungs would have filled with blood, likely leading to suffocation. And even if I'd miss both arteries and the respiratory tract, I could still have ended up planting the blade in his cervical vertebrae. Then, the tip of the knife would have had to be planted between the bones and considerable force would have been needed in order the gravely wound that soldier. But luckily, none of that happened, although I was very much prepared for it were it not a soldier but someone else.

The person I expected is someone who lived down the block. One time, he had followed Anna around the neighborhood and spoke to her in broken English, inviting her over to his place. Another time, Anna was leaving the S-bahn station near our apartment building and he took it upon himself to grab her hand, and after she had fought him off, follow her home. Anna had been clear to him he was to leave her alone, but she said he'd only smiled at her, creeping her out even more.

Then, a few days before my abduction by the military, Anna and I were walking towards the same S-bahn station. As we were walking, Anna suddenly held my arm more tightly, pulling me towards her. "Psst, it's him. That's the guy. It's him," she whispered. He saw us together from the other side of the street, producing that awful smile as he passed us by, looking at me as much as at her. I made sure to get a good look at him. He was a young, deep-black man. He was dirty and wore a headscarf. His smile towards Anna was insulting, as if he hadn't a clue he was upsetting her, and as if she was potentially happy with his harassment.

The day of my abduction, I went to say goodbye to Anna at the airport because she was taking a flight to Switzerland. As I was coming back to my apartment, I saw him, walking by. He recognized me too, and I decided to follow him. He turned out to live right across from my and Anna's apartments. I waited 10 meters away from him as he searched his backpack for his keys.

When he found them, he looked at me with some confusion. I held my arms crossed as we stared at each other for a good 6 seconds while I tried to display both anger and restraint. Then he walked through the front door of his street level apartment, revealing his address to me. I kept watch on his house for one more minute until I caught him peeking through the curtains.

My apartment is visible from where he lives, and I assumed he knew my address.

The small stand-off was the reason I answered the door holding a knife that evening.

7 The Public-Private Partnership and the Other Public-Private Partnership

There exists a public-private partnership which has received more and more attention the past years. The public side of the partnership is our elected governments, and the private side are transnational corporations. The private corporations engaged in the public-private partnership implement common state activities.

Examples of the public-private partnership is the exploitation of common resources like fossil fuels, management of the electricity grid, or sewage disposal by private corporations. Natural monopolies are typical in these industries, which is very dangerous to give to a private corporation.

In the United States, many prisons are run by private corporations. These corporations benefit from high incarceration rates and have an incentive to keep prisoners locked up for as long as possible. Other corporations like Google, Vodafone, and Microsoft willingly engage in mass surveillance of hundreds of millions of people. They have the choice to make secure technology and to inform rather than disinform the people, but they choose not to. Instead, these privates partner with the 'public', in secret.

Still other corporations engage in outright warfare against civilian populations. G4S is a company that is hired by the public government of Israel to occupy the West Bank. Blackwater is a corporation that rents out private armies. Private soldiers of the Blackwater corporation, along with public soldiers of the United States have engaged in war crimes in Iraq and many other countries, too. These crimes are punishable under the Nuremberg principles. A lot of the US 'enhanced interrogation' (read: torture) has been conducted by private companies: private companies, torturing people in the name of the state. Likewise, the assassinations organized by Western European countries and the U.S. are facilitated by private corporations.

It should be noted that firms like Google and Blackwater have an incredible power over societies. These corporations are acting not only in line with the interest of the public government, but they also add tremendously to the power of the government. This development has become stronger in recent times, and state power has never been greater than today. The implementation of surveillance, the use of force and even warfare has been privatized to a large extent. This structure is what is now commonly known as the public-private partnership.

This used to be called fascism.

Mussolini, a famous and openly fascist dictator in Italy, said: "Fascism should more appropriately be called Corporatism because it is a merger of state and corporate power". There are countless examples of this merger, and not a single significant example of a corporation that opposes Western state powers, except perhaps drug cartels. (Although we have seen examples of drug cartels that are working with the state, too.) We should recognize that his merger is ongoing but that it could also be increased or reverted. I will not call it a 'public-private partnership' or the more traditional name, fascism. For once, I will (bare with me) follow Mussolini's suggestion and more aptly call it Corporatism.

Our current system of corporatism is related to the 'revolving door' concept. The revolving

door is a name for the observation that corpocrats switch between the public and private, to the benefit of the corpocrat and the members of the partnership. Therefore, it is likely that this public-private partnership is well understood in our modern corpocratic circles.

Besides the before mentioned corporatism/fascism/'public-private partnership', there is another public-private partnership. It is as visible as the first, but there is less worry about it in our Western corpocratic societies. It is the 'other' public-private partnership.

The other public-private partnership is that between the public governments and the private governments. The public governments (Germany, UK, etc.) partner with private governments like that of Kazakhstan or the armies of Jordan and Egypt.

The King of Saudi Arabia is an example of a private government. What follows is a description of this private government;

The territory is dominated by the House of Saud, which is the name of the royal family. The House of Saud is led by a King, which is called the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques. This Custodian is by definition member of the Saud family and is also the absolute monarch of the Saudi territory.

Officially, the Saudi territory is ruled under Islamic (Sharia) law. More specifically, the law is in accordance with Wahhabism, a puritanical sect within Islam. In accordance with the Wahhabi doctrine, citizens can be subjected to beheading with a sword, amputations, or lashes as punishment for their misbehavior. Capital punishment is applied for crimes including drug use, blasphemy, apostasy, and sorcery. Some of the other misbehaviors include women driving, women being alone in public, and adultery. Being raped is considered adultery and will at least require lashes as punishment. Adultery can also be punished by death (if the perpetrator is female). There is a strict separation between men and women in public life, and women have virtually no chance of winning a legal conflict with a Saudi man.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is an authoritarian nation by any measure. The Saudi army soldiers, police soldiers, and secret soldiers work for the Custodian. This makes that the Saudi soldiers are all private soldiers. These soldiers and their equipment cost well over 50 billion dollars a year.

One public-private partnership involves the U.S. and European countries sending arms to the Custodian and being allowed full access to the Saudi territory for U.S. war purposes. Many U.S. flying murder robots have their base in the kingdom of Saud, but the partnership is also political in nature. Segregated Saudi Arabia is called a 'more moderate ally in the region' by our corpocrats, for example in comparison to Iran or Palestine. For a full understanding of how 'moderate' this ally truly, is we should look at their internal and external dealings. I think one can only find one example of a more extremist private government in the region, which is the Islamic State—also claiming to be Wahhabi, and sponsored by the house of Saud.

The kingdom of Saud is by no means an exception. Bashar al Assad and Hosni Mubarak had been good partners of the U.S. for a long time, until the midst of the revolutions in Syria and Egypt. Egypt has received over a billion U.S. dollars per year in war-aid for quite some time.

The following is a testimony of what the public gets in return for these partnerships:

| If you want a serious interrogation, you send a prisoner to Jordan; if you want them to be |

tortured, you send them to Syria; if you want someone to disappear—never to see them again—you send them to Egypt.

- Former CIA agent Robert Baer

French bureaucrats have always had an intimate relationship with former Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi. Muammar has been invited by many British, French, and other presidents and has always had a friendly relationship with public governments. The British government has rendered people to Muammar's Libya to be tortured, either because these people were an annoyance to the British government or as a kind of friendly act towards Muammar because these people were opposing Muammar's rule. Supporting dictatorships and sending people there to be tortured is what the 'public' side does, both publicly and secretly. Only when his ouster was completely unavoidable did the British, French, and German public governments halt their support for Muammar's private government.

The public-private partnership between governments is a constant, and at times has been critical for the survival of the private governments, who would otherwise be overrun by the 'criminals' and 'terrorists' that want to end their oppression.

Private governments terrorize the populations that they control. The public-private partnership of governments is, in many cases, what keeps the private governments in place and prevents their populations from freeing themselves. But problem isn't that public governments are doing nothing against private governments – doing nothing would be an improvement. The problem is that the public and private governments have merged their powers, to the benefit of both.

We must end this public-private partnerships of governments.

Public governments typically try to obfuscate their support for private governments (and other terrorist actions). For example, public governments might publicly condemn actions undertaken by a private government, while at the same time blocking resolutions at the U.N. that might actually have an effect. Many public-private partnerships, of the corpocratic and governmental nature, remain to be exposed. We can expose what terror the public-private partnership has caused historically, and we can expose current public-private partnerships, for which there is significant (unexposed) public record already.

Our public governments are supporting private governments like those of Saudi Arabia, and to a large extent, we are responsible; if the municipal soldiers arrest an Al Jazeera journalist at the airport because a private government requests it, as happened in Berlin, we are responsible for enabling that private government oppression. To the extent that our public governments are in fact public and democratic organizations, we, the citizenry, are responsible for what our government does. And what it does is not pretty....

8 Acceptionism

There is no doubt in my mind; the reason that the military abducted me is that I have been involved in Direct Actions as an environmentalist. The military does not work for the interest of the people, or for any good in this world.

In our societies, we mostly accept our corpocratic leaders. But many of the respected corpocrats are responsible for enormous wrongdoing. For us, Germans, it can be obvious when they do it elsewhere. We see the corpocrats allowing fracking and the exploitation of tar sands. We see the militaries of Israel imprisoning 1.8 million people in Gaza alone, preventing any and all development throughout the territories. We know about the military governments that rule throughout the middle east, which our leaders rightly condemn and unrightly support at the same time. But when we, Germans, are responsible for atrocities in this day and age, we tend to look away. Of course we and other western states recognize the wrongdoings of the (second) World War. But the Germany of today has evolved and has now moved on to other crimes. Although Germany has a leading role in green energy in Europe, it is also burning brown coal on a massive scale. It also hosts many dozens of U.S. military bases. The U.S. bases in Germany are used to mass monitor communications in Europe and also to fly murder robots. These flying murder robots are a constant threat to the lives of millions of people throughout a large part of the world. Some of these murder robots can be heard from the ground, for many days in the year. Each time they hear one, the people don't know if it will fire (not that there is running from it, anyway). And Germany is allowing this to happen, from their soil. In our culture, we celebrate these soldiers and the well paid corpocrats that sanction these terror campaigns. We welcome the military-leaders of the middle eastern countries and sell them weaponry to sustain their oppression of otherwise free people. We do not live in a just society—not remotely. These are some of the facts of life. The question is, even if we care deeply, do we accept that these things are going on in our communities? There are many, many more ongoing crimes that are conducted or allowed by the German government, today.

It would be a mistake to think that history ended after WWII; many millions of people have been murdered in genocides since. Just after WWII, there was this idea of 'never again' in Europe. But in the decade after WWII, the British murdered over a million blacks in Kenya alone. There was the Vietnam war and the still ongoing oppression of the people in Iran and the West Bank. Although Western Europe and North America have not seen any major wars since WWII, every other region has. And to a significant extent, we are responsible. We could have reduced terror in this world—we should have. At every moment in 19th and 20th century, the Western bureaucracies have been directly responsible for the gravest of crimes. Typically, these crimes were only discussed in the European countries decades after they occurred, or not at all. It is not reasonable to think that the citizens of Western Europe are not as complicit in ongoing crimes as they were 50 or 350 years ago.

The law was on your side if you wanted to stomp a Jew in the face, if you wanted to organize a cat burning in your village. Your right to fire someone from their job because of their sexual identity was protected by the state. Under the rule of law, it was not a crime to abduct a nigger from the bush, or to torture that person in ways that are more horrific than I care to write in

this passage. Any person engaging in a Direct and effective Action to prevent these crimes from occurring would themselves be prosecuted under yet other unjust laws. To think that our current rule of law has suddenly stopped being unjust is almost to doublethink.

One should question if there is even a correlation between being prosecuted under the law and unjust behavior. Many of the most horrific crimes have gone (and are going) unpunished. At the same time, there have been many, many whiplashes and executions as punishments by the state against those that stood up for the idea that all people (not just white men) should be treated with equal consideration and with dignity.

Should we, the people in Germany, think it acceptable that the U.S. military is tramping all over Germany to engage in their acts of global Terror? That the U.S. embassy, located next to the Reichstag and the holocaust monument, is spying on our parliament? Should we accept that we are burning brown coal like there is no tomorrow? That our own bureaucrats and our secret militaries are more concerned with exposing our every private thing than protecting any of our liberty? That our corpocrats are burning the planet and enslaving people outside of Germany? Should we accept cooperation with states that torture, fly murder robots, or behead people? The law was not just then, and the law is not just now. If there is one thing that is constant throughout human history, it may well be that every state and its set of laws have been on the wrong side of history. Prove me wrong.

Even if we would be able to doublethink that the current laws are suddenly, unlike any other time in history, morally supreme, or if we fetishize legalism for some other reason, we shouldn't pretend that the government is applying the law equally to people, corporations, and particularly itself.

For example, in 1986, the U.S. vetoed a U.N. security council resolution that called on “all governments to observe international law.”

Annie Machon, a former MI5 agent, has revealed many unlawful activities conducted by the British secret services, which operate almost entirely outside of the law, resulting in even greater tragedies than if they were behaving lawfully.

Within Europe, the following countries have directly supported the recent global US torture operations: Albania, Austria, Belgium, Britain, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the Czech Republic. This knowledge has been public for years already. Lithuania, Poland, and Romania have even been kind enough to host 'Black Sites', whereto the US abducts its victims to tortures them. All the above mentioned countries have ratified the 'United Nations Convention against Torture.' They were (and are) therefore obligated to take effective measures against torture within their territory, and are forbidden from transporting people to a territory where they may be subjected to torture.

Germany is one of the key players in the murderous US drone campaign. As part of this campaign, the US (with help from Germany) flies killer robots across the world, terrorizing millions of people, and executing people without trial. One headline describing this campaign reads: “41 men targeted but 1,147 people killed: US drone strikes – the facts on the ground” That is a significant ratio of collateral murder to illegal murders.

Germany is also an important partner to the US and the 5-eyes spying operations, and in this role, Germany enables more spying, records and helps to record more data on innocent, unsuspected

citizens than it has ever done during the most troubled times of its last 100 years of history.

All these things that the states (the German state, and others) do are illegal under current laws. Executions without trial, torture ... The crimes cannot be grave enough, but not a single corpocrat has gone to prison over this because *the law is not implemented against the corpocracy*.

Law (in terms of rights) is also not implemented to protect people.

There are countless Kafkaesque nightmares that people are put in by the bureaucracies. For example the no-fly list, terrorist watch lists, or being kept in prison without charge or while a release has been ordered. The violation of peoples' rights, by their own state and other states, is completely pervasive in our corpocratic society.

The spying that is enabled by the modern states is likely to be the single largest criminal conspiracy and human rights violation in human history, both in terms of people that are affected and in terms of people that know about it and enable it.

One Kafkaesque example involves the bombing of the Israeli embassy in London in 1994; two people have been sentenced to prison for this, even though *there is no question of their innocence*. It is public knowledge that all evidence that these men committed the 'crime' was fabricated by the British political police.

There are countless other examples of legal rights not being given to people, not in some far away place, but right here in Berlin and in the rest of 'democratic,' corpocratic societies, too. For example, I was interrogated while being denied the presence of a lawyer and people whom the state is after cannot discuss details of their case with their lawyer on a phone.

These systemic and systematic violations of our current laws are open secrets. And so there is no denying that the Western governments, if not you, ensure that *the law will be broken*.

For every authoritarian government there is a significant portion of the population that supports the ruler. This has been the case with Mussolini, Stalin, Mao, Assad, Obama, and the list goes on. Many of the authoritarian governments (most notable the archetypal genocidal government) have been elected democratically, without having to make much pretenses. More uplifting is the fact that there have always been people who fought those authoritarian governments, even though *all* of them had some popular support. The people who fought before us have overcome injustices that are far greater than some of the injustices we face today.

There are those who accept the way the territory, and indeed the whole world, is governed. They are the people who have accepted the status-quo and play along in an unjust game. There can be different reasons for this. There are people who benefit from the status-quo: the affluent corpocrats. There are people who have been thoroughly indoctrinated, who's minds are unable to see solutions or even imagine a change. There are those that are afraid and choose the path of least resistance. Before casting judgment, we should recognize that these people accept what is going on in the world and contribute to maintaining the current injustices. To accept is to go along, as so many have done in the past, too. It was not right to go along (to be on the side of the state) then, and it is not right now. We should remember that, "All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing."

I am not an acceptionist. I reject what is—and has been—happening in the world, and I act upon my rejection of the status-quo. Most of my family and student-colleagues are acceptionists. I think most of the people are. But I am not. Moreover, I believe that when there are no other options to prevent an imminent harm, resorting to extraordinary actions to prevent that harm can be just. The law is of no guidance when it comes to just and unjust behavior; the law, is just that. It has only offered false guidance and comfort for the acceptionists, like the holy book was the comfort for the crusaders. If we want to live as free persons in a just society, we must not accept what we know is wrong.

The true measure of a person's worth is not what they say they believe in, but what they do in defense of those believes. If you are not acting on your beliefs, then they probably aren't real.

- Edward Snowden

9 Anna and I Get Together

After I broke up with my neighbor B, at the end of February of my first year of university, I had a few unfulfilling weeks which I used to catch up on course work. I felt alone. I was unlike myself; I slept with a bottle of Jäger under my pillow, and sometimes, I even ate meat. This feeling passed with the start of April as Anna and I continued to grow increasingly close. I felt like I had found a better and more profound friend in Anna than I had in the 5 years before. We usually texted each other after school and during the weekends. We were close, like best friends. At that time, I wasn't sure I wanted anything beyond friendship with her. I also didn't know if she wanted anything more. She was a *virgin*, and up until then, all my affairs had been with women older than me. The average age difference had been 4 years. This girl was 1.5 years younger than me, and she had never kissed anyone before.

In April, Anna and I spoke more and more about relationships and how we saw them. I was surprised by how traditional her view on relationships was. She wanted to love the first person she would kiss. She wanted her first partner to be her only one for life. In light of this, 'trying her out' would not have been respectful.

In May, Anna and I continued to work closely together in school. Our student-colleagues noticed how close we were, and rumors started to emerge, especially when they found out that Anna was staying at my place some times between school days. But the rumors were false, and Anna and I were not a romantic couple. Or maybe we were romantic, but not sexual.

I have always been clear to her; I didn't think that one, certainly not I, could predict a lifetime together even after a first encounter. But I was genuinely interested in her.... And so, I did try to lure her to 'the other side;' I convinced her to give up her ideal and try to have some fun with me, explicitly without any promises. It worked. By June, Anna started to get frisky, and before July, we had hit third base. At the time, I wondered if intentionally luring her away from her ideal self was a violation of her autonomy. I always had the best intentions for her. But I am still unsure.

The summer after our first year in university together, I learned I could recognize her smell, which I think is one clear sign of love.

We have lived together since.

10 Why Act Morally?

Odds are, you know very well for yourself what you consider moral or immoral behavior. It doesn't matter if you are following the holy book, and you think gay marriage is something that should be prevented, or if you are aware that animals suffer needlessly from human oppression and should be liberated from it. (I am assuming that reducing suffering is a moral principle of yours.) People are, if they give it any thought, able to identify what they think is moral behavior, and they are creative enough to invent new behaviors to act in accordance to (their) moral principles.

Unfortunately, and perhaps unsurprisingly, people often do not act in accordance with their moral principles. For example: even though most people in Berlin recognize that eating animals is contributing to climate change and/or animal suffering, that they have a moral responsibility to act against climate change and animal suffering, and that stopping themselves and others from eating animals is in accordance with their own moral principles, they continue to eat animals. Clearly, most people in Berlin decide (each day) to not act morally.

One might ask the question, 'why should I act morally?' In *Practical Ethics*, Peter Singer addresses this question. The following text is a selection from the last chapter of his book and includes minor edits:

Why should I act morally?

Questions like, 'Why should I treat people of different ethnic groups equally?' or 'Why is abortion justifiable?' seek ethical reasons for acting in a certain way. These are questions within ethics. They presuppose the ethical point of view. 'Why should I act morally?' is on another level. It is not a question within ethics, but a question about ethics.

'Why should I act morally?' is therefore a question about something normally presupposed. Some philosophers have found this particular question so perplexing that they have rejected it as logically improper, as an attempt to ask something that cannot properly be asked. They think it must be rejected for the same reason that we must reject another question, 'Why should I be rational?' which, like 'Why should I act morally?', also questions something—in this case rationality—normally presupposed. 'Why should I be rational?' really is logically improper because in answering it we would be giving rational reasons for being rational. Thus, we would presuppose rationality in our attempt to justify rationality, and therefore rationality cannot intelligibly be questioned unless it is already presupposed.

Is 'Why should I act morally?' like 'Why should I be rational?' in that it presupposes the very point of view it questions? It would be, if we interpreted the 'should' as 'should morally'. Then the question would ask for moral reasons for being moral. This would be absurd; once we have decided that an action is morally obligatory, there is no further moral question to ask. There is, however, no need to interpret the question as a request for an ethical justification for acting ethically.

So far, Peter has analyzed the question and provided grounds on which to dismiss it, depending on how the question may be interpreted. We of course know that acting morally is the moral thing to do. But the following text (selected from the same chapter, minor edits made) provides a reason to act morally that does not make a moral appeal:

HAS LIFE A MEANING?

Most of us would not be able to find happiness by deliberately setting out to enjoy our selves without caring about anyone or anything else. The pleasures we obtained in that way would seem empty and would soon pall. We seek a meaning for our lives beyond our own pleasures and find fulfillment and happiness in doing what we see to be meaningful. If our life has no meaning other than our own happiness, we are likely to find that when we have obtained what we think we need to be happy, happiness itself still eludes us.

We obtain happiness and fulfillment by working towards and achieving our goals. Our own happiness, therefore, is a byproduct of aiming at something else, and not to be obtained by setting our sights on happiness alone.

The prudent egoists may find meaning in their lives for a time, for they have the purpose of furthering their own interests; but what, in the end, does that amount to? When everything in our interests has been achieved, do we just sit back and be happy? Could we be happy in this way? Or would we decide that we had still not quite reached our target, that there was something else we needed before we could sit back and enjoy it all? Typically, our material 'needs' expand just fast enough to keep ahead of our income.

The 1980s, the 'decade of greed', provided plenty of examples of the insatiable nature of the desire for wealth. In 1985, Dennis Levine was a highly successful Wall Street bankster with the fastest growing and most talked about Wall Street firm, Drexel Burnham Lambert. But Levine was not satisfied:

“When I was earning \$20,000 a year, I thought, I can make \$100,000. When I was earning \$100,000 a year, I thought, I can make \$200,000. When I was making \$1million, I thought, I can make \$3million. There was always somebody one rung higher on the ladder, and I could never stop wondering: is he really twice as good as I am?”

Levine decided to arrange with his bankster friends at other Wall Street firms to exchange confidential information that would allow them to profit by buying shares in companies that were about to become takeover targets. By this method, Levine made an additional \$11million on top of what he earned in salary and bonuses. He also ended up bringing about his own ruin and spending time in prison. That, however, is not the relevant point here; no doubt many who use insider information to make millions of dollars do not get caught. What is less certain, however, is that they really find satisfaction and fulfillment in having more money.

If we are looking for a purpose broader than our own interest, one obvious solution is to take up the ethical point of view. The ethical point of view requires us to go beyond a personal point of view to the stand point of an impartial spectator. Thus, looking at things ethically is a way of transcending our inward-looking concerns and identifying ourselves with the most objective point of view possible.

I am suggesting that rationality, in the broad sense that includes self-awareness and reflection on the nature and point of our own existence, may push us towards concerns broader than the quality of our own existence; but this process is not a necessary one and those who do not take part in it—or, who in taking part, do not follow it all the way to the ethical point of view—are neither irrational nor in error. Psychopaths, for all I know, may

simply be unable to obtain as much happiness through caring about others as they obtain by antisocial acts. Other people find collecting stamps an entirely adequate way of giving purpose to their lives. There is nothing irrational about that; but others again grow out of stamp collecting as they become more aware of their situation in the world and more reflective about their purposes. To this third group, the ethical point of view offers a meaning and purpose in life that one does not grow out of, at least not until all ethical tasks have been accomplished.

Peter Singer is writing that having a life-goal inspired by ethical standards, rather than stamp collecting or self-enrichment, can be a very useful objective for giving a purpose to one's life. This purpose is a necessity for happiness, and much like the purpose of stamp collecting, it can be merely something to occupy one's time with, as the final result of one's ethical behavior or stamp collecting cannot ever be enough to sit back and be done with life. An athlete cannot win enough medals, and a banker cannot gain enough wealth; life is about the pursuit.

Free people can choose what they pursue; they might as well choose to create Utopia.

Of course, this rational reason to act morally, that does not make a moral appeal, is merely a ladder for people to climb to reach a particular state which happens to give themselves happiness, and others too; it is an egoistical reason to act morally. But once the transition from egoism to altruism has been set in motion, logically, the following happens:

They must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after they have climbed up on it.

11 ACAB

Today in Berlin, soldiers will lock you up if you allow a gay or lesbian couple to marry. Tomorrow, the same soldiers will lock you up if you prevent a gay marriage. When the law changes, do all soldiers suddenly think different about such unions? Unlikely. If we would ask a soldier why they arrest and retaliate against someone for (not) marrying people, the answer we get would really boil down to the following: *"I'm following orders."*

(I will use the word 'cop' as an umbrella term for all soldiers, agents of the state or private corporations, people payed to police by going though the streets or through stacks of paper, etc; cops are people who implement public or private law for the corpocracy.)

Sometimes, cops will do good things. But making the world a better place is not the occupation of a cop. Any good the cop does is just a coincidence, an effect that is neither in line or against the cop's mission. The cop upholds (unjust) laws, created by an unjust system, and thereby prevents progress. In the process of doing this, the cop's behavior introduces new harms and new injustices. We know this because it has been a constant throughout history, and because we still see them uphold unjust laws today by threatening and sometimes retaliating against people.

Cops follow orders. They don't make the rules; they don't think about the right or wrong of their behavior. That is, a 'good' cop does not evaluate for him or herself if a law is just or not; a good cop simply implements the narrow part of the law that the cop is assigned to implement, without asking questions to themselves or others.

I see two main reasons why people turn from being a person into being a cop. They may be idealistic legalists, believing that implementing the current law in their region, unlike any other time in history, will make the world a better place, or they enjoy rampaging about, abducting, threatening, torturing people in small and big ways, or in some cases murdering them outright.

There may be a small percentage of cops who have chosen to become a cop with the best of intentions. Maybe they do believe that our current rule of law, unlike any other time in history, is just. (They should therefore resign/become obstructionist as soon as a single law is changed.) Or they might think that the state we currently have is, unlike any other time in history, just or as good as it is going to get, and that therefore this state, unlike all previous states, should be protected. These people are insane according to Einstein's definition of insanity.

Cops voluntarily gave up their ability to do what is right, and instead, they choose to implement the corpocracy's decrees. Their 'ethics' change as soon as the law does. No cop agrees with every single law; they have chosen to not fight for what they believe in themselves, but for the status quo or even an expansion of state control.

Both public and private cops are working to maintain an unjust system, against people who try to make the world a better place. They threaten and brutalize people into submission. We should realize that these violent actors are not thinking for themselves anymore. They are loose canons who have openly rejected behaving according to ethics. They are brutes. All cops are

working for the system while making the effort to not think for themselves.
All Cops Are Brutes. ACAB.

12 Life with Anna

After our first year of university, Anna and I were a couple. In October of our second university year, we both moved so that we ended up as neighbors. In practice, this meant that we were always at her place, or at mine, sharing two apartments. We were always in the same year of the same university program and worked together on every single assignment. We did groceries together, and we visited each other's family together. We have been together all day, for just about every day, for the past 3.5 years.

During these years with Anna, I began to get more involved with Direct Action groups. At first, it can be a bit difficult to get an understanding of how these groups function and how to contribute to their causes. I think that to function effectively within these groups you have to embrace an idea that exists in all these groups: if you see something wrong, take action. Don't wait for others to tell you what to do. Other people are either busy with themselves, or busy with some other Direct Action. You can decide to stand up for something and start working for a cause. You don't need permission to do what is right.

And it is such an amazing experience! You can meet tons of people from every corner of the world. Most of them share your values and are highly idealistic. Join a few groups and causes that you believe in, that are not directly linked, to meet even more people. Most of the people that you'll meet are highly intelligent and responsible people who have decided that being wealthy is not the best they can be. They all have amazing stories from previous Direct Actions or other life experiences which might have inspired them to join the cause. No cocktail parties with corporocrats, no celebrity gossip. Being involved in Direct Action is a way to live your life to the extreme, and to share it with interesting people.

Although Anna would support the causes I was working for, she would not approve of some actions that I and others were taking. She didn't seem to understand why I would travel to another country for a cause, why I was willing to risk jail. She had the traditional, misguided, left-liberal upper class view that Direct Action should consist only of petitions and peaceful marches, that fire is only useful for cooking food, and that motor oil and gasoline are only to be used in cars....

Inspired by her own first hand experiences, Anna herself got involved in feminist causes. But she was far more 'conventional' in her ways. She would organize women, seek dialogue with corporations, and apply the 'naming and shaming' strategy only as a last resort. All of this was good work by her, and I do believe she contributed something to equality in Germany. She even became a somewhat prominent figure, being invited to various debates where she would represent the 'feminist point of view'. She was not always comfortable in her role and never very controversial. She never came close to breaking the law because, as she had warned me, "bad things happen if you break the law." I have never told Anna how far some of my actions went.

The three and a half years that Anna and I have been together have not been without issues. We started out with a seemingly good sexual compatibility, which surprised me because she was unexperienced. But after some months, it seemed like she was cooled off and simply had a lower drive than me. This sometimes led to significant tensions between us. Besides this, Anna could be

painfully cold, rash, or unemotional, as I discovered for example when a family member was diagnosed with cancer or when she told me I was “stupid for doing anything illegal,” after a soldier had tried to beat an eye out of my socket using his baton....

Anna has always been very serious about school. I was pursuing things outside of school, and because we worked together on every project, this made it seem to her like I was holding her back. When she later started working with other people, she quickly realized that I am also one of the better performing students. It was good to have that recognition from her, but when I started working with her again, her academic demands of me remained almost as high and she kept faulting me. We were both within the top 5% of our year when we graduated from our bachelors program.

The future of Anna and I is more conventional than our activist present. We plan on moving to federated Switzerland next year where she has an opportunity lined up for her, and I am sure to find work there as well.

13 In the Business of Making Money

The three types of organizations that the bureaucracies allow to exist are: corporations, non-profits, and of course, the bureaucracy itself. Corporations, as we currently know them, should not be allowed to exist and should be transformed, or else destroyed.

The bureaucracy is free to define its own goals and obligations, but typically both private and public bureaucracies need to prioritize the continuation of their own existence if they are to remain at all. In both cases, this means that the bureaucracy has to violently aggress the criminalized factions of their populations. Examples of these criminals and criminal organizations include the African National Congress (ANC) by Nelson Mandela, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), the Black Panthers, the people in the indigenous rights movements, the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), the anti-nuclear movement, the anti-war movement, communists and capitalists alike, Jews, Kurds, and Muslims, anti-fascists, refugees, environmentalists, and worst of all, Anarchists.

Non-profits have an obligation to not pursue profit, but some other goal. There is and has been a lot of freedom to choose which goal to pursue, including the liberation of animals, acceptance of homosexuals and other marginalized groups, and the abolition of slavery. Non-profits can, of course, sell goods and services, but creating wealth is not allowed to be their goal. Many non-profits are severely restricted in their ability to pursue these goals because any meaningful action towards the goal of the non-profit are typically criminalized. Examples of illegal but effective tactics that the non-profit is not allowed to use include the blocking of brown-coal exploitation, murder of war mongering corporats, and the freeing of privately bred slaves.

The third and last type of organization that is allowed to exist is the corporation. All the bureaucracies maintain a different, but similar definition of what a corporation is. Typically, corporations are considered legal persons, with rights and obligations similar to that of a human person. They are allowed to borrow money and to sue and be sued. However, all bureaucracies have specified in some form or another an additional obligation: a corporation is obligated to make as much profit as possible. The various laws do not state this directly, but it is a legal obligation in all states. A corporation is obligated to make as much money as it possibly can, and to make decisions that conflict with this obligation is criminal.

Someone who is only out to maximize their own wellbeing, without regard for anyone else, is not someone we would consider to be a friend.

Law abiding corporations are in the business of making money, and nothing else. Sometimes this means that corporations momentarily act to the benefit of something besides themselves, for example as Ford did with its production of the Ford Model T or when Netflix lobbied for net neutrality. Other times, the actions of corporations very directly undermine the interest of people, for example when a corporation breaks unions, funds climate change denial, digs up brown coal in Germany, or when banks create unnecessarily complicated financial instruments. Corporations *will* keep important information from the public, lie to their customers, if it will

increase their profits, even if publishing that information is in the public interest. There is also an obligation to do the bare minimum when it comes to environmental and other safety regulations, to undermine the creation and enforcement of those regulations, and to do this secretly, so that the corporation's image is not harmed.

One powerful example of a corporation maximizing profit is the involvement of IBM in the holocaust. IBM, the most powerful corporation at the time, built and sold computers to the Third Reich. These computers were designed to assist in genocide. (You can read more about this in the book *IBM and the Holocaust* by Edwin Black.) It was the legal obligation of IBM to create and sell these machines to the Third Reich because it maximized profit. IBM was selling genocide computers, but IBM was *not* in the business of genocide; IBM was, as any other corporation in any other time, in the business of making money.

The core objective that defines all corporations is unacceptable, and corporations should not be allowed to exist. We should not accept the existence of such actors in our societies, especially given the fact that they are completely unnecessary; any useful activities that a corporation engages in could be performed by a non-profit. (Remember that a non-profit can charge money for products, too.)

Suppose that you had the choice to work for a corporation or a non-profit. Which would you choose? Would you choose to work for private (possibly your own) wealth, or choose to work for a cause? Maybe you know of something that should be improved. I hope you do.

Now what does it mean that our world is currently run for profit, by corporations? It means that many 'externalities' have been introduced in our societies. It means that while the planet is getting ever warmer and is loosing biodiversity, corporations are funding climate change denial and refusing to go green. It means that products are priced not at a reasonable price-point, which would be good for the community, but at a price point that maximizes the corporation's profit—often with disastrous consequences, especially when the corporation has a (natural) monopoly.

But there is another effect that emerges when for-profits inevitably gain more and more power. Corporations like Google, Facebook, Exxon Mobil, Blackwater, and G4S are, like the governments that they work with, so powerful that people cannot truly escape these entities. If there is oil where you live, Exxon will not let you be. Blackwater's soldiers can pretty much kill any individual that they are hired to oppress. There is no escaping Gmail and Facebook if you want to meaningfully participate in the modern world; even if you don't use Gmail's and Facebook's (intelligence) services, these corporations still build profiles of you by using information that others give about you. This happens by people posting a photo of a gathering you attended on Facebook, or by mailing you from a Gmail account. Again, this is a merger between state and corporate power, to the benefit of both.

Mussolini said that fascism is “a merger of state and corporate power,” and should be called corporatism. We are living it now. Corporations like Google, IBM, Blackwater, and a few bureaucracies have merged their powers. They are the corpocracy.

We know that these powerful actors have enormous powers over us, and we know what their

objective is. The corpocracy can oppress any individual with the press of a button. We know that bureaucracies can turn from bad to worse; Hitler was elected in a democratic and fair election—certainly a more fair election than, say, recent elections in England or Greece, or the appointments of the European-level leaders. The most powerful 'democratic' state to have ever existed, the United States, is murdering thousands of people without trial, without even knowing the identity except that they are brown people. The United States has a president of brutal oppression and genocide throughout their (recent) history and has torture prisons all over the world, today. These bureaucracies now have teamed up with the corporations, who are offered higher profits in return.

An alternative to corporations are organizations composed of free individuals that work towards other goals than making money or gaining power over others. It is not a necessity that we compete with each other; cooperation is a real possibility. Corporations are in fact not needed in a society where free people work together to make the world a better place. We can remove the perverse (cultural) incentives that corporations have. There have been societies where people cooperated and not competed with each other, and such societies will emerge again.

Is it strange to suggest that we could start cooperating with each other once more, for the betterment of themselves, and for the betterment of this world?

Is this a radical idea?

14 A Sense of Humor

As shown in previous chapters, corpocrats behave in some of the most horrific ways you could imagine. If not challenged, corpocrats will succeed in destroying almost everything that is good in this world. Almost everything. Because even while they are torturing, murdering, and obstructing all positive development, many of them have not lost their sense of humor....

In the coming sections, I will tell you about some of the best jokes of the last two decades, all created for you by the hard working, self-less people that are the corpocracy. For a moment, don't worry about the consequences of what transpired—just enjoy the sweet irony, the shamelessly dishonest declarations, and the wildly outrageous actions! Even if the world goes to shit, the heroes of that world will always provide comic relieve.

I start by citing an article:

The Day Ferguson Cops Were Caught in a Bloody Lie

[Article opens with the picture of a black man with a large head-wound on the top of his skull.]

The officers got the wrong man, but charged him anyway—with getting his blood on their uniforms. How the Ferguson PD ran the town where Michael Brown was gunned down.

Police in Ferguson, Missouri, once charged a man with destruction of property for bleeding on their uniforms while four of them allegedly beat him.

“On and/or about the 20th day of Sept. 20, 2009 at or near 222 S. Florissant within the corporate limits of Ferguson, Missouri, the above named defendant did then and there unlawfully commit the offense of ‘property damage’ to wit did transfer blood to the uniform,” reads the charge sheet.

The address is the headquarters of the Ferguson Police Department, where a 52-year-old welder named Henry Davis was taken in the predawn hours on that date. He had been arrested for an outstanding warrant that proved to actually be for another man of the same surname, but a different middle name and Social Security number.

“I said, ‘I told you guys it wasn't me,’” Davis later testified.

He recalled the booking officer saying, “We have a problem.”

The booking officer had no other reason to hold Davis, who *ended up in Ferguson only because he missed the exit* for St. Charles and then pulled off the highway because the rain was so heavy he could not see to drive. The cop who had pulled up behind him must have run his license plate and assumed he was that other Henry Davis. Davis said the cop approached his vehicle, grabbed his cellphone from his hand, cuffed him and placed him in the back seat of the patrol car, without a word of explanation.

But the booking officer was not ready just to let Davis go, and proceeded to escort him to a one-man cell that already had a man in it asleep on the lone bunk. Davis says that he asked the officer if he could at least have one of the sleeping mats that were stacked nearby.

“He said I wasn't getting one,” Davis said.

Davis balked at being a second man in a one-man cell.

“Because it's 3 in the morning,” he later testified. “Who going to sleep on a cement floor?”

The booking officer summoned a number of fellow cops. One opened the cell door while another suddenly charged, propelling Davis inside and slamming him against the back wall.

“I told the police officers there that I didn't do nothing, 'Why is you guys doing this to me?’” Davis testified. “They said, 'OK, just lay on the ground and put your hands behind your back.’”

Davis said he complied and that a female officer straddled and then handcuffed him. Two other officers crowded into the cell.

“They started hitting me,” he testified. “I was getting hit and I just covered up.”

The other two stepped out and the female officer allegedly lifted Davis' head as the cop who had initially pushed him into the cell reappeared.

“He ran in and kicked me in the head,” Davis recalled. “I almost passed out at that point... paramedics came... they said it was too much blood, I had to go to the hospital.”

A patrol car took the bleeding Davis to a nearby emergency room. He refused treatment, demanding somebody first take his picture.

“I wanted a witness and proof of what they done to me,” Davis said.

He was driven back to the jail, where he was held for several days before he posted \$1,500 bond on four counts of “property damage.” Police Officer John Beard had signed complaints swearing on pain of perjury that Davis had bled on his uniform and those of three fellow officers.

The remarkable turned inexplicable when Beard was deposed in a civil case that Davis subsequently brought seeking redress and recompense.

“After Mr. Davis was detained, did you have any blood on you?” asked Davis' lawyer, James Schottel.

“No, sir,” Beard replied.

Schottel showed Beard a copy of the “property damage” complaint.

“Is that your signature as complainant?” the lawyer asked.

“It is, sir,” the cop said.

“And what do you allege that Mr. Davis did unlawfully in this one?” the lawyer asked.

“Transferred blood to my uniform while Davis was resisting,” the cop said.

“And didn't I ask you earlier in this deposition if Mr. Davis got blood on your uniform?”

“You did, sir.”

“And didn't you respond no?”

“Correct. I did.”

Beard seemed to be either admitting perjury or committing it. The depositions of other officers suggested that the “property damage” charges were not just bizarre, but trumped up.

“There was no blood on my uniform,” said Police Officer Christopher Pillarick.

And then there was Officer Michael White, the one accused of kicking Davis in the head,

an allegation he denies, as his fellow officers deny striking Davis. White had reported suffering a bloody nose in the mayhem.

“Did you see Mr. Davis bleeding at all?” the lawyer, Schottel, asked.

“I did not,” White replied.

“Did Mr. Davis get any blood on you while you were in the cell?” Schottel asked.

“No,” White said.

The contradictions between the complaint and the depositions apparently are what prompted the prosecutor to drop the “property damage” allegation. The prosecutor also dropped a felony charge of assault on an officer that had been lodged more than a year after the incident and shortly after Davis filed his civil suit.

Davis suggested in his testimony that if the police really thought he had assaulted an officer he would have been charged back when he was jailed.

“They would have filed those charges right then and there, because that's a major felony,” he noted.

Indisputable evidence of what transpired in the cell might have been provided by a surveillance camera, but it turned out that the VHS video was recorded at 32 times normal speed.

“It was like a blur,” Schottel told *The Daily Beast* on Wednesday. “You couldn't see anything.”

The blur proved to be from 12 hours after the incident anyway. The cops had saved the wrong footage after Schottel asked them to preserve it.

One of these four officers was later elected to the city council.

George W. Bush, a day after the 9/11 attacks:

Make no mistake, the United States will hunt down and punish those responsible for these cowardly acts

Subsequently, the 9/11 attackers have been described as 'cowards' many times in mainstream corporatic media.

There is another view. On Bill Maher's talk show, a guest said:

[Cowards?] Not true. Look at what they did. You have a whole bunch of guys who were willing to give their life; none of them backed out. All of them slammed themselves into pieces of concrete. These are warriors.

Then Bill Maher followed up, saying:

We have been the cowards. Lobbing cruise missiles from 2000 miles away, that's cowardly. Staying in the airplane when it hits the building—say what you want about it—it's not cowardly.

Of course, he was right. It isn't cowardly to stand up against the world's largest military and intelligence power, and to knowingly give your life to accomplish it. Similarly, it is not cowardly to blow yourself up for what you believe in. Misguided? Sure; maybe. But cowardly?

Bill later came out and apologized for this 'insensitive comment', saying: “I have been the

biggest military supporter there is.” Nonetheless, he was fired for making this observation.

Some remarks that Secretary of State John Kerry made regarding the whistleblower Edward Snowden:

Edward Snowden is a coward, he is a traitor, and he has betrayed his country. And if he wants to come home tomorrow to face the music, he can do so.

This is a man who has betrayed his country. He should man up and come back to the US.

A patriot would not run away and look for refuge in Russia or Cuba or some other country; a patriot would stand up in the United States and make his case to the American people.

However, Edward would never be offered the chance to make his case, not to the American people and not even to a judge. As one of Edward's advisors, Ben Wizner, explains:

[In reference to another whistleblower, Chelsea Manning]

Snowden saw what happened to other people who faced prosecution under the Espionage Act, and he saw the state of the law, which *would not have allowed him either to challenge the government's improper withholding of this information in the first place, or to hold up the enormous public value of these disclosures.* All that would have been irrelevant

John's and others' remarks that Edward should come home to face a fair trial, to explain himself to a jury, to his peers, are all bullshit because that is exactly what is being denied to him. And they know this very well....

David Cameron, shortly after his reelection as prime minister of the U.K.:

For too long, we have been a passively tolerant society, saying to our citizens: as long as you obey the law, we will leave you alone. It's often meant we have stood neutral between different values. And that's helped foster a narrative of extremism and grievance. This government will conclusively turn the page on this failed approach.

(To clarify, in case you are not fluent in the language of state oppression, David here said that if you have the 'wrong' values, then the government will not leave you alone, even if you are not breaking any laws.)

George W. Bush, while president of the U.S.:

I am driven with a mission from God. God would tell me: George go and fight these terrorists in Afghanistan. And I did. And then God would tell me: George, go and end the tyranny in Iraq. And I did.

And now, again, I feel God's words coming to me: Go get the Palestinians their state and get the Israelis their security, and get peace in the Middle East. And, by God, I'm gonna do it.

Again George W. Bush while in office, not talking about the U.S.:

We're facing a radical ideology with unalterable objectives: to enslave whole nations and intimidate the world!

After the 9/11 attacks:

Freedom itself was attacked this morning by a faceless coward, and freedom will be defended.

In 2009, U.S. Colonel Joseph Romano was convicted in absentia to 5 years imprisonment for the abduction of Abu Omar from the streets in Italy in 2003. 22 other CIA agents were also convicted in absentia for the same crime. The abductors had brought Abu to Egypt, where he was tortured. Although the U.S. and Italy have an extradition treaty, the U.S. have (unsurprisingly) not extradited their agents of the Italian state to face trial for abduction and torture (they received medals instead). This shows how extradition treaties work (mostly one-way), even for the most severe crimes like abduction and torture.

Now here is the part where that statist showed their sense of humor. The Italian government, in defiance of court rulings, have refused even to file an extradition request, before and after the convictions and (mild) sentences. Nonetheless, after Joseph Romano's conviction the pentagon came out with a statement saying:

Our view is the Italian court has no jurisdiction over Lieutenant Colonel Romano and should have immediately dismissed the charges.

So the illegal abduction for torture, on the streets of Milan, is not a crime over which the Italian courts have jurisdiction?

In the end, the matter of jurisdiction didn't matter. President and national hero Giorgio Napolitano pardoned Colonel Romano in 2013.

After the western-backed Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak was successfully overthrown by the Egyptian people in 2011, Mohammed Morsi won the democratic elections that followed. However, military chief Abdel Fattah el-Sisi overthrew the democratically elected Mohammed. Many journalists and demonstrators were slaughtered during the protests that followed Sisi's coup d'état; it was yet another example of a dictator brutalizing the opposition. Along with other western countries, the U.S. condemned the crackdown on the protesters and called on all parties to restrain themselves.

Then in early August, 2014, in Ferguson, Missouri, the unarmed Michael Brown was murdered "out of self-defense," shot in the back by the domestically deployed soldier, American hero, Darren Wilson. Protests broke out, calling for retaliation against the soldier. The people took to the streets in opposition to the white-supremist military occupation of their city, and in response, the national guard was employed to crush what is now known as the 2014 Ferguson unrests.

During these unrests, Colonel Sisi (the fresh military dictator of Egypt) called on his U.S. colleagues to deal with the Ferguson protesters "according to the American and international standards," and asked his colleagues to exercise "restraint and respect for the right of assembly and

peaceful expression of opinion.” This irony did not escape western media outlets who correctly reported that the Egyptian government was “trolling” the U.S.

A year later, president Barack reinstated the annual 1.5 billion dollar military aid to Egypt. Soldier Darren has not been charged with a crime—he was just doing his job.

After the Russian liberation efforts in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine, the French government did not want to continue allowing a €1.2 billion deal to sell two warships to Russia. After all, Russia didn't respect human rights.... So instead, the French authorities thought it better to sell those same warships to Egypt, to the newly installed and aforementioned dictator and proven tyrant, el-Sisi.

This happened just two weeks after the U.S. \$1.5 billion military aid to Egypt was reinstated.

After it came out that the NSA had been spying on all German people and even the elected leaders, the German state finally started an investigation into illegal spying by the U.S. secret military. All the evidence was there, published in Der Spiegel and other sources. But that evidence did not come from official sources, and it wasn't as if the 'soft walls' used for illegal spying were visible from the glass top of the Reigs Tag itself (it still is!).

And so the investigators asked the NSA: “Did you illegally tap the phones of our elected officials?”

To this the NSA said: “l.o.l., no, we totally didn't.”

And so there was really nothing that the investigators could do and they simply dropped the case.

The same thing happened in Belgium when the NSA and U.K.'s GCHQ tapped Belgacom's networks to tap all E.U. politicians that gather in Brussels. All evidence was there, no question what so ever. Then the Belgians asked the U.S. and the U.K., which again said: “l.o.l., no, we totally didn't,” and so the case was dropped.

15 Anna Comes Home from Congress

While the police abducted me, Anna was safely away in Switzerland. The abduction and terrorism charges had been (and remain) a traumatic experience, and my future had suddenly become very uncertain. Shortly after my release, I mailed Anna explaining very briefly what had happened. Translated to English, my message read:

Dear Anna,

On the first night that you were gone, I was arrested in my home by the police on the suspicion of being involved with terrorism. Local forces had received a tip from the FBI. I was quickly interrogated without a lawyer present, even though I had requested one. They released me the morning after.

Because they have taken my computer and phone, I will not be able to communicate with you as frequent.

I have to ask the following of you: do not speak with anyone about any aspect of me, for the foreseeable future. I will be able to inform you more about what is happening when you get back.

Please do not be too worried about me. Although this is an inconvenience, I am hopeful that things will be sorted out at some point.

You are in my heart and I hope you will get everything you wanted out of the conference.

Love, Max

Her reply to this was:

I understand your request and I will respect it. Max, please take good care of yourself by doing whatever you can do.

Love, Anna

While I was happy that Anna was away during the abduction, I was eager to see her back, too. The prospect of being treated as a terrorist by the United States (itself the largest terrorist organization of the last 70 years) had not left me unaffected.

Luckily I am not black, Muslim, or from a poor country. These factors make a real difference; being a 'terrorists' in a different territory, you can be assassinated using a drone (after a few failed attempts that kill random other people in your town), then the first-responders that check for a pulse are murdered by the same drone also, and then your entire group of friends and family (anyone you called on your cellphone) is murdered for good measure, too. That is the *policy* for dealing with terrorists that live in other territories. I am a privileged, skinny white-person living in an affluent province of northern Europe. The American military has chosen to abduct 'terrorists' from Europe and fly them to torture facilities, but luckily they have not chosen to give me that

treatment, yet. But clearly, they would give the gruesome treatment that they give other terrorists if they would get away with it. The knowledge that I am labeled a terrorist by the U.S. is therefore a reason for concern; it is an existential threat to me, and the people whom I love, from the most powerful actor in human history.

With that on my mind, I was hoping Anna would give me some emotional support when she would come back.

So far, the people that I had told about my abduction (family, a hand full of friends from classes, and friends who were involved in the same causes) have been very kind and understanding. Invariably, they rejected the state's actions as wildly excessive, and no one even questioned if my actions amounted to terrorism in the common sense of the word.

On the evening of her return, I went to the airport to welcome Anna back home. When she walked out towards me, it pained me to see her. I saw she was concerned, angry, and had a lot of questions. By the time we got to her apartment it was 21:00. She had told me a lot about her trip, but I hadn't said a word about what happened to me. I think we were both too tired to talk about it. I don't know why she didn't insist on me telling her what had happened, but I was afraid of telling her. We went out for a quick bite, and neither of us brought up my police arrest that evening.

The following morning, Anna and I had breakfast together. Only after that did I tell her. I couldn't tell her everything that had lead up to the abduction; she wouldn't understand and therefore she would just become a liability. I told her that in the late evening, after she took her flight to Zürich for her conference, I heard a knock on my door. When I opened, some 10 soldiers stormed in, and I was cuffed. Then I was interrogated without a lawyer at the police station, and the next morning again with a lawyer. They had taken my computer and phone, and I didn't expect them to give it back any time soon. I told her that the FBI would likely file for an extradition request, and that I could end up in an American jail and then prison as a 'terrorist'. She didn't interrupt me while I told her about the events but listened carefully to what I had to say.

When I was finished, I asked her, "How do you feel about all of this?"

She took a moment to think and replied coldly, "I don't know if I want to deal with this, Max."

"What do you mean, You don't want to deal with this?" I asked anxiously.

"I mean that, I don't know if I want to deal with this," she said almost casually.

I asked, "What do you think of the situation that I am in?"

She paused for a moment and answered, "I think ... how could you have been so *stupid*? Why would you do such a stupid thing that would cause this situation?"

I told her, "You know that I am not actually a terrorist, right? You know what I work towards and that I wouldn't do bad things, right...?"

"It is not about you being a terrorist or not," she said, "but about you making stupid decisions that get you into trouble. What were you thinking?"

This was going even worse than I had expected. She was not in the least empathetic, and

now I was in a position where I had to defend myself. I started to get worried and agitated at the same time.

“What do you mean, What was I thinking?”, I said, “Is a terrorism investigation something I should have expected?”

“No,” she said, “I don't think terrorism is the right label, but you were breaking the Law, Max, and so that's why the police is now doing this. You did this to yourself. And what if I had been home!?”

I have never been too afraid of spending a short time in prison, after a protest or mild sabotage. But a terrorism charge is something else entirely. And although there is no limit to what the state will do to protect the status quo, to prevent progress, labeling me a terrorist and (potentially) shipping me to a country with the largest prison population in the world per capita is a state-side escalation of the fight around freedom and justice.

I looked at Anna, for whom I had been waiting a week to come back and be a supportive partner. I had not known her this cruel before.

“I'd hoped you would have been more supportive, more kind, even if you think my actions were dumb,” I said.

“The news is worse than I had expected,” she said, “and I don't know if I want to deal with this now.”

Heartbroken, I stood up and started packing my things. Only then did she offer a kind word.

“I am sorry this is happening to you,” she said unemotionally, “I don't like the news either.”

“Yes, I can only imagine how difficult and stressful it must be for you to hear this,” I said rhetorically, “Let me know if I can help you overcome this.”

Three and a half years Anna and I had been together, living together. By some, I have been told that there is never a good moment to breakup. But this was perhaps the worst.

I explained to Anna that she was not behaving as I think a partner should behave, and I gave her a few more days to become more available to me. But she remained cold and unsupportive, and I was deeply disappointed in her. I asked if she wanted to break up, to which she said no.

After a week had passed, I decided to break up with her, but she begged me to stay. She pulled my arm and barricaded the door. I explained to her that she had remained unkind and uninterested in my feelings and the case against me, and that I felt that I was treated less than a friend and more like an enemy. To this, she promised she would change, that she would be supportive, but without even acknowledging the validity of my issues with her. In the second week after her return, Anna was noticeably kinder to me, but in hindsight, still not behaving decently. Two weeks after Anna had come back from Zürich, three weeks after my abduction, Anna broke up with me. Via a phone message.

Before my abduction, I was a student who was finishing his masters with high grades, no debt, and great career opportunities. I was in a long-term relationship which was neither great nor

bad. I was active for causes greater than myself because I love the world and all of its creatures.

I was free.

A month later, the most powerful bureaucracy in human history was out to get me. I was left by my long-term partner, Anna. I had the prospect of going to prison, for years. Suddenly, my whole life was turned upside down....

16 A Positive Outlook

In this work, I have shared a lot of criticisms, sad news that wasn't really news, and showed some of the things that are terribly and needlessly wrong with contemporary structures of human societies. I gave you a personal account of my own perspective and experiences. In this world, there are so many injustices to make right, so many trends that need to be reversed. But I am not at all a negative thinker; I think there are a great many things that have been done, are being done, and could still be done to make this world a better place, for all people and even for all sentient beings that live today and will live here in the future.

Everything good in the world comes from the efforts of people who came before us. Every minute that we are able to enjoy in a society that is not ruled by senseless violence is a minute given to us by the hard work of people who dedicated their lives for something better.

You can take part in the betterment of this world, too. To do this, it is important that you not just smash the state (although, have your fun with that!), but also create alternatives that help us construct a free and just society.

“What should I do?” is a question that some people have in face of the enormous challenges that we face. “Anything” or “Organize” are answers that are typically given, and then the questioner is told (lectured) about the incredible privileges and freedoms that people in the West have to do good, without concrete steps being provided. Although these are true answers, I don't think that they are good answers. In this chapter, I will broadly discuss some domains where anyone can make a contribution to make this world a better place. However, unsurprisingly, this will not “fix” the world; these are just some very basic ideas for getting started.

One answer to “What should I do?” that I would like to exclude immediately is voting. Mussolini, Hitler, Thatcher, Blair, American presidents, etc, were all elected democratically. Besides:

What is there to vote on? There is doing the right thing, and there is doing the wrong thing.

- Bree Newsome, after being arrested for taking down the confederate flag.

I am not saying that voting has no effect; unlike some other people, I happen to believe that there are actual differences between the candidates—just like there is a difference between being hit by a car at 20 or 25 km/hour; it does affect your chance of survival.

But voting every four years is just not enough to deny you are accepting of ongoing injustices. Voting is not an act of resistance, not even an act of protest. Sure, it is better than nothing. But if you leave it at that then you have nothing to be proud of. So instead, here are some starters for you:

There is no need for us to accept that there are soldiers amongst us, who have militarized our society and who are implementing arbitrary laws arbitrarily; societies without soldiers and without a

bureaucracy have existed, and will exist again. In a broader, historical sense, our militarized society is an anomaly, not the norm. Peaceful societies can exist without a constantly aggressing military, just not extremely unequal ones such as our current corpocratic society. And even if an outside force would want to dominate over our society, there is no good reason to deploy armies to lockup and brutalize fellow members of our own community.

Those who say the system is working are working for the system.

Every time we see them, no matter if they are helping an old person cross the street today or beating and abducting someone for rejecting unjust laws tomorrow, we should remember: All Cops Are Brutes. We should not accept Brutes, and there should be a high social cost to being member of a public or private army, police unit, or secret service. All Cops Are Brutes—so don't be friends with them; tell them they behave like automatons, working to maintain a system of injustice, and that you don't accept that. Or better yet, if you can, convince them to act morally and responsibly; convince them to join the good fight and help smash the corpocracy, for the betterment of the planet, and help them doing it. This is especially useful when the cop is a member of a secret service—Edward Snowden was a private secret service copper before he turned whistleblower.

We should not accept what we know is unjust, and so we should not accept those that are at the core of the violent and oppressive, corpocratic system; we should not extend social acceptance or solidarity to soldiers and elite corpocrats until they are fighting the good fight. Acceptance of injustice inhibits progress.

We need to build communities of people, practicing mutual aid and solidarity, in many areas in our society—for justice, (technological) infrastructure, food, and anything else where a group of people can do more than the individuals that compose it. Instead of competing with each other in an economical sense, in a rigged marketplace, we can try to cooperate with each other, for the betterment of our own community but just as much, for example, to free the people in Bangladesh from capitalist exploitation. I see two ways to have a society built around communities, which I think can co-exist well and in fact should co-exist: society composed of communes, and society composed of worker-owned and -managed enterprises, or trade unions, that work together with other such syndicates.

Communes come into existence when free people find each other, understand each other, and decide to go forth together. The commune itself makes the decision as to when it would perhaps be useful to break it up. It's what makes us say “we,” and what makes that an event. What's strange isn't that people who agree with each other form communes, but that they remain separated. Why shouldn't communes proliferate everywhere? In every factory, every street, every village, every school. At last, the true reign of the communes! We need communes that accept being what they are, where they are; a multitude of communes. We need communes that, outside of their specific political activity, aren't afraid to organize themselves for the material and moral survival of all their members and all the lost ones that surround them. Communes that don't define themselves by what's within them and what's outside of them, but by the density of the connections at their core.

There are all kinds of communes now that aren't waiting to have the numbers, or the resources, or much less the “right moment”—which never comes—to get organized.

Our current system of justice has many faults, and it can be replaced with something better. For example Restorative Justice, which is not focused on retribution and oppressive scare tactics, but on understanding, healing, and prevention. Instead of torturing the perpetrator to various degrees, we may uncover what happened and what led up to the incident in a truth-and-reconciliation-like process which better allows healing for the victims, reduces recidivism, and reveals the causes of why the injustice happened in the first place so that these causes can be addressed.

Even according to our current laws, many (celebrated) soldiers and military bureaucrats should be locked up in prison for many years. This is because they (e.g. German politicians and secret service cops) are responsible for physical torture, mass spying on the population, and executions without trial. Although I fault them for their murderous actions, truth-and-reconciliation and Restorative Justice are more helpful to our society and other victimized societies than simply locking them up in a tiny cell (read: psychologically torturing them) for the rest of their lives.

Restorative Justice is a practice that you can implement together with your community when there has been an injustice. It is a method to bypass the military and the bureaucracy, which has been proven to reduce recidivism, making your neighborhood safer from thugs, the retaliatory justice system, and the military alike. (More on restorative justice in a later chapter.)

With modern technology, we are able to film and expose (domestic) military brutalities. Here in Kreuzberg, the public military has aggressed the population many times, even in the last few years, during protests but also during seemingly random acts of aggression, and there exist many videos of this. The brutalities and threats by the military are bad enough here, but they are probably worse in the U.S. where blacks are frequently murdered by the white-supremacist, public military, “out of self-defense.” Cellphone video enables you to shed more light on these problems than eyewitness accounts could. In very rare cases, individual soldiers can be stopped iff they have been recorded. But the real value of recording these attacks against our neighbors is not to expose any one wrongdoing, but to show that the corpocracy is acting for its own benefit, not the citizenry.

We should expose military attacks against people, and we should also expose what decisions politicians are making in our name and the ways corporations are attacking us.

There exist non-corpocratic media outlets like DemocracyNow! by Amy Goodman, SubMedia TV by Stimulator, and, infortunately stopped, Rap News by The Juice Media. If you want to read more in-dept reflection or non-mainstream ideas, you can find many interesting article. Some anarchist-oriented news blogs host some of the most vicious self-criticisms that I have seen in public discourse. All these outlets are funded by mutual aid and solidarity as opposed to corpocratic propoganda interests, and that difference shows. Hell, even the Trews (contraction of 'truth' and 'news') by Russell Brand, a handsome, bearded, and scarcely dressed guy sitting on his bed, discussing the news by himself, was a far better news show than the BBC has ever produced.

Getting “multiple view points” does not mean reading the New York Times, the Guardian, and die Zeit; if you want news sources that are actually different from the mainstream Western corpocratic news sources, read from sources like Russia Today, Al Jazeera English, and the Intercept who each do provide a different point of view.

Using modern technology, you can start your own media outlet. (I would recommend you do so anonymously....) You can now communicate and organize better than ever. Technology could offer a red pill to you and those whom you love. But while some modern technologies allows you to liberate yourself, most of our consumer products are designed to spy and inform on us, to reduce our autonomy and our ability to dissent.

Technology is a domain where we need to work on alternatives that enable freedom and justice. If our software and hardware is not open for inspection but works according to a secret design built and known only to the corporation and the bureaucracy, the devices we use can be turned against us with the turn of a key. Without free devices—free as in Liberty, not free as in beer—the corpocracy has total control over every word we read or write on a screen, every message we send—total control over our modern lives. Open source software, and hardware, is a necessity to live in a free society. Cellphones that we use to film the military attacks against our neighbors can be controlled by the same state that sent the military. This is because the state and corporate power have merged, to the benefit of both.

There are people from all over the world who create free software—free as in beer and free as in Liberty. This text is written and distributed using free software, and without free software, I would not have had the liberty to write it. Many non-trivial Direct Actions I have ever engaged in would likely have failed without free software. The free software communities have written software that, bit by bit, subverts the corpocratic authoritarians that try to gain total control over our modern lives. I encourage you to use free software to liberate yourself and the people whom you love, and to contribute to the free software community if you can. I learned about how to use free software for freedom at various cryptoparties here in Berlin. You can too. Using and supporting free software are acts of resistance against the corpocracy for positive change which have very real and immediate impact.

There are many things that are much better today than they were 100 or even 10 years ago. The world is more multipolar (England, France and the U.S. have lost powers), and technology (almost always state funded) has given almost all the peoples in the world a greater material wealth than ever before. The homeless beggars in the streets of Berlin carry cellphones; I have a fridge, and I eat healthier food than any of the kings of Prussia.

But there is no reason for us to accept the negatives that have come along with the positives, even if it would have been a good trade at the time. For it is not a rule of nature that if we have the internet, if we carry cellphones, we should be spied upon constantly; it is not a rule of nature that if there exist computer chips, nuclear bombs should exist too; it is not a rule of nature that if we enjoy delicious and healthy food, species should go mass extinct; it is not a rule of nature that others should suffer for our own (in)actions.

Making this world a better place is not something abstract; it is something you can do today and every other day for the rest of your life.

We have overcome the last wave of fascism and many other, even greater tyrannies, and we can smash this corpocracy, too.

17 Utopia Is Impossible; Everyone Who Isn't a Utopian Is a Shmuck.

[I was asked] to write to the children of the newest generation and to say something to inspire them. To write something that would encourage them to take up the cause of bettering the world. That's you or someone you love - when you're finished, please pass this book on to the person who needs it most.

Everything good in the world comes from the efforts of people who came before us. Every minute that we are able to enjoy in a society that is not ruled by senseless violence is a minute given to us by the hard work of people who dedicated their lives for something better. Every person we meet is carrying his own burdens. Each person is the center of her own universe. There is so much left to be done, so many injustices to right, so much suffering to relieve, so many beautiful moments to be lived, an endless amount of knowledge to uncover. Many secrets of the universe wait to be uncovered.

The deck from which our hands are dealt need not be stacked against us; it is possible to create societal structures that are just and capable of reasoned compassion for everyone. It is possible to change the very nature of our lives. It is possible to redesign the entire deck, to change the very face and count of the cards, to rewrite the rules and to create different outcomes.

We live in the golden era of surveillance; every phone is designed to be tapped, the Internet passes through snooping equipment of agencies that are so vast and unaccountable that we hardly know their bounds. Corporations are forced (though some are willing enough!) to hand over our data and data of those whom we love. Our lives are ruled by networks and yet those networks are not ruled by our consent. These networks keep us hooked up but it is not without costs that they keep us hooked together. The businesses, the governments, and the individuals that power those networks are incentivized to spy, to betray, and to do it silently. The architecture of the very systems produces these outcomes.

This is tyranny.

The architecture of our systems and of our networks is not the product of nature but rather the product of imperfect humans, some with the best of intentions. There is no one naturally fit to survive in these unnatural systems; there are some who are lucky, others who have adapted.

This letter to you, from your perhaps recent past, was written with Free Software, written as a labor of love by someone who wished to help the children of Uganda while flying over an expansive ocean at difficult to understand heights. It was composed while running under a kernel written by scores of people across every national line, across every racial, sexual and gender line, by a socially and politically agnostic engineer. It was sent through multiple anonymity networks built by countless volunteers acting in solidarity through mutual aid, and it was received by an author who published it for a purpose.

What is the common purpose of all of these people? It is for the whole of our efforts to be more than the sum of our parts – this creates a surplus for you – to give breathing room to others, so that they may take the torch of knowledge, of reason, of justice, of truth telling, of

sunlight – to the next step, wherever it may lead us.

There was a time when there were no drone killings; societies have existed without armed policemen, where peace is not only possible but actually a steady state, where mass surveillance was technically and socially infeasible, where fair and evenhanded trials by impartial juries were available for everyone, where fear of identification and arrest was not the norm but the exception. That time was less than a generation ago, and much more has been lost in the transition from one generation to the next.

It's up to you to bring those things back to our planet. You can do this with little more than cooperation, the Internet, cryptography, and willingness. You might do this alone, or you might do it in a group; you might contribute as a solitary person or as one of many. Writing Free Software empowers every person, without exception, to control the machines that fill our lives. Building free and open hardware empowers every person, without exception, to construct new machines to free us from being slaves to machines that control us. Using free and open systems allows us to construct a new basis by which we may once again understand, as a whole, the systems by which we govern ourselves.

We are on the edge of regaining our autonomy, of ending total state surveillance, of uncovering and holding accountable those who commit crimes in our names without our informed consent, of resuming free travel without arbitrary or unfair restriction. We're on the verge of ensuring that every person, not one human excluded, has the right to read and the right to speak. Without exception.

It's easy to feel hopeless in the face of the difficult issues that we face everyday – how might one person effectively resist anything so much larger than herself? Once we stop acting alone, we have a chance for positive change. To protest is to stop and say that you object, to resist is to stop others from going along without thinking, and to build alternatives is to give everyone new choices. Omission and commission are the yin and yang of personal agency.

What if you could travel back through time and help Daniel Ellsberg leak the Pentagon papers? Would you take the actions required, would you risk your life to end the war? For many, it is easy to answer positively and then think nothing of the actual struggles, the real risk, or the uncertainty provided without historical hindsight. For others, it's easy to say 'no', and to think of nothing beyond oneself.

But what if you didn't need to travel back through time?

There are new Pentagon Papers just waiting to be leaked; there are new wars to end, new injustices to make right, fresh uncertainty that seems daunting where success seems impossible, new alternatives need to be constructed, old values and concepts of justice need to be preserved in the face of powerful people who pervert the rule of law for their own benefit.

Be the trouble you want to see in the world, above nationalism, above so-called patriotism, above and beyond fear, and make it count for the betterment of the planet. Legal and illegal are not the same as right and wrong – do what is right and never give up the fight.

This is one idea out of many that can help you and your friends free our planet from the tyranny that surrounds us all. It's up to you now – go create something beautiful and help others to do the same. Happy hacking,

18 Restorative Justice

Restorative justice is a community justice practice, different from the retaliatory justice practiced by states. In restorative justice, the focus lies with restoration of damage caused by a misconduct. Victims are encouraged to explain why there was a harm and how this harm affected them; offenders are encouraged to explain why they behaved in the manner they did, and help can be given to offenders in order to prevent future offenses. An offense can be any behavior that harms another being. In the end, a restorative solution is sought with all parties that are involved, meaning the offender, the community, and the victim. The restoration can be anything, depending on the misconduct. The objective of restorative justice is not to retaliate against an offender, but to heal the harm as much as possible, and to create an understanding between the victim, the community, and the offender, which minimizes the risk of future offenses by empathizing with the offender as well as with the victim.

The justice that is served by modern states is quite different. Modern states maintain a book of what behavior is unlawful, and the states try to retaliate against all those who show behavior described in the book¹—regardless of whether or not there is a (potential) victim. The effect of this is that wildly violent and destructive behavior might not be addressed, like a corporatic conspiracy to burn all brown coal in the territory that it controls, and complete non-crimes, such as addressing a soldier with the informal “du” instead of “Sie” or keeping the ashes of a loved one after cremation are retaliated against. The violence or destruction that is (intentionally) caused does not matter to the retaliatory justice system of modern Western states. Nor does it matter if there is a (potential) victim, what the victim thinks, or why an 'offender' behaved in the way she did.

In restorative justice, the causes for the offense are investigated in order to prevent such causes from re-emerging in the future if possible, be it with the same offender or another person. This means that if an offense is inspired by some other injustice, like poverty, racial discrimination, or some other structural problem, these causes will be found out about and can be addressed. Restorative justice is centered around conversations with all parties, not around the book of law.

Where retaliatory justice asks, “What law was broken?” “Who do we punish?” and “How severely?” restorative justice asks, “Who was affected and how?” “Who's actions caused this?” “Why did it happen?” and “How do we restore it?”

Restorative justice has been shown to reduce recidivism and increase victim satisfaction compared to retaliatory justice, even when applied to grave crimes. It is also more economical.

There is a growing movement that tries to have restorative practices become part of the statist legal practices in order to transform the legal system that currently monopolizes justice. This could be a good idea for schools, I think, but one could also observe that state justice has,

¹ A notable exception to this is that this retaliation is not implemented against bureaucrats, and often also not against the other corporats. One example is James Clapper who lied under oath in the American congress. Here in Germany, we have our own spying agencies who have gone rogue, for example by illegally collaborating with the NSA and by illegally creating the Bundestrojaner. No one goes to prison.

throughout history, been on the wrong side, being nothing more than a branch of government itself. I happen to think that state justice is broken beyond repair. We cannot rely on the state to serve fair justice.

The good thing is, there is no need for a state in order to have restorative justice. In fact, I see no place at all for a state in a process of genuine justice. Justice as the states deal it has been horrific throughout history, (I gave many examples in earlier chapters, including slavery and genocide), and there is no indication that today, unlike any other time in history, the state legal system has suddenly become just.

This is evident by our corpocrats allowing Investor-State-Dispute-Settlements, torture or aiding in torture, while retaliating against things so trivial as performing gay marriage and wearing the Muslim veil.

Investor-State-Dispute-Settlements (ISDS) in particular are a corpocrat's wet dream. As the name suggests, ISDS is a mechanism that settles disputes between states and investors. For example, in 2009, the Swedish energy giant Vattenfall has claimed 1.4 billion Euro from Germany because one of its coal plants was polluting water too much according to new regulation. As part of the settlement, regulation was changed to allow more pollution. Vattenfall is also seeking 4.7 billion Euro, again from Germany, because Germany decided to start phasing out nuclear energy. Other examples include countries having to pay billions because they introduced new regulation to reduce smoking or because they banned fracking (shale gas extraction). ISDS and other traditional state justices are not in fact about justice, about right or wrong. They are about following the decrees governing a particular territory.

Restorative justice is different. It is about right and wrong in a particular situation, and some law book has nothing to do with it. Restorative justice requires a victim for there to have been a crime, and will also ask "Why," instead of automatically deciding some form of retaliation.

With some effort, you can side-step the corpocracy that has invaded your community and start applying restorative practices instead of retaliatory practices. This is not necessarily easier for the community; unlike retaliatory justice, restorative justice is not something an affected community can outsource (to the state). However, it is likely better for a community of people to be autonomous than to have law and justice be dictated by others. Restorative justice at least offers a chance to for a wrong to be restored.

Restorative justice is a method to bypass the military and the bureaucracy, which has been proven to reduce recidivism, making your neighborhood safer from thugs, the retaliatory justice system, and the military alike. You can learn more about restorative justice online.

There is a better justice than the justice we have today, and there is no reason we have to do with our current form of justice. Systems of justice, like systems of government, have come and gone, and our current, dualistic, Western system of justice will make way for other systems, too.

19 The Law in These Parts

Already not being a fan of the U.S. and the German states, or any state for that matter, going to court is an extremely uneasy experience for me. Appearing in court is like going to a circus. So many soldiers, judges, lawyers, corporate representatives, and department of justice people; everything that stinks about the state can be found slithering through the halls of the court house. It is the place where the fat Schweine act as if they are decent people making reasonable decisions, and where their victims act as if they respect the German law that they are being whipped across the face with.

Suits are what identify people that don't have a meaningful job. Suit wearing people need to wear suits because otherwise they would not be taken serious. They are redundant managers or sales people, but also soldiers and politicians. I have been to security conferences, and the heads of the public and secret militaries would be there, too. These generals all come in their military uniforms, complete with all kinds of pins, patches, and buttons that demonstrate what loyal managers of soldiers they are for their states. Of course, not a single sane person knows what any of their 20 to 40 decorative pieces stand for, but it is presumed that it is not just their mothers that gave them cool stickers. Colonel Ghadaffi and the North Korean Kim leaders had less decorative nonsense pinned to their chests than the NATO army leaders. But then again, Ghadaffi and the Kims didn't have to go to conferences where they measured theirs with other idiots'.

Now, judges have their own type of suits, which look like what you expect a goth's wedding dress to look like. As you move down the ladder, deeper into the shithole that is the legacy justice system of the German state, judges' dresses get more and more red with blood and shame. They also start wearing bibs, as these judges spend more time drooling over their holy books, instead of looking their victims in the face. All judges are in contempt of court, clowning around in those black and red trash bags.

Yes, surgeons and construction workers also wear special clothing when they work, but they do so because it is a physical necessity to perform their job. A manager, banker, or other suit wearing person is just trying to communicate, "I am special! Look, I dress up!" These people cannot prove their value directly, by doing work that betters the world, and so they have to prove in other ways that they have a reason to exist. Bakers wear aprons, crossing guards wear fluorescent vests, and chemists wear lab coats; managers, marketeers, and bureaucrats wear suits because, hey!, they're also something! Meanwhile, pizza delivery people don't need a tie, and teachers wear normal clothes as if there is no need for them to act as if they are important (except for England, where teachers should leave those kids alone). They don't feel the need to dress like a clown because, well, they're not clowns, and the usefulness and legitimacy of the work of all these non-dressers is still evident, even without the dress code.

One striking example of suit wearers are the queens guards in England, which are very common to see in London. They march as inelegantly as possible, with old fashioned guns, wearing ridiculous military suits and 30cm high hats. They are a tradition (one should not think of what the tradition represents) and are of course anything but useful for protection. The queens guards are

probably the most extreme case of humans being reduced to its most stupid and lethargic form. But here is the best part: these are not misbehaving cops that are being punished; and these are, supposedly, not the dumbest Brits alive. They are the best cops they have—England's finest—who are selected to do this, and it is considered their great honor to be a marching vegetable, day in day out.

The quickest way to tell if a person is doing anything useful is to check if they suit-up for work or not.

Needless to say, most all the people that you'll find in a courthouse wear a suit.

As became clear early on, the semantics of my case, and of law as I have gotten to know it, are also frighteningly ridiculous. For one thing, terrorism is pretty much defined as anything that interferes with governmental or corporate operations. So if I sabotage a machine that is used to scrape brown coal, or if I blow up a road that leads to a (U.S.) military base here in Germany, the state has the 'right' to label me a terrorist, and treat me as such, especially if I fiddle with international (read: U.S.) corpocratic interests.

The definition of terrorism that is maintained by the European Union is the following:

unduly compelling a Government or international organization to perform or abstain from performing any act; or seriously destabilizing or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic, or social structures of an international organization.

Clearly, terrorism as defined under the law is not what you might think of as terrorism.

Hell, even writing inciting texts can qualify as terrorism.... A prominent case of this has been that of The Invisible Committee, who wrote *The Coming Insurrection*. When the French secret police thought they had a lead on the authors, they assaulted the tiny village of Tarnac with helicopters and 150 anti-terror terrorist-soldiers. No weapons were found (except for books), but indeed, the very most threatening thing described in *The Coming Insurrection* was found in Tarnac: a small, peaceful community that operated on the basis of cooperation.

To give you an idea of how international cases like mine are handled, these are some of the things my lawyer has told me:

International cases like yours really don't have much to do with justice, or even with law; it is about treaties that have been signed between countries.

These treaties ... [because of these treaties] they just accept any information that a foreign, 'allied' nation provides to the investigators and the justice department. There are no meaningful checks in place to see if the information is obtained lawfully or if it is even correct. The accuracy of the information provided by allied nations, and the legal basis for the existence of it is explicitly not something that a judge is allowed to weigh in. It is a whitewashing, without much pretenses, and although it won't help you, what the German state is doing here is probably in violation of a few other laws and treaties.

And so the fact that my case involved a clear example of parallel construction² simply didn't matter to the judge; Germany has a treaty with the U.S., the U.S. is a country that respects human

² Parallel Construction: The legal process is subverted by the police or department of justice, who don't provide an accurate, chronological overview of an investigation. This prevents the defendant from showing that the investigatory process as conducted by his assailants was unlawful.

rights (the judge said this with a straight face; she wasn't joking) and so there was nothing wrong with sending my journal, my phone data, my computer, and even me, to the U.S.—there was a terror threat! Unspecified and, for security reasons, not even disclosed to the judge herself, but surely a serious terrorist threat, or else our ally, the U.S., would not have said that there was one.

It is not as if the judge automatically signs off on everything that the prosecutor wants, but the judge simply looks at the treaties, and then the German law comes second. The judge watches how the lawyers and prosecutors disagree with each other, like gentlemen, and will then decide what to do based on what the book says should be done. Reason, compassion, proportionality, or justice have nothing to do with the decisions that are made in a court of law, especially when it involves international affairs. Because they mindlessly follow arbitrary law, irrespective of their own beliefs, judges will do horrific things to people. Like cops, they have voluntarily given up thinking for themselves about right and wrong. They are brutes, too.

To summarize, when going to court, you will find a mix of weirdly dressed up statist and legalists masturbating each other, with the victim tied down by mindless brutes to a designated table in the center of the play. The occasional witness is either a corpocrat trying to get some of the action, too, or an actual decent human being who tries to free the victim with her words, but who soon finds out that reason or justice has nothing to do with Law.

20 Emma

After my government abduction, the relationship between Anna and I had quickly ended. She had left me at a time when I needed her the most, and it was tough for me. I felt betrayed by Anna, who seemed to be surprisingly untroubled with going no-contact immediately after the breakup. But we remained neighbors; it was inevitable to occasionally run into each other, at the grocery store or when entering or leaving our apartments, but she would never say anything unless I addressed her. Months went by where it was difficult to find joy in my life. I was tediously writing my master's thesis and fighting my case in court. Being intimidated by the state, I had promptly stopped my involvement in the causes I cared about and dropped out from my small circle of activist friends. My intention was to show the state that they had won, that I had stopped my opposition to it.

The truth is, there is something that happens when moderate opposition is viciously attacked by an aggressor. It is something that intelligence agencies are quite aware of—they call it *blowback*. Blowback is when an aggressed party radicalizes or implements counter-attacks in reaction to the aggression they received. The drone murders for example, for which Germany bears great responsibility, create a lot of blowback. When drones are used for extra-judicial murder, there tends to be a lot of collateral murder, too. Estimates of the ratio of targets to collateral for drone assassinations range from between 1 to 20 to as high as 1 to 50. How can one expect to affect a moderate when his family member is collaterally murdered? What should you think if there are drones above your head, which you know kill a bunch of random people? What should a Brit, a Yemenite, a German, or an Afghan think about the fact that random, innocent follow-citizens have been abducted and tortured, knowingly and willingly, and that the corpocracy makes this happen and continues to do it. What should you think if there is collective punishment against all people in your territory because there are a few that fight an ongoing injustice? What should I think of the fact that the largest and most powerful terrorist organization in history is out to get me and that the state in which I live cooperates?

While the case is ongoing and I am under the threat of a terrorist treatment, I have seized my opposition to the injustices that are brought about by the corpocracy. But by summer, half a year after my abduction, the lawyer fees have cost me a small fortune already. I also have to appear in court about every 6 weeks, which typically involves meeting with my lawyer twice, going to court, and then meeting with my lawyer again to discuss the results and further steps. I have come to know more about the justice system and international treaties than I would have wanted, and if there is one lesson to learn from it, it is that Justice has nothing to do with Law. Meanwhile, the Snowden revelations and other whistleblowers continue to expose the corpocracy that rules us; the U.K. government, more than any other government, is going completely berserk over the use of encryption; EU countries are willing to sign trade treaties like TTIP, which will benefit the corpocracy at the expense of the citizens. The tolerance I had for the state, and in particular the U.K., the U.S., and the German states, is quickly evaporating. I find myself thoroughly disgusted with the governments and corporations that devise and implement murderous policies, who leave no liberty to people to make this world a better place. My treatment by the Western state gave me the final push that convinced me: not just the (Western supported) dictatorships must be overthrown,

but the Western corpocracy must be dismantled or else smashed, too, to create a better world.

It is not a question of whether or not the current corpocracy will be overthrown. Different empires and societal structures have come and gone, and the current ruling of the corpocracy will end, too. Instead, the questions are: What will be left of the good in this world when the corpocracy is overthrown?, What comes after?, and Will you be proud of yourself?

No doubt that most people have and will take the path of least resistance, of accepting or even cheering what they may well know deep down is wrong. These acceptionists might even form a majority of the population, fluid in their moral stance and willing to accept pretty much any proposition that allows *themselves* to live sufficiently well. Adolf Hitler was, in fact, a popular leader and so were Benito Mussolini and Muammar Gaddafi and many others whom we now understand to dislike. Today, people know it is wrong what they are doing in the name of their corporation or state; people know that eating animals is not something that can reasonably be defended in light of the health issues, the environmental impact, and the cruelty involved. And yet, most people go along with the corpocracy in the destruction of liberty and the planet, most people did trade slaves, did punish the Jews, and most people do still eat meat. All of them have done so, and will continue to do so, until sufficiently challenged. For the rest of us, we must continue to reject what we know is wrong and not become part of the acceptionist group.

For me, and I hope for you too, seeing what the corpocracy brings to this world and being the target of a terrorism investigation is no reason to give up hope, joy, or love. But the state is doing its best to deny me all three. Hope is frustrated by dragging me into a court case when there has not been a crime and there is no evidence of wrong-doing, joy is frustrated by making my life difficult and keeping me under a constant threat—I now fear every police officer I see. And Love, too, is not something I can enjoy freely without having to fear the state.

For one thing, any person whom I would love and who would love me back would be guilty by association. In the middle east, this would mean that the person I love would be killed with a drone, just like they would be trying to murder me, too. Luckily, I am a rich white person, and so the worst that could happen to my romantic partner is that his or her life would be complicated by the state, for example by being harassed for 9 hours when transferring through the U.K., as happened to David, the lover of investigative journalist Glenn Greenwald, or by having the person you love, when she is sleeping alone in her house, wake up in the middle of the night to find that agents of the state, wearing night-vision goggles, are watching her sleep.

But a potential lover becoming a target of the state, just for being with me, isn't the worst scenario. At least not for me....

From 2003 until 2010, Mark was a lively activist in different left-anarchist and environmental groups. Based in England, he used to be a drug dealer, but now he devoted himself to being a stand-up citizen, ready to take on coal plants and the G20. His father had left him when he was young, his mother had died, and so he didn't like to discuss them much and he would never have any news about them. This poor soul was finally able to find a home among other activists, some of whom he developed sexual or romantic relationships with. He lived with a few activist girlfriends, but also traveled around the Western world in his fight against injustice, destruction of

the environment, and the ever more powerful corpocracy. Sometimes, when Mark was involved in a Direct Action for the protection of people and the environment, the police would already be waiting for Mark and his group, ready to arrest the protesters, in spite of the group having used secure communications. This was strange, but surely it was not something that Mark, a devoted vegan who was well-integrated into the activist spheres, could have done anything more about to prevent it. Mark was also inexplicably lucky by not getting charged and not going to prison after being arrested along with the rest of the group, who did end up doing (minor) time in prison. Some of his friends were very unlucky and got caught even though very few people besides Mark knew about the fact that they would be crossing a state border illegally.

One day in October 2010, Mark's girlfriend was searching for her sunglasses in the house that she shared with her boyfriend of 4 years. Then, she stumbled upon the passport of another Mark, which looked exactly like her boyfriend—a Mark with a different last name....

She confronted her lover, who explained to her that the other passport had to do with his criminal past, that he had needed a new identity to break away from it. Although the explanation was plausible by itself, the circumstantial evidence against him had kept growing over the past two years. Luckily, she was courageous enough to speak to her circle of activist friends about Mark's second passport.

Armed with Mark's new (and true) last name, fellow activists were able to uncover that Mark used to be a police officer around a decade ago. In the early morning of October 20, 2010, Mark was confronted by the circle of activist that he had gotten to know so well over the years; he confessed that he had been informing on his activist “friends”, his deceived romantic partners, and that he had been an agent of the state since day one.

I have spoken to some people who have met Mark in person. (Due to an eye condition, Mark has a salient face.) They were all amazed when they found out that he was an agent of the state; for years, Mark had fooled just about everyone.

The news that Mark, who appeared to be a great activist in many ways, was with the corpocracy, against progress, hit the U.K. activist community like a bomb and sent shock-waves throughout the activist community in Europe and North America. Of course, his romantic partner of 4 years was devastated, and his disingenuous engagement with her has (had) a great effect on her. His ex partner also has difficulty recovering.

Not only was Mark active in the U.K., he also spied for the governments of other (Western) countries. He went to France, where he misinformed on the “terrorist” village of Tarnac (where, after a terror-raid, only a small, unarmed, and peaceful community was found) and to Germany, including to the city where I live now, Berlin.

In the aftermath of the outing of Mark, many other secret agents were unmasked by a wave of mistrust that flooded the activist community. Most of them had had romantic relationships with the people they spied upon. For the agents, sleeping with one or more of the objects of the investigation was “one of the perks of the job.” There is at least one known case of an undercover agent who, under his false identity, married an activist that he was tasked to spy upon. These are cold-war level spy stories—shit that, in the West, could only happen in fantastic movies. Yet, here it was for real: agents sent by the state to spy on the communities of progress and to covertly invade peoples' lives in the most intrusive way imaginable, thereby frustrating one of the most fundamental

and important aspects of peoples' lives: their romantic relationships.

One may ask, "To what end?" Why did the state need to have secret agents implanted in the communities of progress? What was so important that agents faked romantic relationships of years? According to the states, these agents prevented bodily harm to (human) persons; the activists posed, supposedly, a danger to society; they were violent radicals; terrorists.

And yet, none of these intrusive activities have resulted in a single arrest related to violence against people; no-one was charged with so much as plotting to endanger anyone.

The real reason that this spying happened was to protect the corpocracy. One of the largest coal plants in Europe would have been temporarily shut down during one of the planned Direct Actions (with no danger to safety as the energy grid would draw enough electricity from elsewhere). There were plans to protest in a multitude of ways against the G8 summit. These are the kinds of "threats" that Mark was assigned to spy on, and environmentalism and anti-fascism is what he has frustrated by performing his actions; no bloodshed was prevented. Mark's work was nothing more than a corpocratic conspiracy against progress. The same goes for other secret agents; the only "terrorism" that they were trying to prevent was the protection of liberty and the environment by people. And indeed, frustrating corporations' activities and challenging government oppression *is* a form of terrorism, not in the common sense, but in the sense that Western governments have decided to define terrorism. As I have quoted before, this is terrorism according to the European Union:

unduly compelling a Government or international organization to perform or abstain from performing any act; or seriously destabilizing or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic, or social structures of an international organization.

In other words, in Europe (as well as in North America), if a corporation is polluting the environment on a massive scale, torturing animals, or exploiting people, or if the government is routinely fighting or contributing to illegal wars and deploying and using mass-surveillance against the people, invading their most intimate spheres, that is not (institutionalized) terrorism. Trying to stop these same things that may or may not be legal according to the book, but are so clearly wrong in every way, that, according to the European Union, is terrorism, and that is what warrants such intrusive methods.

It isn't so much that I am opposed to (unlawfully) harming certain individuals to prevent them from doing far greater harm, but I have never done so. Nonetheless, by the definition of the European Union, I am a terrorist. I am proud to fall under that definition, along with thousands of other "terrorists" that live in Germany, and in every other nation-state, too.

Today, like every other time in history, those who are at the forefront of making this world a better place are called terrorists or are similarly oppressed. Nelson Mandela was, on 9/11, 2001, a terrorist. Martin Luther King, Ulrike Meinhof, Bhagat Singh, Chelsea Manning; but also the unsung heroes who hid Jews during WWII and who freed slaves from the plantations; all these people are widely celebrated 50 years later (if we still remember their names, that is), but while these people are alive, they receive the terror treatment from the state. Today, environmentalists (at least those who try to shut down the (brown-)coal plants; not the petition whores), non-capitalists,

and anarchists are oppressed by the state. But if we look back we can see that throughout history, the state has always tried to suppress every positive change, by legislation and aggression. States have been on the wrong side of history for all of history, and it would be foolish to think that today, unlike any other time in history, acting morally can be done within the confines of the law. If you have ambition and you want to change the social order beyond a few minor tweaks, if you really want to make this world a better place, then the state will try to oppress you or else you are not doing it right. Environmentalists and anti-fascists are on the bleeding-edge of unjust government oppression today.

Environmentalists and anti-corporatists can now expect to get the terror treatment, and that means that they will be spied upon, they will be infiltrated, and their cause will be frustrated; they will be oppressed, their lives will be ruined if not ended, as much as the corpocracy is able to do so, until the corpocracy itself is dissolved, or else smashed. Those who want to make this world a better place are not safe from the government or from the corporate, not even in their most intimate relationships. Even if you meet “the love of your life,” as one of the victims of the state put it, that person could be an informant.

That is why randomly meeting Emma, an American expat living in Berlin, was more thrilling than I would have liked it to be.

21 Liebe Statt Angst

In the early summer of 2015, just 5 months after I was abducted from my bed by the domestic military for being a terrorist, I met Emma at a semi-formal social gathering of about 20 non-activists. About 6 weeks earlier, I had publicly announced that I would be present at the meeting, and therefore the corpocracy would have had plenty of time to prepare for my presence there....

While making smalltalk with a few people at the gathering, I noticed a girl looking out the window onto a park, seemingly removed from what was going on in the rest of the room. I was unsure if she wanted to be left alone or not, but because she could just as well have left the gathering if that were the case, I decided to approach her. I walked over, and she greeted me with a smile. The gathering being mostly composed of foreigners, I spoke to her in English:

“Hi, my name is Max,” I said

“Hi, I'm Emma,” she quickly replied in an American accent. “Do I know you from somewhere?”, she asked.

“Max Nowak,” I said, “and I don't think we have met before.”

We discussed the gathering a little bit, but took a greater interest in each other. She had come to Germany the previous summer because she wanted to settle here indefinitely, fearing the socio-political climate back in the U.S.

“So what are you doing in Berlin?” I asked.

“I'm a masters student,” she said, and she continued to tell me her field of study, which happened to be related to my field. “So what about you,” she asked, “are you a student, too?”

“No, I'm unemployed,” I told her with a smile. “I just graduated last week, and I'm taking some time off.”

Emma and I continued to have a great conversation outside in the park. I loved the chemistry we had. Emma was radiating sex, and she was a huge confidence boost to me. We parted with the intention to meet up again later that week.

The irony of me flirting with an American!

From the first moment I met her, I was wary of the fact that she might be an agent of the state. Emma seemed comparatively well informed about the U.S., certainly better than the average American, and more importantly, she shared her critical thoughts, almost as if she was tempting me to speak my mind, too, to confide in her the observations that I had about the state. But I did not want to show her my cards yet, fearing she might be an agent trying to provoke me to state something “radical,” like the fact that the U.S. is the most powerful terrorist organization in history. But I was delighted to hear her infrequent rants, even though I wouldn't say much. In fact, I kept so quiet about my true disgust of the corpocracy and my own political beliefs and struggles that to an outsider, she must have appeared to be the more radical during our conversations.

By the time I met Emma, I had began some new projects that I wanted to keep a secret from the corpocracy, including writing.... For our first date, I had invited Emma over to my home for dinner. I felt the need to seal my new, “clean” computer, to be sure that she wouldn't be able to tamper with it by way of implanting spy software on my device, and although I remained suspicious

of the gorgeous and fun American girl showing up in my life out of the blue, Emma and me had a great time together. Emma is the most affectionate girl I have ever met. In this regard, she is the complete opposite of Anna.

After a wonderful first two months of dating Emma, when she had started to sleep over at my place more regularly, I had been able to get two completely independent and first-hand confirmations via friends of mine that she was indeed a student, enrolled in the program she had told me she was in. I had looked up her parents' street address, which matched the stories of her childhood, and I had also been able to see her American passport, which featured the name she had given me. Yes, I realize that she could just have received a fake passport from some government, as was the case with Mark, the agent whom I previously discussed, and was the case with the Mossad agents who killed a Hamas member in 2010 in the U.A.E., but I also recall an American FBI informant who was caught because he had not been given a fake passport. It seems that agents receive fake passports, while informants don't. And to fake a family, in another country, but still with online presence and whom I have seen on Skype, that is a step beyond a fake passport. The fact is, it seemed like Emma really had a full-time occupation of being a student, and everything that she told me about her family and her life in the U.S. checked out, and there was a lot to check.... If she was an informant, she was doing it under her own identity. Emma also spent as much time as she could with me, while fulfilling her course requirements. And so, I decided to trust her. But until that moment had come, I had kept silent about how the U.S. government, and by extension the German government, was after me.

When is it the right moment to tell your American girlfriend that “her” government is after you? The last time I told my girlfriend, of three years, about the government being after me, that promptly ended our relationship. Emma is clearly a much kinder person, which both means that I want to be with her for longer term, necessitating informing her, and makes it more likely that she will be understanding and supportive. In general, I had not actively hidden from people what had happened, but I was never eager to tell anyone. Telling my new girlfriend was much more scary than telling my friends and family, whom I knew wouldn't drop out or shun me.

Emma was nothing but great. She felt sorry for me; she was not judgmental. When I told her how anxious I was for the conversation because my last relationship had ended as a result of the terrorism case, she told me, “You have nothing to worry about.”

With that, and a great amount of circumstantial evidence, I decided: Emma is my girl.

22 How We Live Now

John Twelve Hawks:

How We Live Now

We drink our morning coffee with a drop of fear. The television news alternates between staged media events and new threats to our lives: terrorism and airline crashes, global warming and car-jackings, an epidemic of avian flu. All the threats are different, but they have one common theme: it's impossible to truly be safe. Somehow all of us have become victims—or potential victims—of a long list of dangers.

With these threats fresh in our mind, we travel to work tracked by pervasive electronic monitoring systems. There's a Global Positioning device inside our automobile and another within our cell phone; both inform a computer of our exact location. A transponder knows when we approach a toll booth. A transit card records our trip on the subway and stores the information in a central data bank. And everywhere we go, there are surveillance cameras—thousands of them—to photograph and record our image. Some of them are “smart” cameras, linked to computer programs that watch our movements in case we act differently from the rest of the crowd: if we walk too slowly, if we linger outside certain buildings, if we stop to laugh or enjoy the view, our body is highlighted by a red line on a video monitor and a security guard has to decide whether he should call the police.

These two modern conditions—a generalized fear coupled with sophisticated electronic monitoring—shape the world of “The Traveler,” my first novel. Many critics have reviewed the book as science fiction, an idea that amuses me; although “The Traveler” is set toward the end of our decade, all the technical aspects described in the book are either in use at this moment or far along in the development process. I didn't write the book to predict the future; I wanted to use the power of fiction to describe how we live now.

This new technology of control and the wide-scale manipulation of fear combine to create something I call “The Vast Machine.” Does the Machine really exist? Are we living in such an environment? And, if this fiction turns out to be the truth, what difference does it make to our lives?

The first icon of the 21st century is the closed-circuit surveillance camera, slowly panning back and forth as we move beneath its gaze. A few years ago, it was estimated that the average person in London was photographed at least 300 times by different CCTV cameras on their way to work; the amount of cameras has probably doubled since the terrorist bombings on the London tube.

Chicago gives us a typical example of the rapid spread of surveillance cameras. There are over 2,000 cameras in the city and hundreds more are introduced every month. Mayor Daley stated that “The city owns the sidewalks. We own the streets and we own the alleys.” Then he announced plans to put surveillance cameras in commuter cars, on buses and on the city's street-sweeping vehicles.

The outline of a Vast Machine becomes apparent when we examine the new “smart” cameras used in Chicago, London, and Las Vegas. The computers attached to these machines contain a template of what should be determined “normal” behavior for a person. If anyone behaves differently, those actions are immediately detected.

During the next few years, surveillance cameras will also feed data into computerized facial recognition systems. There are about 80 “nodal points”—unique features—in every person's face. Facial recognition systems transform our unique features into complex algorithms that are checked against a database of driver's licenses and passport photos. The idea that a surveillance camera could identify a stranger in a crowd was thought to be fictional by some of my readers, but first-generation recognition systems have been operational for years. At the January 2000 Super Bowl in Florida, dozens of surveillance cameras automatically scanned every person in the crowd and compared the faces to a database of criminal mug shots.

These days, people are routinely photographed when they pass through airport immigration checkpoints, and that image is compared to the biometric data (fingerprints, iris scan) embedded in the passport. But the new biometric passports to be introduced by the United States reveal another aspect of the Vast Machine. Although the passports are ostensibly being introduced to protect us, they actually make it more dangerous for American tourists in foreign countries.

The passports contain a radio frequency identification chip (RFID) so that all our personal information can be instantly read by a machine at the airport. However, the State Department has refused to encrypt the information embedded in the chip, because it requires more complicated technology that is difficult to coordinate with other countries. This means that our personal information could be read by a machine called a “skimmer” that can be placed in a doorway or a bus stop, perhaps as far as 30 feet away.

The U.S. government isn't concerned by this, but the contents of Paris Hilton's cell phone, which uses the same kind of RFID chip, were skimmed and made public last year. It may not seem like a problem when a semi-celebrity's phone numbers and emails are stolen, but it is quite possible that an American tourist walking down a street in a foreign country will be “skimmed” by a machine that reads the passport in his or her pocket. A terrorist group will be able to decide if the name on the passport indicates a possible target before the tourist reaches the end of the street.

The new RFID passports are a clear indication that protection is not as important to the authorities as the need to acquire easily accessible personal information. The means of acquiring information are expanding every day. Most people realize that the GPS devices in automobiles allow a central computer to determine a car's precise location. But there are also hidden sensors placed in car tires as well as a “black box” under each hood that records car speed and direction (generally used in the event of an accident).

While our location is being tracked, computer programs automatically read and evaluate emails without our knowledge. Carnivore is one of the programs mentioned in my novel. It's a “packet sniffer” developed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation along with a variety of other on-line detection programs—like Packeteer and Coolminer—that reassemble message

fragments and analyze data. Like the smart surveillance cameras used in Chicago, the Carnivore programs establish a standard for what is normal, and everything else is automatically judged as being suspicious. Gradually, all these evaluation systems are becoming independent of any direct control.

“The Traveler” describes for the first time in any book the secret computational immunology programs being developed in Britain. These programs behave like the leucocytes floating through our bloodstream. The programs wander through the Internet, searching, evaluating, and hiding in a person's home PC, until they detect a “dangerous” statement or unusual information. After gathering our personal information, they return to the central computer. There is no reason why they can't easily be programmed to destroy a target computer ... such as the one on which you're reading this essay.

Once you look beyond surveillance cameras, you can find the Vast Machine everywhere. Infrared devices and x-ray machines can “see” through walls of homes and vehicles. New data systems can instantly evaluate ATM and credit card activity, building a computerized image of our personality and buying preferences. Viewed in isolation, each of these technological developments is not a major threat to our privacy. But the growing computational power of computers allows all of these monitoring tools and databases to be combined into one total information system.

In January 2002, former Reagan administration national security advisor John Poindexter was appointed to be the head of the U.S. government's newly formed Information Awareness Office. Poindexter had been convicted in 1990 of five felony counts of lying to Congress, destroying official documents and obstructing congressional inquiries into the Iran-Contra affair, but this didn't seem to disqualify him from his new position.

Under Poindexter's leadership, the IAO proposed a “Total Information Awareness” program that would place all personal information about U.S. citizens in one central database. According to New York Times columnist William Safire:

“Every purchase you make with a credit card, every magazine subscription you buy and medical prescription you fill, every Web site your visit and email you send and receive, every academic grade you receive, every bank deposit you make, every trip you book and every event you attend—all these transactions and communications will go into what the Defense Department describes as 'a virtual centralized database.’”

In his book “No Place to Hide,” Washington Post reporter Robert O'Harrow describes how the controversy over Total Information Awareness resulted in public protests and Poindexter's resignation. But TIA did not disappear; it was simply renamed the “Terrorist Information Awareness” program, and the technology was passed on to U.S. intelligence agencies. Poindexter may have lost his job, but his vision lives on.

Total information systems are being developed in every industrial country. In Europe, these systems are almost exclusively controlled by the government. In the United States, weak privacy laws have also given private industry almost unlimited power to create dossiers of every American citizen.

I feel strongly about the growing power of computer monitoring systems, and that belief

has a great deal to do with my decision to retain a truly private “private life”—even when dealing with my agent and publisher. It seemed hypocritical for an author to attack the loss of privacy in our society and then display his personal life to promote a book. Although I have avoided the media, however, I've talked to a wide variety of people about these new forms of surveillance. A few people have been disturbed about the intrusion, but many have given a more typical response:

“They (our leaders) know what's best.”

“It's a dangerous world.”

“Honest people have nothing to hide.”

Believing that the government knows what's best is an argument that barely merits a serious discussion. Any high school history student can come up with hundreds of examples of when a king, dictator, or elected official followed a destructive, foolish policy. Democracy doesn't protect our leaders from having a limited, parochial vision. Often a politician's true priority is career self-preservation.

The prompt arrests of the four suspects of the failed July 21 London bombings demonstrated that surveillance cameras and other elements of our electronic society can help protect our society from terrorists. But in destroying our enemies we run the risk of destroying ourselves—those elements of personal freedom and tolerance that define and sustain our society. We seem to be blindly giving up our rights without asking our elected officials how their actions will truly defeat our enemies.

“And so what if they know all about me?” asks the honest citizen. “I'm good person. I've got nothing to hide.” This view assumes that the intimate personal information easily found in our computerized system is accurate, secure, and will only be used for your benefit. What if criminals access your information? What if corporations deny you insurance or employment because the wrong data has ended up in your file? What if you simply want to take control over who knows what about you?

Obviously, our government needs to know certain facts about us so that elected officials can enforce laws and protect our borders. But during the last few years, information gathering has gone far beyond the standard data shown on a driver's license or income tax form. These days it is easy to target someone and find out his medical condition, the names of his friends, and the titles of the books he's checked out of the library. This data can be used in sophisticated ways to predict behavior.

In every religion, saints and prophets go off alone when they want to talk to God. We need moments of true privacy to evaluate our thoughts and experiences; to decide what we really believe. There is a reason why a curtain—real or symbolic—is placed around the voting booth in a democratic society. If privacy truly disappears, freedom itself will vanish with it.

It's clear that the new computerized technology has resulted in the end of our conventional view of privacy. But a true picture of the way we live now involves more than Carnivore programs and radio frequency chips. The Vast Machine monitors our actions, but it also gives us a reason for that intrusion. The reason is always the same: those in power are

working to protect us.

Fear is a necessary part of our survival; the response is programmed into our neurological system. But in the 21st century, modern communications make it possible for everyone to know instantly about any possible danger, however remote, however far in the future. The Internet multiplies these sources of information, relaying threats both real and imagined.

In his insightful book “The Culture of Fear,” Barry Glassner shows how many of our specific fears are created and sustained by media manipulation. There can be an enormous discrepancy between what we fear and the reality of what could happen to us. Glassner analyzes several “threats” such as airplane disasters, youth homicide, and road rage, and proves that the chance of any of these dangers harming an individual is virtually nonexistent.

Although Glassner accurately describes the falseness of a variety of threats, he refrains from embracing any wide-reaching explanation. It can be argued that the constant message of impending destruction is simply a way for the media to keep us watching television—“Are cyber predators targeting your children?” is a tagline that is going to get the audience’s attention. What interests me is not the reality of these threats, but the effect they have on our view of the world. Fear encourages intolerance, racism, and xenophobia. Fear creates the need for a constant series of symbolic actions manufactured by the authorities to show that—yes, they are protecting us from all possible dangers.

In “The Traveler,” powerful men use fear to keep the population under control. While I don’t believe that a shadowy group of Illuminati are guiding the industrial world, I think it’s clear that a variety of institutions use fear to manipulate public opinion.

Awareness of the past seems ever less important as history is superseded by the present crisis. Most people can still recall the so-called Weapons of Mass Destruction used to justify the war in Iraq, but the fact that the WMD never existed seems to have disappeared from the day-to-day public discourse. We simply moved on—to a new threat.

Many of our leaders have gone past the old-fashioned politics of the democratic era and entered into the politics of fear. People running for national office no longer emphasize their view of economics or social change. The leading political question of our time has become: who can ease our nightmares?

We are being watched and controlled without our knowledge, but the biggest surprise is that there is little broad-based objection to this significant change in our society. Instead of resisting the Vast Machine, many of us have given into cynicism and distraction. Our contemporary culture has become a brilliantly colored surface without a deeper spiritual meaning. We care more about celebrities than our own neighbors. Are Nick and Jessica getting divorced? Is that famous actor secretly gay? Staged media events allow us to think that everything is false. Our sense of powerlessness—the belief that an ordinary person does not matter—has twisted our lips into a sneer.

Although I recognize the growing reality of the Vast Machine, I refuse to accept its authority. Each one of us needs to make a choice about what kind of world we want in the future. The pose of rebellion based on style and attitude is an empty gesture. Political affiliation is not a relevant part of this decision; privacy and personal freedom should be

fundamental rights for everyone.

The first step is awareness: the realization we are being monitored without our consent. When we use a shopping card, there's no need to also include accurate data in the application. Why should our desire to get a discount on detergent require us to provide our address, our phone number, and other personal data? All of us need to protect our home computers with programs that destroy spyware. We should realize the implications of giving our social security numbers to large corporations. In real life, protecting one's privacy is never a single dramatic action; it's based on adopting a new attitude toward the powerful forces that want to reduce our lives to a digital image.

We have the power to resist the constant message of fear.

We have the power to use technology, not as a means of control, but as a tool to improve our own society.

In my novel, people are waiting for a Traveler, a visionary, to emerge from the darkness and change their lives. The Travelers are almost extinct, and the last few are defended by a small group of fighters called Harlequins. A great battle has started that will be described in the next two books of the trilogy.

In the real world, our battle will be made of small gestures—small decisions—to protect our private selves from the intrusions of the Vast Machine. No outside force will save us. We must look into our own hearts to find the Travelers and Harlequins—the prophets and warriors—who will keep us free.

Since John Twelve Hawks wrote the above essay, *How We Live Now*, in 2005, the Western governments have only increased their pro-surveillance and pro-security dogmatisms. And as governments become more totalitarian, it becomes possible for them to lie more overtly.

Examples mentioned above are John Poindexter and the Iraq invasion more generally. More recently, the director of the American National Security Agency (NSA), James Clapper, was asked: “Does the NSA collect any type of data at all on millions or hundreds of millions of Americans?” To which James answered: “No, *sir*.” Because the person asking the question knew that the true answer was actually “Yes, *sir*,” the questioner was surprised and followed up with, “It does not?” to which James said, “Not wittingly.” This lie might not have been anything special, except that James lied while he was testifying to congress, which means that he committed perjury. To no one's surprise, James has not been charged with a crime.

Another example is what happened in the wake of the Paris attacks in November 2015, when a bunch of Islamic militants went on a killing spree in Paris. Shortly thereafter, legal limitations to government mass surveillance, Edward Snowden, and the existence of encryption technologies in general were blamed for the Paris attacks by government officials in different countries. Even the New York Times devoted an article to it.

The truth is, almost all the attackers were already known as Muslim extremists to the intelligence agencies. This means that what went wrong was that there was not enough *targeted* surveillance. If the agencies were not so preoccupied with mass surveillance, they might have been able to apply more targeted surveillance on these terrorists, which were already known to them. But instead, calls were made for more *broad* surveillance and a general ban on encryption technologies;

these were calls for a further erosion of Liberties when there simply was no case for it, except shouting the word “terrorist”. Deceit upon lies.

It is not the case that the terrorists are really affected by the fact that all email communications are recorded by the corpocracy. They know better than to use (unencrypted) emails to discuss upcoming attacks. Likewise, terrorists simply don't use cellphones the way other people do. Terrorists don't use the unencrypted internet, they use circumvention and encryption technologies instead. Or they meet in person.

So what do you get from all the spying? Certainly not the capture of terrorists. These mass-surveillance efforts are simply not designed to catch terrorists, often because the terrorists are already known for different reasons. The 9/11 hijackers, for example, were already known to be radical Muslims and put on a watchlist. Similarly, the Paris attacks of 2015 featured radicals that were also already known. More mass-surveillance is not going to make a difference if you already know who the terrorists are. The only people affected by mass-surveillance are the people who are not plotting attacks. The suggestion that mass-surveillance would stop or detect terrorists is simply false; mass-surveillance does not help against terrorists because terrorists simply start encrypting their communications. So in fighting terrorists, mass-surveillance style, the only thing left is to eliminate all encryption, as some governments have proposed already, in order to facilitate not just mass-spying, but an ominous, total surveillance of all communications and activities of the entire population.

And if we would accept this total surveillance, as acceptionists do, we would have corpocratic mass-monitoring of cellphone conversations and locations, of emails and post packages, of every bank transaction, every website that anyone visits, and every letter that anyone writes. What if we did all that, and there was no privacy, no agency for people, no government accountability, no anonymous whistleblowers, and no possibility to meaningfully challenge what we know is wrong. What if we arrived at such a State? Will terrorist attacks be a thing of the past? Or will terrorists still be able to meet in person? What if we have peoples' homes and Mosques monitored as strictly as the public space is monitored now, so that there is no hiding who is meeting with whom. Then we will still have lone-wolf attacks and attacks by smaller groups. What if we successfully eliminate every gun in Europe? It may then still be possible to get a car, perhaps a Range Rover or a Hummer, and at high-speed, drive into a crowd or a narrow street full of pedestrians. Or a knife attack as a low-tech alternative. Maybe a better solution to stop terrorists is to prevent them from spreading their violent ideology. (That way you don't have to come up with a better, competing ideology yourself.) Ideology may be the real problem, so we should ban the spread of certain ideologies. Especially any Muslim ideology, and post-capitalist ideology, too, is simply too dangerous to the corpocracy. The only safe and responsible thing to do is to require a license for the spread of ideas, whether the ideas be spread in film, text journalism, or scientific journals.

Terrorism, in the broad sense of the word, is a real problem that currently affects the lives of billions in Europe alone. We should address it. We should do everything we can to make this world a better place, for every person and for every sentient being. But mass-surveillance is not a solution to any of the problems we currently face, and spending billions on militarism and mass-policing

does not begin to address any terrorism and does not contribute to making this world a better place.

23 The Only Way To Stop a Bad Guy With a Potato Peeler Is a Good Guy With a Nuke

Throughout history, terrorism in the widest sense of the word has been used to justify government crackdown on liberties and an increase in totalitarianism. One should be wary that totalitarianism and more aggressive government often comes about through legal means and not by way of criminal behavior. For example, Adolf Hitler didn't commit a crime. Of course today, we think of Adolf as the bad guy, but back then, Adolf was a popular leader, democratically elected, and not a criminal. The totalitarian powers that he acquired were also not stolen. When the Reichstag (German Parliament) was set on fire in February of 1933 (a “terrorist attack”), the state of emergency was passed. This eventually allowed Hitler to rule by decree in March of that same year. Democracy and legal processes granted Hitler the right to become a dictator, and when he legally became one, he even continued to receive massive support. This legal route to end up with a totalitarian government, and the massive popular support that these governments then receive, is by no means exceptional. Hungary may well be a contemporary example.

When new legal rights are given to a government, even if it is not quite as severe as was the case with Adolf, these rights tend to stick around even after the threat of terrorism has passed. That is to say, the change in the amount of liberty for people and the power of the state tends to flow into one direction only: people continue to become more oppressed while the governments under which the people live continue to become more powerful. As the government becomes more totalitarian, one of two things may happen: one, the government loses a war against another state or states, as was the case with Germany during WWII, or two, the government (partially) implodes, as was the case in the U.S. between 1765 and 1783 and in Romania in 1989. After such transitions are completed and a new government comes to power, the cycle starts fresh with the new government acquiring more and more power at the expense of the people until that government, too, is toppled by one of the two ways.

All of this has happened before and will happen again, again, again, again, ...

I am not saying that every time after a government is overthrown people are more free under the newer government than under the old one because there are some exceptions; the people living in the Islamic State, for example, are less free under their current government than under Saddam Hussein and Bashar al-Assad. The same can be said about the people in Iran and Chile when their democratically elected governments were overthrown in 1953 and 1973 (remember by whom?). However, it is an extremely rare phenomenon to see a country, in any period of time, where the people collectively have become more free in the last 20 years *without* the government having been overthrown or forcefully transitioned into a completely new form. The simple fact is that, a government only acquires more and more power and control over people as the particular instance of a government gets older, until sooner or later, that government is overthrown, too.

I am also not saying that there is no progress in the lives of people living under stable governments. Many Western European states have not seen a transition in power recently and peoples' lives are arguably better than they were 20 years ago, in terms of health and wealth. But at the same time, people have never been under such awesome control of the state, which is a threat to

the continued existence of the people. People's locations are being tracked in real-time, many people cannot have a private (as in, private from the state) conversation with other members of society if they use digital means, and also in public, people are being filmed and tracked wherever they go.

The fact remains, every government gains more and more power over the lives of people, until that government is overthrown, too.

Now what are the reasons that are given for the endless expansion of government powers at the expense of liberty? Invariably, it has to do with protection of the people in the state, against imagined or created threats. For example, we are told by the government and corporate media that in the West, we are suffering attacks from Muslim terrorists and pedophiles and that we need to address these attacks in order to protect our values, our children, and/or ourselves. The truth, of course, is that we have never been safer from violence and pedophiles. Americans, and most likely Europeans too, are more likely to die from being crushed by their furniture in a freak-accident, or to be hit by lightning than from dying in a terrorist attack. Even in the year of 9/11, or the years of the Madrid and London bombings, which were peak years for terrorism in the West, the deaths caused by terrorism were simply negligible. In these years, many more people died from causes like road accidents or diseases stemming from a Western diet. Meanwhile, many billions were spent, are being spent on “security,” which invariably takes on the form of power grabs.

In traditional societies, these power grabs were (are) often supported and implemented by specific sections of the population, such as specific religious or ethnic sects, to the superficial and short-term benefit of that sect. In our modern corpocratic society, it is the corporate that is enabling the bureaucracy to acquire powers that are historically exceptional. Security and policing of digital media has been volunteered by the corporate, and the government and the corporations have now merged, to the benefit of both, forming the corpocracy. This is the modern form of power grabs by government.

Suppose that the Western governments actually wanted to reduce terror. They happen to be in an excellent position to do so—they could just decide to stop terrorizing. Germany for example is a large weapons manufacturer, and those weapons typically don't end up in the hands of “extremists” like the Kurds or Palestinians (more often in their skulls), but they are exported to “moderate allies” like Saudi Arabia and Israel, who have a proven record of reigning large-scale terror. Also the U.S. military bases here in Germany are a direct contribution to terror, for example by way of extra-judicial assassination drones being supported from here in Germany. An effect of a would-be reduction of terror that the West brings to other countries is that the West would get less terror back in return, less “blowback”. This is not a controversial theory; it is an effect that intelligence agencies periodically report to exist, and which is brushed aside by the corpocracy in favor of more militaristic policies.

If we would consider that animals such as cows, pigs, and chickens can experience terror, then we would see an even greater opportunity to reduce terror. Farm animals are probably the most tortured creatures that have ever existed. The terror that (farm) animals feel is just as real as the terror a human feels, except they are subjected to it their entire life. If you think Guantanamo

Bay prisoners receive a horrific treatment, you should realize that this treatment (and often worse) is given to billions of animals per year in Germany alone. The fish that are caught in the wild, an enterprise which has led to mass-extinction already, may have had a better life, but their murder is about as cruel as you could imagine, certainly much more horrific than the way in which a few human victims are murdered in the West today by terrorists, and more comparable to a prolonged crucifixion.

The way that the corpocracy, and every other government in history, decides to reduce terror is to slide at slower or greater pace towards totalitarianism. But even if, for whatever reason, we decide not to implement the easy and obvious steps towards a reduction of terrorism, is a slide towards totalitarianism the best answer? Could the billions of Euros spent on intelligence, policing, and militarization be spent in any better way? Perhaps investing in renewable energy would, overall, reduce the terror that is caused by climate change more than we can reduce the comparatively insignificant terror of attacks. Instead, governments decide to give up your liberty. This is something that deserves our consideration; after all:

Those who would give up essential Liberty, to purchase a little temporary Safety, deserve neither Liberty nor Safety.

And even if we decide, against all evidence (which would make it a religious conviction), that today in the West, it is very dangerous to be alive, could we not better invest in food safety, mental health, and homelessness? If in Germany, we invested just 4 billion of our 60+ billion yearly spending on private and public police, intelligence, and militarism into stopping people from having to live on the streets, then we would have solved the problems of roughly 300.000 homeless people within a year (and it would reduce other costs, too). It is not by choice that so many people in Germany are homeless; it is because terrible shit happens to good people, and being homeless is as horrible to them as it would be to you. Could you imagine never being looked into your eyes while losing all your teeth for the next five years? If reducing (human) suffering and terrorism is our goal, whether it be inside or outside of our nation-state's borders, then we should take a more scientific approach to it and leave the reactionism and security-religion behind. Because the fact is, terrorism in the narrow sense of the word (mostly Muslim extremism), in Germany and all other Western countries, is simply a non-issue. Yes, each and every case is an absolute tragedy, needlessly afflicted to the victim and their family and community, but it is nevertheless a very minor event compared to what else is needlessly happening in the country and in the world. Terrorism is only significant in so far as the government manages to use it to reduce liberty of people and go to war elsewhere, but otherwise, terrorism doesn't begin to compare to the terrors that we can easily alleviate.

24 MORALS

Throughout history, those who were at the forefront of making this world a better place have been oppressed. Doing the right thing has never, ever been possible within the law because the law, and the government, have never been on the right side of history. Today is no different.

But here is the good news. 1. You don't need permission from anyone to do what is right. There is nothing stopping you from making this world a better place, for human kind, but just as much for all other sentient beings. 2. Living a moral life can be extremely rewarding. It is possible to be in an emotional and mental prison while the corpocracy gives you hollow rewards for being a good acceptionist. It is also possible to be a free and responsible person, wherever you are, and to make this world a better place.

Different people will make different choices; some will choose to be on the side of Oppression, Acceptionism, and Statism, but others will be on the side of Militance, Resistance, and Love.

This world would be a better place if there was less suffering and more joy. Every action *you* take, every decision *you* make influences how good this world is. *You* have significant agency; there are actions that you can *choose* to take, small and large, that will greatly reduce suffering for yourself and others. *You* also have other options available, ones that will cause terror and agony so awesome that it is difficult to comprehend.

I write this to you not to scare or overwhelm you, but to empower you.

The choices you make have a very real impact on this world.

Doing the most you possibly can to make this world a better place, to demonstrate your love for all sentient beings every day, may well be the best way to live your life to the fullest; to live your life to the Max.

Written as a labor of love by Max Nowak