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*Photo: April 2011 protest at CPUC hearing on Diablo Canyon. By Luke Hauser.*



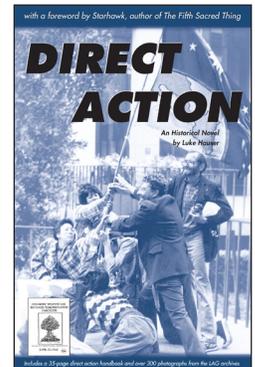
## DIRECT ACTION

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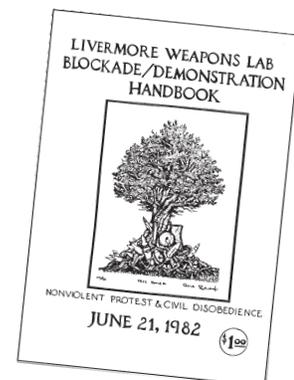


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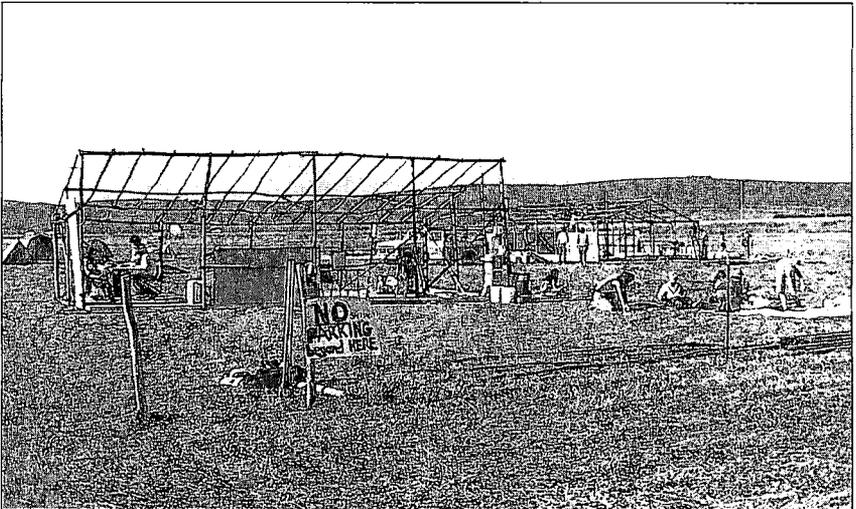




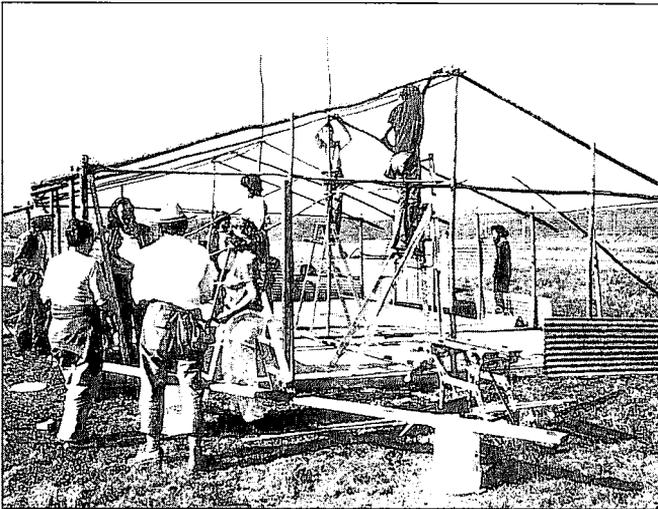
# LIVERMORE PEACE LAB

January-February 1984

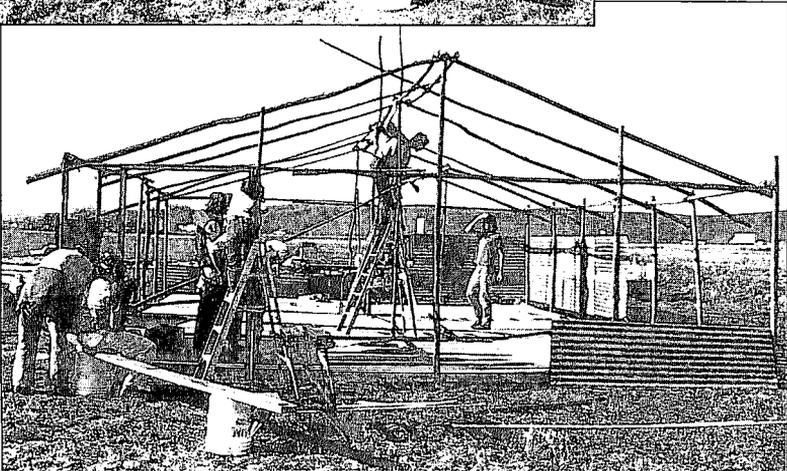
*All photos on these two pages by Ted Sahl, except top left by Ilka Hartmann.*



Several dozen  
volunteers  
pitched in to  
build the  
camp,  
including a  
construction  
crew and a  
rotating  
squad of  
ditch-diggers.



Was it a  
peace camp,  
or a new  
subdivision  
going in?





*The day's work complete, peace campers circled up, then shared dinner and a campfire to celebrate the opening of the Livermore Peace Lab.*



*All photos by  
Ted Sahl.*

## Four / 1984

*In the aftermath of even a limited nuclear exchange, debris blown into the atmosphere would not settle for weeks or months. Sunlight would vanish. Temperatures would plummet. And most of life on Earth would perish in the "Nuclear Winter."*

Saturday, January 7, 1984

"NO ONE WANTS to protest at Livermore anymore." Karina slung the words as if she were being forced to state the obvious. "The real action is in the financial district."

I didn't feel like arguing with her. The first Change of Heart meeting of 1984 was at her and Sara's Mission District flat. Karina sat cross-legged in a big chair that was draped with blue and purple fabric. Her throne, I thought. No point in fighting with her on her home turf.

Jenny, seated on the floor across from me, raised her hand. "There are still a lot of people who want to do Livermore. We can do both, can't we?"

"Fine," Karina answered, "as long as I don't have to work on it."

I shoved my cushion further into the corner and scowled. Two actions. What a compromise. Bump Livermore back to Tuesday, and do City actions on Monday, April 16th.

Should I speak out against the change? As a rallying point for LAG, the City was a loser. But if I opposed the financial district, I'd just push Change of Heart further from LAG.

So where did that leave me? Livermore was being organized by people like Spirit AG, Monique and the Walnettos, Melissa, Daniel... Good people, sure, but when I pictured our meetings, I saw a circle of folding chairs in a fluorescent-lit church classroom.

I looked around Sara and Karina's living room. Mid-afternoon sunlight

filtered through gauzy curtains. Hanging plants filled the bay window. Fifteen people were settled into couches or cushions on the floor. The meeting seemed small for Change of Heart, although the regulars were present.

Most of them, anyway. Holly was working her food-prep job. But she probably wouldn't have been at the meeting, anyway. Since Caroline left for Nicaragua, Holly seemed even more estranged from LAG than in the Fall. If not for the peace camp, she might be gone altogether.

And then there was Angie, who was still back east visiting her family. We hadn't talked since that night in front of my apartment. Once she'd been gone a few days, I felt thankful we'd parted that evening. What was I doing, risking my relationship with Holly for a fling? However enticing I found Angie, I couldn't imagine us long-term. We were meant to be friends and co-workers, not lovers.

Still, I wished she were here at the meeting. We could have gone out for a burrito afterward, then taken a walk over to Balmy Alley to see Claude's new mural.

Sara, who was facilitating, cleared her throat and looked around the circle. "The proposal is to do the City Monday and Livermore Tuesday. Are there any objections to our supporting the changed dates?" No one spoke. Sara's eyes stopped on me. I sighed, then shrugged my shoulders. Sara paused a moment. "Do we have consensus?"

Around the room, people twinkled their fingers. Doc and Walt leaned their heads together and exchanged a few words. Alby said something, and Megan and Moonstone laughed. Only Karina seemed genuinely excited. "That's great," she said. "Now let's talk about the Consulate action. It's only two weeks away."

Yes, even with the April financial district action in the bag, Karina was pushing ahead with a late-January cluster action. Word had leaked out within the cluster that the target was the Salvadoran Consulate, located in an office building in downtown San Francisco.

I couldn't argue with the target, given Reagan's support for El Salvador's pro-corporate government — a government which had killed fifty thousand of its own people in a decade of civil war with leftist guerrillas.

Alby, who was sitting on the arm of a couch, proposed that some people be peasants and others Salvadoran soldiers. "We'll pull out squirt-bottles of fake blood and do an execution right there in the office," he said.

"Why use fake blood?" Karina said.

Alby bounced up from his perch. With sweeping gestures he demarcated the room. "We can have three zones — real blood, fake blood, and no blood."

I smiled to myself. No wonder Sara and Karina had opted for an autonomous action. I could picture a hundred-person spokescouncil trying to reach consensus on real versus fake blood.

In truth, it didn't look like LAG was ever going to consense on anything

meaningful again. The only action we'd agreed on in the past year — April at Livermore — was disintegrating. And the upcoming meetings to hammer out some sort of plan for July's Democratic Convention looked even more hopeless.

The only bright spot was the Emergency Response Network. Since the consensus at the December meeting, not a lot had been done. But at least we could use the LAG office and network as a basis if Reagan launched another invasion.

The meeting moved through the scattered agenda. Walt reported on plans for Spring protests at the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant. Sara asked who was planning to make the six hour trip down to Diablo, and almost everyone in the room raised their hand.

"How about a mock-wedding ceremony?" Doc proposed. "Something like the People of California getting married to PG&E and having radioactive children."

Incredible. Why couldn't we put this energy into Livermore? I took a breath. It's only January. When April rolls around, people might be just as excited about the Lab.

We took a break, and someone opened a package of Oreos. In a minute, people were laughing and tossing a nerf football around the room. Alby pulled a copy of Orwell's *1984* off the shelf and commenced a dramatic reading, to much applause and encouragement.

I ate a few cookies, half-wishing I could share in the joking. But when I tried to join the laughter, my face felt tight.

The second half of the meeting kicked off with a bang, but soon faded into a post-sugar slump. Sara read an announcement about the Livermore peace camp, slated to open at the end of the month. With Holly absent, no one at the meeting was really involved, and silence followed the announcement.

The same low-key response greeted the report on the recently-concluded "representative trial" that wrapped up the previous Summer's Livermore blockade. Rick from Enola Gay had been one of the reps, along with Monique and nine others. The other two hundred defendants — the people who had pled not-guilty instead of no-contest the previous Summer — agreed to accept the verdict meted out to the eleven representatives. The reps and a team of lawyers developed a multifaceted defense strategy. But the judge disallowed discussion of international law or the "defense of necessity" — the claim that protesters committed their crime in order to prevent a greater evil. After that, the guilty verdict was a foregone conclusion. "We never denied that we blockaded the Lab," Rick said. "The only possible defense was the justice of our motive."

The judge handed down thirty-day sentences to second-time blockaders, meaning people might have to go back to jail. But Rick didn't look concerned. "The sentence will probably be reduced to time-served on appeal," he said.

An announcement about an upcoming spokescouncil to plan actions around the Democratic Convention brought some spark back to the circle. Several people volunteered to go to the meeting. Good. Let others be the spokes. If by some miracle there was a LAG protest at the Convention, I'd take part. But I was tired of wasting my time on deadends.

Besides, I had an alternative — work on the People's Convention. Get to know some different types of organizers. It might be a welcome change. And it might help LAG in the long run if we built some wider connections.

Sara crossed the last item off the agenda, then gave me a quizzical look. "We forgot the report on the April Livermore action, didn't we?"

Oh yeah... I appreciated her support, but I didn't sense much interest in the room. I mustered a few meeting dates and a perfunctory list of help needed. People nodded their heads dutifully, but no one volunteered for anything, and I was glad to let it drop.

As we gathered in a closing circle, my mind drifted off. Jenny had offered me a ride home, but I felt like being alone. Tension still lingered between us from the December spokescouncil, and I didn't feel like dealing with it now. Enough meetings for one day.

She walked up as I put my jacket on. Her teeth were clenched, and her hair frizzed out of its tight bun. "Ready to go?"

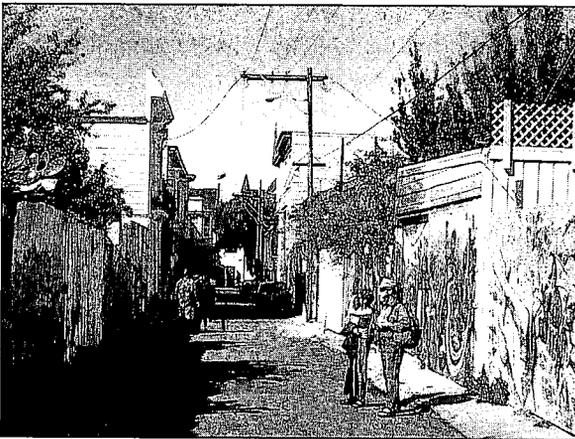
"No, I remembered an errand I need to run," I improvised. "I'll catch BART later."

She looked surprised and relieved at the same time. "Are you sure?"

"Yeah, yeah," I said. I felt guilty for making up the errand part, but I didn't want to go into my motives right then. There'd be a chance to talk with her

soon and clear the air.

Karina came over and asked Jenny something. I took the opportunity to step away, said some quick goodbyes, and headed out the door ahead of the crowd. The recent rain left the air crisp and cool, like a Fall day in Indiana. I took a deep breath, glad to be alone. If



*Balmy Alley, off of 24th Street near Harrison, an outdoor mural gallery coordinated by Precita Eyes — see resources page of the Appendix.*

Angie were here, it would be different. I pictured us strolling through the Mission, dissecting the meeting, laughing away the tensions. If only...

Lacking that, I was grateful for the solitude. Other relationships felt heavy, something to be endured or, better yet, escaped. I picked up my pace, lest someone from the meeting drive by and offer me a ride. I couldn't go to BART yet, either, for fear of running into folks riding the train back to Berkeley.

Why not go see Claude's new mural? I knew it was somewhere off of 24th Street. I figured I could find it. I slowed my pace as I passed a group of kids talking in rapid Spanish. Rows of old Victorians lined Shotwell Street. Most of the tall wooden houses had two, three, or even four front doors, each leading to a separate flat. Some had steps going down to doors below street level, behind which I pictured subterranean studios with open-beam ceilings and rustic brick floors.

I turned on 24th and stopped for a burrito. Someone had left a sports page on my table featuring a story about off-season baseball trades. Several big stars had changed teams, but none were coming to San Francisco or Oakland. It was a long, slow Winter. And unless the Giants or A's — both of whom had losing records the previous year — got some new players, there wasn't much to look forward to in the Spring.

I finished my burrito and recycled my tray. I considered asking which way Balmy was, but didn't want to come off like a tourist.

I made my way up 24th Street. A small crowd clustered outside a storefront church. At the corner, the smell of fresh donuts almost drew me in, slowing me just enough that a bicyclist coming down the side street didn't decapitate me. Thank you for small coincidences, I thought as I collected myself and crossed Folsom Street.

Ahead of me, a man was yelling something in Spanish to a woman leaning out a window above. Her long black hair



*Archbishop Oscar Romero of San Salvador, who spoke out for workers and common people, was assassinated by a military death squad funded by the U.S. His life and words inspired activists around the world. "Una Ley Inmoral," Balmy Alley, San Francisco, ©1996 by Juana Alicia.*

fluttered in the breeze as she laughed and answered him. I stepped around the man and found myself at the entrance to Balmy Alley.

A rainbow covered the side of the one-story building at the corner. An Aztec medallion was mounted in the center like a golden shield. I turned into the narrow easement, which was fronted by rickety fences and small garages. A rusty basketball hoop was nailed to a phonepole. Ivy overgrew the first garage.

It could have been any alley in America. Only here, every available surface had been turned into a mural. I moved slowly down the alley, taking in the paintings. Kids had covered one long fence with gangly people, trees, and animals in a crazy-quilt panorama. Nearby, a picket fence commemorated the United Farm Workers' struggle for union justice. Across the way, a garage door was painted as if you were looking inside, where a couple of men tinkered under the hood of a low-rider.

Claude's mural was easy to spot, since I knew his style from Berkeley. He and several collaborators from Galleria de la Raza had done a collage-style depiction of life in the Mission. My favorite touch was a clothesline in one corner, with actual T-shirts glued into the mural.

On a garage door at the far end of the alley was a portrait of Oscar Romero, the archbishop of San Salvador who was assassinated in 1980 for his stand against government repression. Romero's gentle, determined face was rendered as if it were a multihued tapestry. Flanking the portrait, in Spanish and English, was a quote: "Una ley inmoral nadie tiene que cumplirla/No one should comply with an immoral law."

I stood there a long time, captivated by the painting. Finally a guy in a European car came putt-putting up the alley, stopping now and then to gawk at a mural. The fumes drove me toward the exit. What did he think this was, a drive-through museum? Have some respect for art.

As I departed from the alley, I thought again of Angie. She would love this. Maybe we could come back together sometime.

My steps were lighter as I headed for BART. I wanted to stay irritated at Change of Heart for its lack of commitment to LAG, and especially at Karina, a staff member with so little regard for the good of the group. But maybe I was smart to give in now. Maybe if I supported her, she would return the favor when the Livermore action rolled around.

One concern, though, I couldn't shake — how Karina kept raising the stakes. Getting inside the Salvadoran Consulate? That was a little more serious than blockading Livermore Lab. And it wasn't just Karina. The rest of the cluster seemed right in step.

The combination of smaller numbers and confrontational actions seemed risky. At Livermore, it was only our numbers that saved us from probation. What was to keep the authorities from hammering a small group of people with probation or a heavy jail sentence?

Or was that the point? Was Karina looking for a rerun of her Vandenberg sentence?

By the time I got to BART, it was seven o'clock. I stopped outside to phone Holly. We had tentative plans to go to a movie that evening. There was still time, if we met at the theater.

But when I reached her, she said she was tired from work. "Maybe we can go for a walk later, do some catching up. Maybe about nine?"

"Sounds good. I'm going to stop by the record store. I'll see you in a little while."

Friday, January 13, 1984

A LIGHT RAIN was falling as we left the auditorium. Luckily, Angie's umbrella was big enough for both of us. As we waited for the bus, I put my arm around her. She huddled closer, pressing against my side. I took a breath and held her to me, glad for once that the bus was late.

"Night rain is so beautiful," she said. "Look at the streetlight in the puddle, how it shimmers with every drop."

I studied the ripples of light. "It reminds me of Monet."

She nodded. "Don't you love it when nature imitates art?"

The bus pulled up. "This will drop us off a few blocks from my apartment," she said. "We can walk from there."

Our plan was to go back to her place for a while and listen to music. Then I'd catch a bus home from there. Or better yet, if the rain would let up, I'd walk back to Berkeley. Holly was spending the night with Daniel and Artemis out at the peace camp site, so I was in no hurry to get home.

We sat side by side on the bus. I looped my arm behind her seat, and she leaned lightly against me. I'd seen Angie once at the office since she got back in town, but this was our first real time together. We'd spent the early evening at a hip-hop show organized by the Federation for Afro-American Unity, one of the groups that was co-sponsoring the People's Convention. It was a good show, but I wasn't sorry when it ended and Angie and I headed for the bus.

Her apartment was dark and quiet when we entered. "Jenny must be over at Raoul's," Angie said. She picked up a stack of magazines cluttering the couch and tossed some stray clothes into the corner. "Put on whatever music you want. I'll heat some tea water."

I shuffled through the tapes and albums strewn around the stereo. One caught my eye. "Wow, Run DMC," I said. "I've heard they're really good."

"Raoul left that and some other rap albums here," she called from the kitchen. "You can put it on if you want."

I started to get it out, but somehow rap didn't suit the mood. I selected an

old Joni Mitchell tape instead. Angie came in carrying two mugs of tea. "I hope raspberry is okay. It's all we've got."

I sat down on the couch. She sat to my left, about a foot away. I felt a twinge of disappointment that she wasn't closer. I wished there were more clutter on the couch, so I'd have an excuse to scoot over.

She took a slow sip of tea. Her hair was pulled back in a single braid, and she had put on a blue button-up sweater that looked like a hand-me-down from her father.

I took a drink of tea and tried to think of something to say. "Are you going down to Diablo Canyon next month?"

She nodded slowly, looking down at her tea mug. "I think so. At some point, I need to go over to Laney College and take care of the paperwork for the woodworking program. And I want to check out the options over at S.F. State. But I think I can get it all done before Diablo."

"State has a woodworking department?"

She shook her head. "Keep this just between you and me, okay?" She waited until I assented before continuing. "I'm thinking of applying to the film-making program at State."

"Really? That sounds great."

"I think it would be. Of course, I've heard that jobs in the film industry are hard to come by. Woodworking would be a lot more practical. And sometimes I think I should go into teaching or social work." She sighed and looked away. "I need to figure out some sort of career. I can't handle secretarial work much longer."

She seemed absorbed in her own thoughts, and I wished I could draw her out. "Is film what you really want to do?"

"I'm not really sure what I want," she said without looking up. "I mean for a career. I like working on Direct Action and organizing protests and street theater. But no one is going to pay me to do that."

"Some people get paid to organize."

"Yeah, but that's still office work. Anyway, I couldn't handle all the infighting. Yesterday at the office, it was all I could do not to strangle Karina. She always has to be the one true anarchist."

She paused for a moment, then yawned and stretched. Was she giving me a hint? "Do you need to head for bed?" I asked, wanting to be polite but wishing she'd find a second wind.

"Yeah, pretty soon," she said. "Sorry I'm so tired. If it's still raining, you can sleep here."

I cast a sideways glance at her. Of course she meant on the couch, which wasn't very comfortable. Anyway, I doubted I'd get much sleep knowing that Angie was in bed in the next room.

"Thanks, I should take off."

"Are you sure?" She touched my arm, and a tingle rippled through me. I

looked at her. Was she being polite, or was I missing something? I took her hand in mine. “Yeah, I should go. It’s not raining hard, and I’m not ready to sleep yet.”

Her smile turned formal. “Okay,” she said. She squeezed my hand and stood up. “I’ll lend you an umbrella.”

“Thanks, that would help.”

I got my jacket, and she escorted me to the door. I stepped forward and hugged her. She seemed to press herself against me, laying her head on my chest. I closed my eyes and absorbed her warmth, holding her body to mine. Finally we let go and eased back a step. “It’s been great seeing you,” I said.

Her eyes seemed to search mine for an instant. Then she settled into a friendly smile. “I’ll catch you sometime soon,” she said, handing me the umbrella and opening the door.

I squeezed her arm. “I hope so.” I turned and headed into the rainy night.

It was only a light mist, not as cold as I expected. Forget the bus. I buttoned my coat, opened the umbrella, and set my sights homeward.

Home. To the apartment I shared with Holly. Smart move to leave Angie’s. That’s a temptation I don’t need. It’s one thing to fantasize from afar, and another to spend the night twenty feet away.

A fantasy — that’s where Angie needs to stay. Sure we have fun together. But how much do we really have in common? How long till the luster wears off? Stay focused. My future is with Holly. Our relationship means too much to jeopardize with a fling.

Hunched under the umbrella, I repeated the words aloud as if answering an interrogator. “How much do Angie and I have in common? How long till...”

But however carefully I enunciated them, they wouldn’t quite take hold. A different question gnawed at me — what if Angie had come right out and said, “Sleep with me.” Would I have left? Was it loyalty or fear of rejection that sent me out the door?

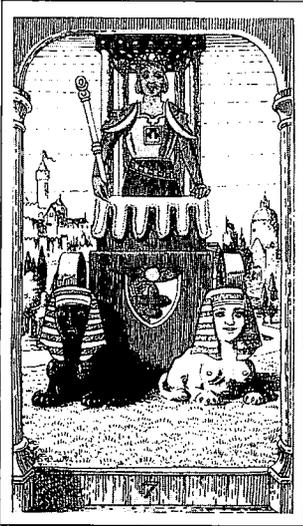
Holly and I had an open relationship, didn’t we? Granted, neither of us had tested it in over a year, since she and Frank stopped sleeping together. But we’d never explicitly changed it. There was no need to feel guilty...

The memory of holding Angie swept through me. Why hadn’t I kissed her right then? Why was I so scared?

Rejection. A sweat broke on my forehead. I slowed my pace and wiped my brow with the back of my hand, which was wet from the rain. Guilt over having two lovers, I could handle. But wanting Angie, and having her say no — that seemed mortifying.

But she wouldn’t have said no. How could I be so slow? Why couldn’t I seize the moment?

Reaching the corner, I turned and circled the block. Not quite returning to Angie’s place. But not getting further away, either. Why not go back and say, “I changed my mind, I’d like to stay the night.” So what if I end up sleeping on



*The Chariot: motion (or not).*

the couch? We might stay up and talk a while longer. Maybe we'd even go in her room.

But what if she's already in bed? Why not wait till the next time I see her? Yet what an opportunity lost! This was our night together. Holly wasn't waiting at home, so she wouldn't have to know until I talked with her. Jenny wasn't there, so the gossip factor was eliminated. This was my chance.

She opened the door, gazed up at me, and flung herself into my arms! No — she hesitated for a moment, and I swept her off her feet. No — we slowly came together in a long, sweet kiss. No — she stared at me in disbelief and I realized I'd made a terrible miscalculation. No — Oh, for god's sake, quit calculating!

I stood outside her apartment. The mist swirled around me. Her lights were still on. I shivered. There was never going to be a better moment. Go for it. Just act.

I knocked. A moment later the door opened. Angie stood there, still wearing the blue button-up sweater. Her braid lay over her left shoulder. One hand held the door open.

I fumbled for words. "It really was raining a lot."

"You can stay here," she said with a vague gesture.

"Thanks. Don't let me get in the way, if you were heading to bed."

"That's okay. I was going to lie down and write, or maybe do a tarot reading." She paused for a moment as I took off my wet jacket and hung it over a chair. Then she looked up at me. "Why don't we go in my room? It's a lot nicer in there."

I caught my breath as she shut the door, lit a few candles, and turned off the lamp. I ducked around a macramé hanging. The candlelight cast dancing shadows on the walls. Angie lit a sprig of sage. I sat down on the edge of the bed, studying her profile as she wafted the earthy smoke into each corner.

After she finished, she stacked up some pillows against the headboard and settled in. I joined her there, leaving a little space between us.

"Do you want to do a tarot reading?" she asked.

"Sure," I said. "I'll watch you."

"We'll each draw a card, to tell us —" She paused and looked at her altar for a moment. "— to tell us the inner truth of our lives." She smiled and shuffled the deck, then fanned them out on her bed. "You draw first. Use your left hand, it's more receptive." She showed me how to let my hand hover over the cards till one presented itself. "Leave it face down. Now I'll draw one."

At the same moment, we turned the cards up. Mine was the Chariot, hers the Five of Wands. Her brow furrowed. "Yours is easier to read," she said. "The Chariot is a card about power and control. Maybe too much control. The charioteer is all ready to go somewhere, he's in the driver's seat — but he isn't moving."

I studied the image and nodded. "What's yours?"

She looked pensively at her card, which depicted five young men fighting with staves. "The Five of Wands," she said. "Conflict. I drew this card last week, too, when I did a reading about me and Jenny. Seems to be a theme right now."

She leaned forward and placed the card, still face up, on the bed near the other cards. Our arms brushed, and as I placed my card next to hers, I shifted closer so we were touching. My whole body tingled. Neither of us spoke. She wasn't moving away, but she stretched her neck forward, as if to relieve some pressure.

Carefully, I reached over and squeezed the back of her neck. She let her head droop, and closed her eyes. I kneaded my way up her neck, then down onto her shoulders. "That feels great," she whispered.

My chest trembled. I turned so I could get both hands on her shoulders and massaged them, pressing my thumbs into the muscles.

She shifted toward me. "A little lower — yeah, right there..."

Her eyes were still closed, and an enigmatic smile rested on her lips. "Why don't you lie down," I ventured. "I could get more pressure on your back."

"Okay," she said. "But just a minute." She got up slowly and made her way out of the room.

I shook my head. Who could have guessed, an hour ago? To think, I almost went home.

When Angie returned, she was wearing a loose T-shirt and gym shorts, and had taken the braid out of her hair. "If I lie down, I'll probably fall asleep," she said. "I don't want to have to get up again."

She stretched out on her stomach, her face turned away from me. I knelt next to her and softly rubbed the full length of her back, savoring the curves and valleys. She had removed her bra. I played my thumb into her shoulderblade where the strap had been, leaning over her so I could see her better. Her eyes were closed, and her brow was knit. I paused a moment, then reached out and stroked her head, petting her soft hair. Her brow relaxed, and her lips parted slightly. She



*Five of wands: conflict.*

took a long breath. I did the same, drinking in the moment. I ran my hand over her hair again, then gently massaged her neck. She moaned softly, and shifted her body so it pressed against my knees. My voice quivered as I whispered, "How are you doing?"

"Scared," she whispered. She rolled over on her side, facing me. Her breasts were outlined against her T-shirt. Our eyes met in the flickering candlelight. I stretched out next to her and ran my hand along the curve of her back. She shuddered, then slid against me, her body melting into mine. I kissed her face, her lips, her neck, burying my face in her hair. My hands roved over every inch of her body, marveling and caressing.

We flowed into making love with an ease that made me wonder why I had ever hesitated. Making love with a passion I scarcely recognized. Losing all sense of time, all sense of place. Winding up on my back with Angie curled up beside me, fending off sleep for fear of never again knowing such a feeling. I wrapped my arms around her, and she stirred, nestling her head against my neck. I ran my hand down her body and gently squeezed her to me. Yes.

Saturday, January 14, 1984

How to tell Holly...

There was nothing to feel guilty about, I kept telling myself. I hadn't deliberately misled her. And it wasn't like I was planning to break up with her. Angie was wonderful, but no way could I picture us together the way Holly and I were. I just needed some breathing space. Maybe Holly secretly wanted the same thing.

Get real. What if she moved out? Then where would I be? Why hadn't I talked to her before? Now I had to drop a bombshell.

When Holly got home from her overnight at the peace camp site, she dropped her daypack by the door and came over and kissed me. Then she went in the kitchen, washed her hands, and made a cup of tea. A couple of minutes later she joined me at the table. I reached out and took her hand. She squeezed mine, and a tranquil smile crossed her lips. A flash of guilt ran through me, not for having a fling, but for spoiling Holly's mood. Maybe I should wait? No, I had to do it now.

I took a breath and plunged in. "Angie and I slept together this weekend. It's not something we planned, but it happened."

She looked at me, the vestiges of her smile fading. "Okay," she said. She wrapped her hands carefully around her teacup.

"I'm sorry I didn't talk to you about it before," I said. "I guess I didn't believe it was going to happen."

She looked at me, but her expression was veiled. "So are you telling me that it happened, or that you plan to keep sleeping together?"

"Well, both," I said clumsily. It was the first time I'd explicitly considered the issue. Of course I wanted to sleep with Angie again. "Both."

Holly took a breath, but said nothing. I leaned toward her. "I'm totally committed to our relationship, Holly. That's not what this is about..."

Her eyes seemed opaque as I spoke. Was she really listening? She gave a tired smile. "I guess we'll just have to see where it leads. Maybe it'll be fine."

Fine? I could wish. But her flat tone wasn't very convincing. What was going on for her? I wished she would show some emotion, so I'd have a clue.

But I knew it wasn't fair to make her dwell on it. She stood and picked up a notebook from the table. "I need to stay focused on the peace camp right now," she said. "We have less than two weeks to get it all together."

I nodded. Standing and kissing her seemed clumsy, forced. I reached out and squeezed her hand. "I love you, Holly."

Her eyes softened. "I love you, Jeff. Let's give things time, and see where they lead."

Saturday, January 28, 1984

WHAT WAS IT exactly that was bothering me? Nothing Holly had said, nothing she had done. Not our sex life. We were actually making love more often the past couple of weeks.

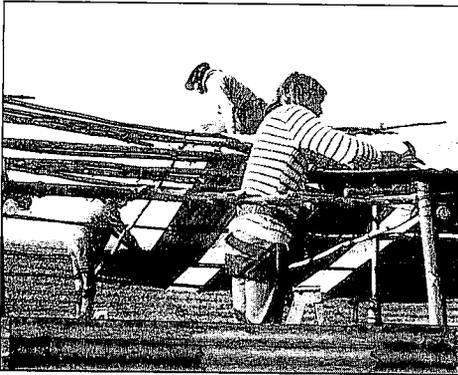
No, it was a glimmer missing when Holly smiled at me. A slackness, ever so slight, when we held hands. A barely perceptible dimming of the love that radiated from her eyes.

And why? For the sake of a fling? What was I doing? Didn't I have enough to worry about? If we were going to keep the paper coming out, organize two April actions, and do something around the Democratic Convention, we needed focus.

Much as I loved being with Angie, I had to end it. Maybe it would be messy. Or maybe she would be in total agreement. But either way, I knew I had to act.

I saw Angie at the office later that week. She was wearing faded blue jeans and an oversized gray sweatshirt. We worked side by side for an hour on a renewal mailing for the newspaper. Then she winked at me and walked casually to the back of the office. I followed a moment later. She stepped into a little nook behind a couple of file cabinets, pulled out a drawer, and started rustling through the folders. A mischievous smile played across her lips. I slipped behind her and slid my arms around her waist. She stood, took my hands, lifted them to her breasts, and leaned back into me. I caressed her and kissed her hair. She turned and stood on her toes to kiss me. "I can't wait to be with you," she whispered. "How about Friday night?"

Whatever you want, I almost said. You name it. But I caught myself. I'd



*Opening Day at the Livermore Peace Lab combined a construction brigade, dinner prepared in the half-built kitchen, entertainers, and a campfire.*

to Holly, playing music I knew she liked, keeping my dishes out of the sink, even making dinner with her one night. But I couldn't escape the brooding malaise that plagued me whenever I thought of what I was doing to our relationship.

Once Angie and I were together that Sunday, though, my cares evaporated. We went to her room and made love, listened to Bach's cello suites, talked about performance art, read Rimbaud, made love, discussed the theatrical implications of urban direct action, looked at photos from her trip to Ireland the previous Summer, and made love. A night of pure beauty.

The next day was the El Salvador Consulate action. I showed up on about two hours of sleep, and never quite got my feet on the ground. Holly scarcely talked to me, and I was glad when we got put into separate paddywagons.



already promised Friday to Holly, and Saturday to Mort and Hank. "How about Sunday evening?"

Her hands slid down to my hips. "Okay, I guess I can do that." She leaned forward and kissed my chest, then slipped away and went back to the mailing. I closed the cabinet drawer and took a breath. How would I survive till Sunday? And what was I going to tell Holly?

For the next few days, I tried to be especially sensitive

Knowing she planned to stay in jail, I cited out. I needed an evening alone to regroup.

WHEN I IMAGINED the Livermore peace camp, I pictured a bunch of pup tents sprinkled along the highway. But what I saw when we arrived looked more like a new subdivision going in. A tool-belted

construction crew erected a wood-framed kitchen complete with a propane stove. A dark canvas circus tent loaned by Greenpeace sprouted nearby. The smaller tents were arrayed in a graceful arc, and a fire pit marked the center of the little settlement.

The most elegant touch was the bathroom, featuring two flushable toilets and a solar-heated shower. All afternoon, pick-and-shovel brigades excavated a trench for the drainpipe, stirred on by the reggae beat of Raoul's boombox.

I pitched in on the drainage ditch, hoping to impress Holly with my ardor. But she seemed too busy coordinating volunteers to notice. Finally, as people got washed up for dinner, I tracked her down.

She hugged me, but kept looking around. "Are you doing okay?" I asked.

"Yeah, it's just hard to slow down," she said. She cleared her throat. "I'm guess I'm feeling a little overwhelmed. But it's so exciting, after all our meetings, to see the peace camp coming to life."

"Looks like a whole village," I said. "And a pretty upscale one, at that."

She smiled. "We want it to be an inviting place for local people," she said. "Somewhere they'll come to visit and dialog with us."

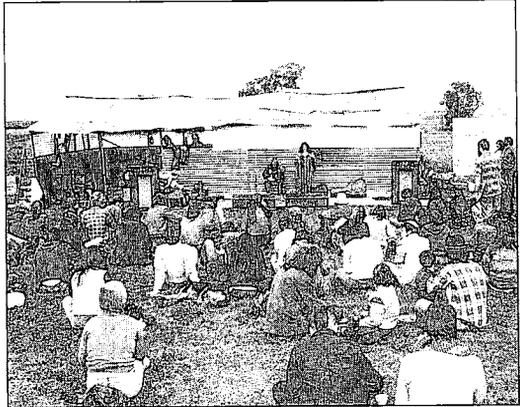
My skepticism flared, but I suppressed it. "I hope it all comes together for you," I said, then regretted sounding like I wouldn't be back.

Holly nodded, as if she hadn't expected more. She started away. "I need to check with Artemis and Antonio about the meeting tonight. Are you staying for dinner?"

"It depends on my ride."

"Say goodbye when you leave," she said over her shoulder. "I won't be home till Tuesday evening."

I nodded silently. Dusk was starting to set in. Out in the yard, Norm stoked the campfire. The volunteers gathered around. I thought back to the bonfire at Vandenberg, exactly a year earlier. I remembered how Craig and I stood in the misty rain talking, how dozens of us crowded into the big tent for the meeting, and how Holly and I huddled together in our sleeping bags later that night. I took a slow breath and sighed. What a long time ago.



*A dinnertime concert at the peace camp, in front of the half-constructed kitchen.*

Friday, February 10, 1984



“IF IT WERE my city,” Angie said, “I’d tear down all of the skyscrapers except the Pyramid.”

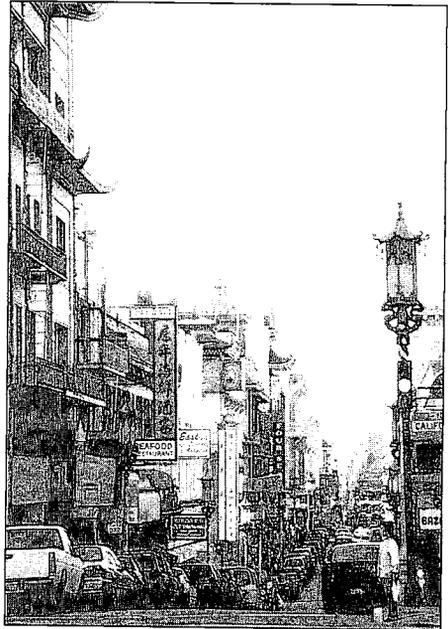
“I don’t know,” I mused. “Couldn’t we make them into high-rise artists’ studios?”

Angie had come over to the City with me to run a People’s Convention errand, and we decided to stay and do some exploring. We took a shortcut under the Pyramid, whose huge structural beams demarcated a shaded plaza area. “Not where I’d want to be in an earthquake,” I said.

“Why not? What a great way to go — squashed by a pyramid.”

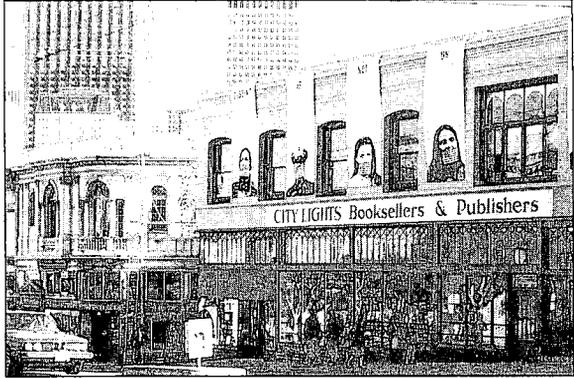
I put my arm around her, drawing her closer to me, and we headed over a couple of blocks to Grant Street, the main artery of Chinatown. The narrow street, lined with ornately-decorated old buildings, was packed shoulder-to-shoulder with locals and visitors. The pungent scent of fish announced a seafood vendor sandwiched between a nightclub and an import shop. Outside the import shop was a rack of San Francisco postcards. “Let’s send one to ourselves,” Angie said. We picked out a pre-stamped one showing a cable car at Fisherman’s Wharf, wrote ourselves a cheery message, and mailed it off to her apartment in Oakland. “Now, if there’s ever any doubt, we can prove we were here,” she said.

We continued up Grant Street. Chinatown gradually blurred into the old Italian neighborhood of North Beach.



*Grant Street in Chinatown.*

The streets were just as narrow, but the architecture grew less ornate. For a couple of blocks, chow mein diners alternated with pizza shops and garlic bistros, with the occasional bookstore or laundromat tossed in for good measure. The most famous of all San Francisco bookstores



*City Lights bookstore, ground zero for the Beat Generation in San Francisco. Vesuvio's pub is to left.*

occupied the corner at Columbus — City Lights. “When I first moved to the Bay Area,” I said as we went inside, “I came over here and bought a copy of Alan Ginsburg’s *Howl*. It felt like a pilgrimage I had to make.”

We browsed the poetry section. I thumbed a collection by Patti Smith. Angie opened a slim volume of Adrienne Rich’s poems. She leaned against me, her eyes on the book. “In college,” she said, “I wrote a poem called ‘Howl.’ I had no idea there was already a famous one.”

“What a bummer.”

“Yeah, and it’s one of my best poems, too.”

She bought the Adrienne Rich book. I scanned the art shelves and found a photo-book of Tuscan cathedrals. Then we went across the alley to Vesuvio’s, legendary watering hole of the Beat Generation.

We stepped in. It took a moment for my eyes to adjust. The front tables of the dark, oblong space were occupied. We made our way to the bar along the left-hand wall. Veils of smoke hovered around



*Coit Tower on Telegraph Hill, home of the murals on the next two pages.*

Tiffany lampshades. Stained wood paneling absorbed most of the light. Slides of ancient art were being projected high on the rear wall.

We got a pint of Anchor Steam to share and made our way up to the balcony, where we found a table with a view of the slide-show. Next to us an older man was intently writing in a black notebook. Across the aisle, a group enshrouded in smoke argued about what sounded like a street-theater performance. Angie got out her Adrienne Rich book, opened it at random, and read to me in a low voice.

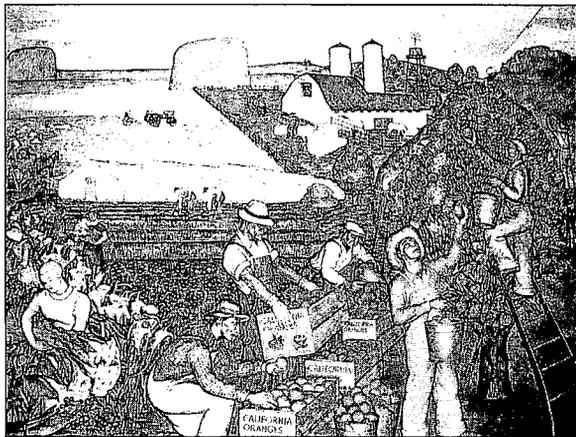
Dusk was approaching by the time we got back outside. “We could walk up Telegraph Hill and watch the sunset,” I said. “And we can see the murals in Coit Tower.” We headed up the hill, which was so steep that steps were cut into the sidewalks. At the intersection, the tower was visible behind a row of houses. I paused for a moment, then took quick breaths as we started up the next block.

We circled up the last stretch of the hill to a grassy knoll at the very peak. Coit Tower was an off-white cylinder two hundred feet tall and forty feet in diameter, with a classical loggia at the top. A couple of dozen people were in the parking area overlooking the Bay. The tower was closed, but we walked around the outside and peered through the windows at the illuminated murals inside.



*Downtown San Francisco c. 1935. The Depression-era murals in Coit Tower have a leftist tint, evidenced by details such as the titles of the radical papers in the stand at lower left.*

The west side centered around an industrial scene, juxtaposing the cold geometry of pipes and gears with the supple forms of the humans. "The workers have such nobility," Angie said. "They look like they're performing a sacred act." She mimed the ritualistic posture of a man turning a wrench.



*An idealized California farm, a dream that lured dust-bowl refugees like those in John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*.*

I shielded the glare with my hands. "Yeah, and look over there in the corner. It's a single figure, a welder or something, standing like a saint in the niche of a Medieval church."

The south mural captured downtown San Francisco in the 1930s, while the east side portrayed an idyllic California farm of the same era. To the right, harvesters worked in an orange grove. Off in the distance, the sun shown on a dairy farm. "This place must have seemed like paradise during the Depression," Angie said.

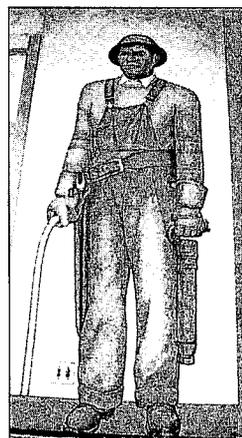
"For some people," I said. "Woody Guthrie's songs don't make it sound so great for poor folks."

We stepped away from the tower. Clouds covered most of the twilight sky, but the quarter-moon appeared for a moment to the south, rising behind the Pyramid. I stopped to look, and Angie leaned against me. Her head lay on my chest. I put my arms around her and squeezed her close, then ran my hands down her body.

"Maybe we should head home," she said dreamily.

"Delighted to comply with your wishes," I said.

On the way down the hill she told me about a letter she'd received from an old school-friend, Isabel, who lived in Portland. "Isabel said that some friends of hers are planning an action later this month to blockade the weapons trains that run from Texas up to Washington state."



*Solitary workers and farmers stand like saints in a Medieval church.*

“Wow. We should cover it in Direct Action.”

“Yeah. Isabel can probably get us photos. You know what else she told me? She’s pregnant.” Angie put her hands into her jacket pockets. “I want to go visit her. I love Portland. Sometimes I even think of moving up there. It seems way less stressful. There isn’t the constant competition for who is the most radical. People have lives, not just meetings all the time. I could go back to school, take some art classes, all the things I never make time for here.”

I cast a glance at her. Was this for real? Was she thinking of leaving, just when we got together?

But I couldn’t say that. I took a breath, and in a quiet voice asked, “Are you seriously thinking about moving to Portland?”

“Oh, probably not. I have moments when it seems idyllic. Other times, I think how, when I was young, I wanted to grow up and be where the action was. And that’s here.” She shook her head. “I just wish I felt more connection with people. I hardly ever see Jenny anymore. When she was between boyfriends, she wanted to live together, but now that she’s with Raoul, that’s all she cares about.”

I put my arm around her. “Maybe the Diablo Canyon action will feel different,” I said. “Besides, think of all the good things you’re doing with LAG, especially with the newspaper.”

She nodded slowly. “It’s not a unique contribution. Anyone could do it.”

I wanted to disagree, but at that moment, a light rain started to fall.

“Shoot,” I said. “It was so nice.”

“In Portland and Seattle it rains all the time,” she said. “You get used to it.”

“I’ll take a drought any day,” I said. “I hate getting my feet wet.”

We walked along in silence, and I felt even more aggravated at the rain. We got only one night a week together — why did the weather have to come between us?

By the time we got to BART, it was already past nine. We had talked about going out dancing, but what I really wanted to do was go back to her apartment. I craved time alone with her. Time in bed. The silky warmth of her body. The sweet caress of her lips.

Fortunately, when we got off BART, without discussing it, we transferred to the bus to her place. The ride seemed to take forever, but finally we got there. All of the old clutter was still present, plus a huge pile of laundry on the couch and four boxes of books on the floor, one of which had been unpacked and its contents scattered around the carpet. Angie picked her way to the kitchen, got some juice, and led me into her room.

She lit a few candles and turned out the overhead light. As she stepped past, I reached out, put my arm around her waist, and pulled her to me. I wanted to drop onto the bed, but I could feel resistance. Take your time, I told myself. We’re home. No need to rush.

She slipped away from me and lit a white candle on her altar. “This candle

was blessed at the Brigid ritual last week," she said. "Brigid is the goddess of poetry and smithcraft. Now, whenever I relight the candle, the power of Her flame is rekindled."

She passed her hand slowly above the flame. I sat on the edge of the bed and looked at the flickering candle. "So there's power in the flame?"

She sat down next to me. "It's not really in the flame. The power is inside of us, lying dormant." She gazed at the altar. "The flame frees that power. That's what rituals do — get us in touch with our own power. Rituals and magical spells."

I slid across the bed so I was sitting with my back against the headboard. "Spell' is a funny word," I said. "We talk about magical spells. But we also 'spell' words."

"Yeah," she said. "It's connected to the power of language."

I nodded. "There's another way we used the word back in Indiana. We'd say, 'Come on in and set a spell.'"

Still sitting on the edge of the bed, she spoke slowly, pausing between each phrase. "A magical spell. Spell a word. A spell of time. It ties together magic, language, and time." She looked past me. "At the ritual, each person made a pledge for the coming year. You stepped to the center, where there was a flaming cauldron, and made your pledge to Brigid. After you spoke, a priestess struck an anvil."

"What did you pledge?"

"My pledge was really a commitment to myself. I pledged to get some direction in my life. I asked Brigid's help with finding a focus. It was good to speak it in front of the whole community. Now I have witnesses."

She fluffed a pillow and propped it against the headboard next to me. "I wish you had been there," she said as she settled in. "At one point Artemis was talking about how Brigid is honored by both Pagans and Christians in Ireland. It made me think about you and your Medieval art pictures."

"Hey, we should look at my new art book," I said. I rolled to the edge of the bed and pulled it out of my daypack. I sat back against the headboard and she leaned against my shoulder as I opened the book. Each right-hand page featured a photo of a Medieval Italian cathedral. "There's Santa Croce in Florence, it's filled with great murals from the 1300s. And Pisa, with the leaning tower. But here's my favorite — Siena."

She sat up and looked at the striped stonework. "It looks like those circus tents we were held in last Summer, doesn't it?"

"You're right, I didn't think of that," I said. "What a wild design, stripes in a church. And it's not like it was a passing fad. It took over a hundred years to build."

"A hundred years," she mused. "That's four or five generations. So the people who started it never saw it finished. That's too bad."

"No, they knew it would take that long. They planned for it. They had

faith that if they laid a solid foundation, their descendants would see it through to completion. They had to work with their great-great-grandchildren in mind. Can you imagine someone thinking that far ahead today? No way.”

“They must have really believed in God,” she said.

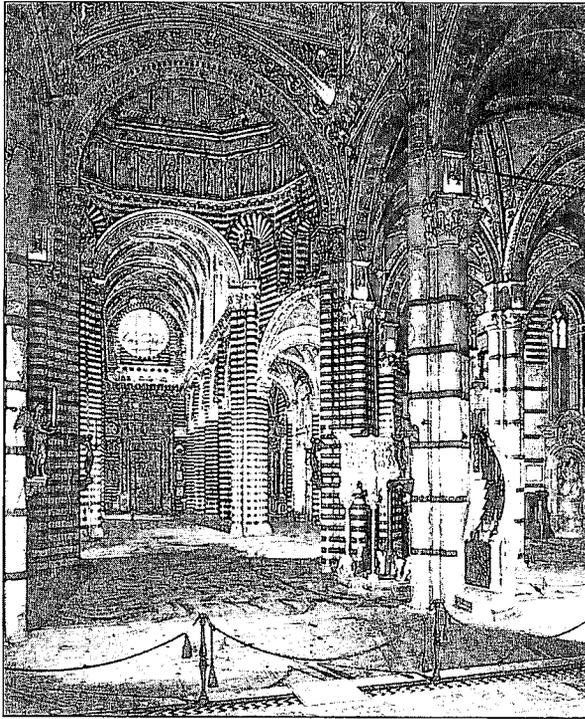
“I think what they believed in was their city, their community. They believed that their descendants would live in that city, and that they deserved the very best.” I looked again at the cathedral, then thought of the nuclear missiles being deployed in Europe even as we spoke. “How weird to live at a time when we

aren’t even sure there will be a human race a generation from now. What an awful legacy we’re giving to the future.”

“I guess that’s where the faith part comes in,” Angie said.

“Believing that we’ll somehow survive, that future generations will pick up where we leave off.”

She settled back against the headboard. I set the book down and leaned over to kiss her, but she didn’t respond. “What’s up?” I asked.



*Interior of the Duomo, 13th-century civic cathedral of Siena. This magnificent building, a hub of urban life, expressed the pride of the independent Medieval city-state.*

She looked away. “I wish we had more time together. One evening a week goes so fast.” She paused a moment. “Are you going down to Diablo next weekend?”

I wished I could tell her whatever she wanted to hear. But I was already way behind at work. And what would I tell Holly, who had asked me to come out to the peace camp that weekend? “I can’t do it. Sorry.”

She sighed. “It’s okay, I understand. I just wish we could do an action together.”

“Why not do a graffiti action? We could do that on a Friday night.”

“Sure,” she said. She seemed to make an effort to shift gears. “I had this idea. You know how B of A is a big investor in South Africa? We could make a stencil of their logo and the words, ‘Blood of Africa,’ and stencil it in front of all their branches.”

“I’ll do that,” I said. I’d probably have agreed to any proposal, if we could put the tension behind us.

A candle flared up, casting its dancing light on the ceiling. I leaned over and lay soft kisses on her forehead. Her breathing grew faster. Her hand caressed my knee and slid up onto my hip. She started to pull my T-shirt out, and I closed my eyes. But as her fingers grazed across my side, I flinched. A mischievous laugh escaped her. “Did that tickle?”

I tried to deny it, but she pounced, grabbing my ribs. A spasm propelled me backwards. She leapt on top, burrowing into me, searching for a vulnerable spot.

“No, no,” I cried between fits of laughter. “Stop!” I grabbed at her arms, but she pulled free and went for my ribs again. I managed to get hold of her wrists and wrestled her down onto the bed. She giggled, which set me to laughing. As soon as I relaxed my vigilance, she pulled one of my hands up to her mouth and bit me hard enough to extricate herself. In an instant she was tickling me again.

Finally I pinned her to the bed. “Whoa,” I said, coughing from the exertion. “I haven’t laughed that hard in a long time.”

“Okay, no more tonight,” she said, but little bursts of laughter still escaped, and I wasn’t going to let go yet.

I leaned down and kissed her, still holding her wrists. “Promise?”

She raised her head and kissed me. “I promise.” She giggled again. “No, really.”

Slowly I let go and stretched out next to her. She pushed me over on my back and crawled on top, pinning my arms to the bed. Then she leaned down and laced her tongue across my lips.

I gazed up at her, feeling at her mercy in ways she didn’t imagine. How could I have dreamed that I could walk away from her?

She leaned down and licked my ear. Her breasts rubbed softly against my chest.

Anything you want, I sighed. Anything you want.

Saturday, February 18, 1984

EVERYONE ELSE seemed to think they were at a big party, laughing and swapping stories. I was the only one out of the spirit. And no wonder. I was practically the only one not getting arrested.

Not quite. Two days earlier, Angie had told me that Antonio was making the round trip in one day and persuaded me to ride down with them. I felt guilty for making a ten-hour round trip to Diablo when I hadn't been out to visit the peace camp since opening day. But this was a Change of Heart action. I owed it to my cluster to be there.

As we huddled in the blustery grayness outside the front gate, Alby and Karina regaled the cluster with their travel story. They had left from San Francisco a few days earlier and ridden the rails all the way to San Luis Obispo. "It was easier than we thought," Karina said. "The hardest part is getting off at the right place. It's not like there are any road signs. We overshot Stockton the first day and had to wait overnight till another train stopped long enough for us to get onboard."

Angie's eyes were wide as she questioned Alby. "Were you riding in boxcars?"

I studied her warily. Was she taking notes for an adventure of her own? What if she and Alby took off freight-hopping across the country?

Alby cocked his head. "Boxcars are too obvious. We found a flat car carrying construction equipment, and crawled under some bulldozers. It was freezing cold going through the central valley at night."

I shook my head. "Didn't you worry about falling off?"

"Oh, you could," Karina said nonchalantly. "But the greatest danger was when the train went through a tunnel. It lasted forever. The whole tunnel filled with diesel fumes. If the train had been going slower, we probably would have suffocated."

Someone called Karina away, and the circle dispersed. I followed Angie away from the intersection, where a squad of cops were lining up. I put my arm around her shoulders. Angie put her hands in her pockets. "Riding the rails. That's pretty amazing, don't you think? I didn't think anyone did that anymore."

"I don't know," I said, wishing she'd focus more on us during our last minutes together. "Seems like risking your life for a cheap thrill."

Angie laughed sharply. "Everything can't be safe and secure. You have to take chances once in a while." She slipped from under my arm and walked away to help Alby and Megan with props for the cluster action. Damn. Why had I taken the bait? I hated to part on a sour note.

But I didn't want to be clingy, either. Wait a few minutes, then try again. I looked around for someone else to talk with.

Belinda and her partner Frida stood nearby, but I figured all I'd get from Belinda was a lecture on Coordinating Council and the evils of centralization. I could pass on that one right now. Finally I spotted Moonstone. "How's it going?" I called to him.

He greeted me with a hug, seeming to hang on my shoulders for support. "Just got out of jail this morning. I've hardly slept for five days."

Moonstone's affinity group, Deadheads for Peace, had come down the previous week.

"Did you get onto the site?" I asked.

"Yeah. We set out last Monday just after dark. We hiked all night and reached the ridge above the plant before dawn. We had this giant banner that said, 'Diablo: We Can Live Without It.' We fastened it to some trees above the

construction site, where the workers could see it when the sun rose. Then we crossed the perimeter road and took cover along the security fence."

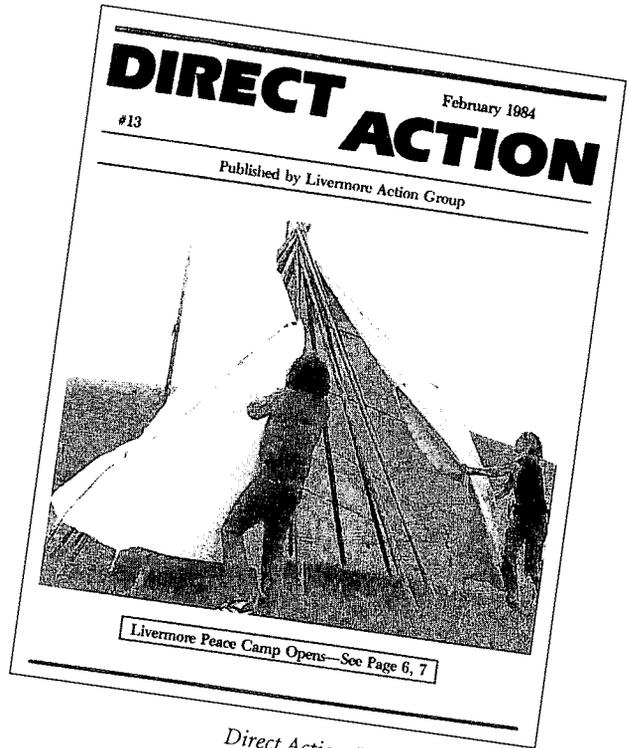
He crouched slightly, as if reliving the action. "By this time it was dawn. We worked our way along the fence till we came across a hole in the outer ring, probably left by construction workers taking a short cut. We slipped through and made it up to the second fence, where the gate was standing open. We couldn't believe it. Just then a guard comes ambling along, carrying a lunch pail and reading his morning paper. We duck, but he doesn't even look up, he goes on through the gate and up toward the construction zone. As soon as he gets past, we run through the gate and hide behind a shed to scope out the last fence between us and the reactor area. We start for it, but right then two more guards come through the gate."

"Oh, no," I said. "So close."

"Yeah. We tried saying we were workers, and it confused them for a minute. But finally they arrested us. On the police report, they wrote that they busted us outside the first fence. They wouldn't admit we got inside the site. But we'll bring it out at our trial."

"Assuming they don't drop the charges to shut you up," I said.

Moonstone nodded. "They may have to, since we just blew a huge hole in their security claims."



*Direct Action #13, February 1984*

We hugged again, and he wandered off to get some rest. I looked around for Angie. She and Jenny were putting their costumes on. They leaned their heads together as if sharing a secret. I hesitated to interrupt their tête-à-tête, but Karina, dressed in a gorgeous white-lace gown, spared me the decision. "Let's go," she called out. "Now's the time."

"What's the rush?" Angie said in a chafing voice.

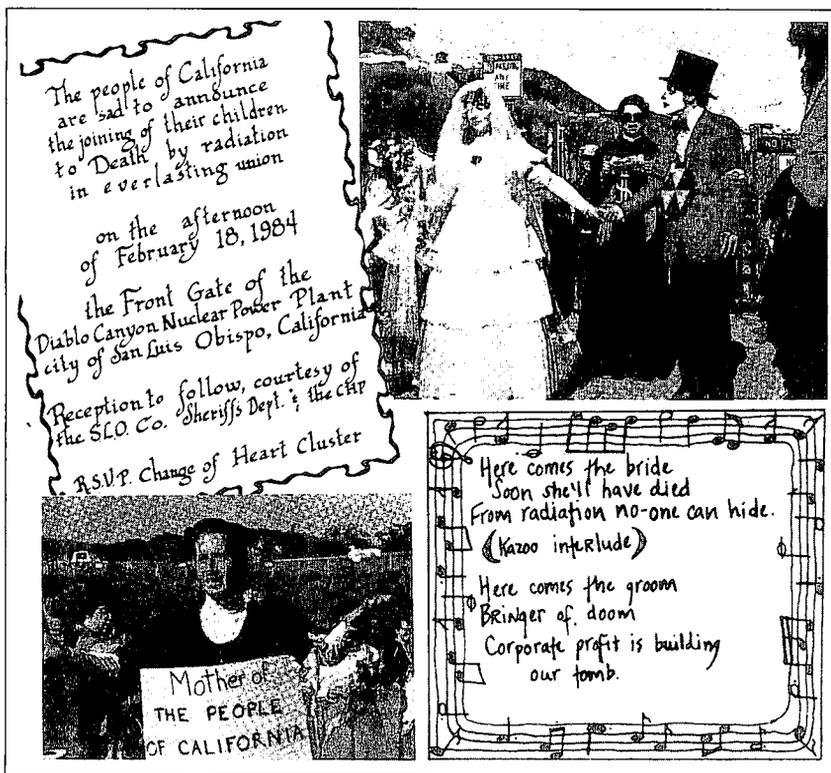
"There's a TV crew here," Karina answered.

"Why should that determine our action?" Angie said.

Karina jutted her chin. "Who else are we doing it for? There's no one here except other protesters and some cops. This is our chance to have an impact."

Sara stepped between them. "We spent so much time planning our action," she said to Angie. "We might as well get some media coverage out of it."

"Fine," Angie said with a wave of her hand. She buttoned up her long black robe and walked over to where I stood. "Sure you don't want to change



Affinity group action at Diablo Canyon, where hundreds of people were arrested in 1984 protesting licensing of the nuclear plant. This layout is from *Direct Action*, April 1984.

your mind and join us?" she asked. "We need more ushers for the wedding. It's probably just a four day-sentence."

I shook my head. "I've got to get home. I have all kinds of stuff to do for the Livermore action."

Angie nodded silently and hugged me, but there wasn't much passion. As I held onto her, I pictured myself sitting alone in the LAG office, hedged in by the clutter, tangled in the phone cords, the archetype of the anti-nuclear bureaucrat. What was I doing, passing up an action to make phone calls?

Angie gave me a last squeeze and stepped away. I reached after her and rubbed her shoulder. "Have a good time," I said wistfully.

"Yeah, I will," she called back. "I'll call you when I get home."

Change of Heart launched its performance, and in spite of my melancholy I couldn't help smiling. For an audience consisting of me, Antonio, Belinda, Frida, and a bunch of cops, the cluster celebrated the betrothal of the People of California (Karina, a bouquet of delicate blue flowers highlighted against her traditional white gown) to Death by Radiation (Alby, bedecked in a suit and top hat, his face painted as a skull).

Doc and Sara handed out programs, and we all sang the wedding hymn as Karina came down the aisle:

Here comes the bride, soon she'll have died.  
 From radiation, no one can hide.  
 Here comes the groom, bringer of doom.  
 Corporate profit is building our tomb.

When objections were called for, Jenny stepped forward. "As the Mother of the People of California, I beg you to reconsider..."

Reverend Angie, wearing a big gold dollar sign over her black choir robe, waved her hand sharply. "Shut Up!" She turned to Death. "You may irradiate the bride." Alby planted a long, deadly kiss as Karina collapsed in his arms. Kazoos took up the recessional, and the big wedding cake stood up and led bride, groom, and wedding party in a dance across the no-trespassing line. Doc proposed a toast to Diablo Canyon, and the whole party dropped dead in the road.

The cops shook themselves into action. Next to me, Antonio seemed as agitated as I. We edged toward the intersection, and I tried to make eye contact with people as they got busted. Doc gave a tight smile. Karina blew kisses. Angie waved just before her arrest, but I couldn't tell if it was to me, or our little crowd in general.

Antonio and I didn't talk much on the ride back, and I found myself with altogether too much time to ponder when I might see Angie again. It was hard enough saying goodbye to her anytime, seeing her as seldom as I did. But to part company when we weren't bonding in the first place, that really hurt.

Wednesday, February 29, 1984

BACK AND FORTH, up and down. One day I'd get an encouraging phone call and think that the Livermore action was finally coming together. The next I'd get smacked in the face with someone's indifference.

Six weeks to go. Shouldn't more be happening? Where were the arguments over jail solidarity, or the debates over blockade tactics? Did we really have it all figured out? Or was Karina right? Was Livermore passé?

Not that the April financial district action was catching on, either. I might be aggravated at Karina and the others for siphoning off people from Livermore, but that didn't mean I wanted the City action to flop. We needed something to go right. If neither of the protests went anywhere, what was left? What was the meaning of Livermore "Action" Group if we never did anything?

The only positive note was the Democratic Convention. True, there hadn't been any specific decision about what to do. But at least people cared enough to show up at meetings and fight over it.

"We just need to be patient," Sara said as she and I sat stuffing envelopes at one of the long worktables in the middle of the office that afternoon. "There's still plenty of time to reach consensus on the Convention. People just need a chance to express their concerns."

"I hope you're right," I said. A spokescouncil was planned for the following weekend to discuss the Convention. Sara and Alby and a few others were submitting a proposal for a LAG protest. I admired their perseverance, but I wasn't sorry that I had a People's Convention meeting the same afternoon. Let other people hash it out. "It's going to take some work to get people like Melissa or the Walnettos to stand aside," I said. "They're so worried about sabotaging the Democrats and helping re-elect Reagan."

"We're proposing that we target military corporations who donate to the Democrats, not disrupt the Convention itself," Sara said. "Someone needs to hold them accountable."

"I'll say we do." Raoul boomed through loud and clear from halfway across the office. He pulled himself up off the couch and ambled over to the table where Sara and I were working on the outreach mailing. "What do the Democrats have to say about disarmament? Nothing! And the liberal groups with their peace rallies sure aren't going to hold them accountable. We've got to shake things up. If we shut the City down during the Convention, that'll get their attention."

I started to say something about toning down the rhetoric in order to get consensus, but just then a paper airplane crash-landed on the table in front of me.

"Airmail! Special Delivery for Jeff Harrison!" It was Sid. I hadn't seen him come in. He did a hop-skip-jump across the office and pulled up just short of our table. "Getting high licking stamps?"



would want input on a LAG action. I stared at the floor, trying to think of a new angle.

“There are a lot of other things LAG could do at the convention,” Jenny said. “There will probably be consensus on joining People’s Convention, don’t you think?”

I looked at her glumly. “LAG might join,” I said. “But who is actually going to coalition meetings? Me and Mort....”

“I thought Claudia was working on it,” Jenny said.

“Yeah. But she doesn’t consider herself a LAG rep.”

Sid picked up a piece of string and made a cat’s cradle. He gestured at

Sara. “Are you coming to the planning meeting for the May 22nd action?”

“What’s May 22nd?”

I asked.

“We’re planning a financial district action in late May to try out some roving tactics,” Sid said. “You should check it out.”

“Why not just do it at LAG’s April 16th action?” The irony of my

pleading for the City action wasn’t lost on me, but at least it was part of LAG. The last thing we needed was another autonomous action.

Raoul cleared his throat. “It wouldn’t work at a LAG action. We want to get inside the corporations and disrupt them. There’s only so much you can accomplish by blocking doors and streets.”

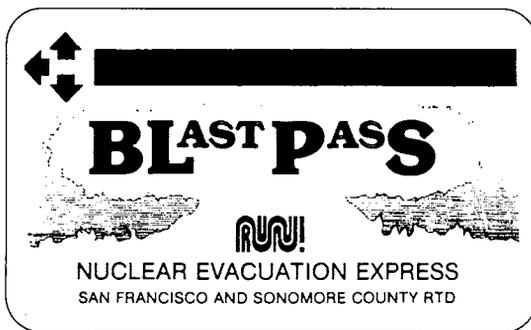
“You could go inside at a LAG action,” I said.

“No, we’d have monitors herding us around like we’re a bunch of sheep,” Raoul answered. “And then you get people saying that when you do civil disobedience, you have to sit down and accept the consequences. To hell with pacifism.”

“What?” Sara said sharply. “I’m a pacifist, and I resent that stereotype.”

Raoul’s big shoulders slumped. “Sorry. You know what I mean. I get sick of that submission model. If you can get away, you should. Don’t give in. Keep protesting as long as you can.”

Sid nodded vigorously. “I already made up a flyer for May 22nd that says, ‘Avoid Arrest.’ I’ll pass it out at the Dead Kennedys show this weekend. There’s a lot of punks who won’t come to protests if they think they have to surrender to the police.”



*An affinity group prepared these mock transit passes for Tax Day actions protesting the military budget.*

And there's a hell of a lot of LAG people who won't go anywhere near your protest, I thought. Did any of you ever consider that?

I was relieved when the office door swung open. It was Cindy from the Commie Dupes, dropping off artwork for the paper. Raoul and Sid followed Jenny back to her desk, and I turned my attention to Cindy. She reached into her handbag and pulled out what looked like a playing card. She snapped it down on the table — a Muni Fast Pass altered to read, "Blast Pass."

"We're going to pass them out during the Tax Day action," Cindy said, "and at the main post office that night when people are dropping off their last-minute returns. There's a war tax resisters rally all evening."

"It looks great," I said. "We'll get it in Direct Action."

"Thanks!" She headed for the door. "Gotta go. I'm double-parked."

As she departed, Sara and Norm came over to take a look. "Speaking of Direct Action," Norm said, "I want to write a story about local people visiting the peace camp. Two more stopped by yesterday. One woman wants to push for a study of groundwater contamination near the Lab. That's the sort of thing a nuclear facility is vulnerable on."

"Especially if the initiative comes from local people and not 'outside agitators,'" Sara said as she turned back to addressing envelopes.

Norm nodded. "We're going to write it up in the next Peace Lab News. That reminds me, Holly asked if you would mind pasting up the new issue — I have all the stuff. If you can do it tonight, I can get it xeroxed tomorrow and take it out there."

"Sure," I said. I had plenty else I needed to do, but the idea of manual labor sounded appealing. Besides, pasting up a flyer was a way to support Holly and the peace camp, even if I hadn't been back out since opening day.

Norm got a manila folder from his desk and handed it to me. "So, when are you coming back out? Come spend a night."

"Yeah," I said apologetically. "I'm planning to."

"The food's great," he said. "And there's always chocolate on hand, not just Bit o' Honey."

I smiled. It was an inside joke. Literally. Back when we were in jail for the Consulate action, before I cited out, we got moved upstairs to a larger holding cell with a bunch of regular inmates. Norm and I sat together scoping out the scene. Every so often, one of the prisoners would kneel down by the back door of the cell and slide some change under the door. A minute later a candy bar would slide back through. I pointed it out to Norm.

"There, see? He got two. Both Bit o' Honeys. That's what the guy over there got, too."

"I'll try it," Norm said, fishing in his pocket for change. "You want one?"

"Yeah," I said, handing him a quarter. "But see if they have any chocolate. A Snickers bar would be great right now."

Norm strolled over toward the door and leaned toward an older man

chewing meditatively on his Bit o' Honey, flat squares of sugary caramel that gave good time-value for your money. A few words were exchanged, and then



*The Peace Lab News was a serial flyer for leafletting at Livermore Lab. A new edition was produced at least once a week during the Spring and Fall peace camps.*

Norm tapped on the cell door. He held up two fingers to the little window, and slid our change under the door. Sure enough, a minute later, he came walking back with the goods. "There's a trustee out there," he explained, "and a candy machine."

"Thanks," I said, trying to mask my disappointment as he handed me a Bit o' Honey. "Is that all they have?"

"No," he said, peeling back the wrapper and working the first square loose. "But that's the only kind that will fit under the door."

Standing there in the office, we laughed again. "LAG should campaign for wider spaces underneath holding cell doors in all future jail construction," I said.

"That could make a big difference," said Norm, "considering all the new jails they're building."

Sara pulled on her sweater and walked toward me. "Are we going to finish Direct Action this weekend?"

"Yeah, I think we can." I surveyed the twenty-four pages in my mind — our best issue yet, I thought. "Carmen sent a great story on the impact of the Euromissiles on European peace groups," I said. "And Angie said she'd get the Bohemian Grove story done by tomorrow."

"Good. I can be there all day Sunday, and I'll stay late if it looks like we can finish. What about the Middle East pages?"

"Mort said he'd finish them Saturday."

Sara looked skeptical. "He always says he'll finish things, and then you or Holly wind up doing it."

"Yeah, well... Maybe you could finish it this time?"

Sara scowled. "Just because you're willing to pick up after Mort doesn't mean everyone else is. That's the sort of thing that's burning people out."

I flushed. "I was just kidding."

“It’s not a joke. The production process is really sloppy, and it’s getting hard for me to keep working on it.”

Tears welled up in my eyes, and I was glad that she turned to pick up her daypack. I’m doing the best I can, I wanted to say. We’re all volunteers here. Do you have to be so critical?

Sara said a short goodbye and headed out the door. Raoul and Sid followed soon after. I welcomed the quiet. But my mind was still racing. I restlessly scanned the conversations of the past two hours, searching for some sign of hope. Something must be going right. The Blast Pass. But that was about it.

I stared at the table. A hundred unstuffed envelopes stared back. I sighed, louder than I intended. Jenny looked my way. “How are you doing?” she asked tentatively.

“Okay, I guess. Getting jumped on by Sara didn’t help.”

“Yeah,” Jenny said. “Don’t take it personally. Karina has a new lover, and Sara’s really stressed. Especially because Karina is so open about it. Not everyone is into non-monogamy...” Jenny’s voice trailed off, and she looked at me sheepishly.

I scrutinized her eyes. When I wasn’t around, did she say the same thing about me and Holly? Had we become gossip-fodder?

Jenny looked away. “How’s, uh — how’s the mailing going?”

“Okay, I guess.” I looked at the table again. The stack of letters wasn’t getting any smaller. But I didn’t have it in me to stuff another envelope. Why not go home? I needed to put in some hours around the apartment building, anyway. Smoke a pipe and vacuum the halls. Do some singing. Let my thoughts wander.

I gathered my jacket and the Peace Lab News paste-up folder, said goodbye to Jenny and Norm, and headed toward the door. I took a deep breath and yearned for release, the satisfaction of a hard-worked day about to give way to more relaxed pursuits.

But as I stepped outside into the grayness of a week-long overcast, my anxiety lingered. I searched back through the frayed encounters of the day, looking for the cause. Raoul? Sara? Jenny? No, it was vaguer, less tangible. A feeling that Winter would never end. Not here. Somewhere bands were playing, and somewhere hearts were light. Why, down in Arizona and Florida, baseball was in the midst of Spring training. That must count for something.

Not with me. All I knew was fog and rain and more of the same.

Sunday, March 4, 1984

IT SEEMED LIKE weeks since we’d gone for a late-evening walk. Holly and I held hands as usual, but our feet seemed out of synch. I kept shuffling, trying to get

in step. We headed for the Cal campus. Get under some trees, I thought. Get away from all the concrete.

We took turns talking, but our usual flow of conversation was missing. Holly was the one to suggest a walk. Was there something particular she wanted to discuss? We never had talked much about my and Angie's affair, or what it meant to our relationship.

I had been thinking lately about what I'd do if Holly insisted on a choice. One moment I'd be grieving my relationship with Angie. The next, I'd be

struggling over how to say goodbye to Holly.

We were still chatting when we crossed onto campus. As we passed Harmon Gym, Holly fell silent. She seemed to be staring intently at the pavement ahead of her, as if she were trying to figure out the best way to say something unpleasant.

We passed under a streetlight, and I looked at her. Maybe I should initiate the conversation, I thought. Before I could make up my mind, she spoke. "Caroline's coming back at the end of March."

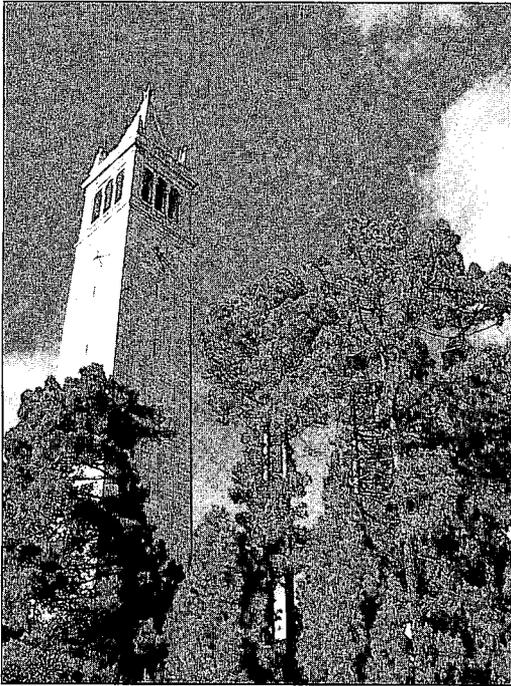
Caroline? Was that what she was thinking about? I felt embarrassed for assuming all of Holly's thoughts were about me. "Did you hear from her?"

"Well, I got a postcard

that she wrote several weeks ago when she visited Managua. So I'm assuming that her plans haven't changed." She fell silent again for a moment. "I hope she comes back soon. I really miss having someone to talk to."

I nodded silently. We walked along a cobblestone path toward the Eucalyptus Grove. I looked down at the patchwork of stones, struck by the seemingly random pattern. Did someone plan this? Or did they just sit there with a big stack of rocks and try to get them to fit?

We crossed a small footbridge and came to a stop under a eucalyptus.



*The Campanile at UC Berkeley, descendent of civic belltowers which served as lookout points and alarm signals in the days before electricity.*

Holly tilted her head back and looked up at the soaring trees. Overhead, a dark web of leaves and branches traced a tangled pattern against the lighter gray sky.

"Are you going to the People's Convention meeting next Saturday?"

Holly's voice sounded disembodied, like it was coming from a loudspeaker.

"Yeah, probably," I said, lowering my head. "Why?"

"I was thinking of going. Now that the peace camp is over, I'll have more time for things like that."

"Really?" I looked at her, then gazed out across the grove. If Holly got involved, maybe Craig and Daniel and Caroline weren't far behind. Maybe the Winter had been a fallow period, and people would return to the fray rested and refreshed. My advance work on People's Convention might yet bear fruit.

"That would be great," I said. "People's Convention needs more LAG people involved. It's a lot of old lefties, with a handful of direct action people to try to balance the load."

I couldn't make out her reaction, but I sensed that my sales pitch had missed the mark. "Have you thought about doing a workshop on the peace camp?" I added quickly. "There are workshop slots on Friday and Saturday afternoons."

"That's a good idea," she said as we made our way across the Eucalyptus Grove, which was illuminated by old-fashioned streetlamps. "We're hoping to find land for the Fall, so we need to be making contacts and getting more people involved."

We headed out of the grove, and Holly fell silent again. Did we used to have these sort of lulls when we talked?

We paused on an old wooden bridge over Strawberry Creek. A gnarled tree cast its shadow over us. Holly leaned against the railing. She looked at me, but didn't speak.

"What are you thinking about?" I asked.

She looked at me intently for a moment. "I've been thinking a lot about our relationship the past couple of weeks. It's crossed my mind to move out of our apartment."

I grasped the bridge rail and said nothing, lest my voice betray me.

"I haven't wanted to make a decision without talking it over with Caroline," Holly continued. "Sara has been a big help, but she doesn't know me as well. Caroline would understand things no one else would, and help me see whether I'm making the right decision."

I nodded. My head felt light, and I gripped the railing more tightly. I took an audible breath, and Holly looked at me expectantly. My words came out slowly. "Are you feeling like you have to decide now?"

She took my free hand. "Right now? No." She looked at me carefully. Then her eyes softened. "Everything is so confusing right now. I don't know how much is about you and Angie, and how much is feeling discouraged about LAG. And how much is just wondering what to do with my life."

I breathed a little easier. We stepped away from the railing and resumed our walk. We angled uphill toward the Campanile, the old bell tower in the center of campus. I tried to relax and enjoy the night air.

But a knot remained in my chest. How long a reprieve could I expect? It wasn't like clarity lurked around the corner. What difference was another few weeks going to make? Why did I think I'd be any closer to a decision?

The Campanile bells pealed. The metallic strokes echoed off the stone buildings and reverberated in my head. I let loose of Holly's hand and sucked in a breath, trying to hold the clanging dissonance at bay until the hour had tolled.

Friday, March 16, 1984

FINALLY — an action. And a journalistic one, no less.

I arrived early at the Berkeley BART station. I pulled a *Bay Guardian* out of a news rack and looked over the music listings and ate a candy bar till the rest of the group showed up around seven o'clock. Half were from Change of Heart, but there were some Overthrow guys, several people who worked on Direct Action, and a few others.

Two dozen of us huddled together. A couple of cops strolled across the plaza and gave us the eye, but they seemed more interested in the nervous-looking guy hustling pirate bus transfers out by the street.

Karina knelt and unfolded a map of the city. She handed one side to me, and I knelt next to her in the center of the circle.

"There are four quadrants," she said. "Downtown, North Shattuck, Telegraph, and West Berkeley. Most of us should focus on downtown and North Shattuck. West Berkeley should take a car and cover the other BART stations too."

Alby and Sara passed out stenciled signs the size of the top half of a newspaper. A broken television set was framed by the words "Sorry: TV On the Blink."

"We have a couple of rolls of quarters," Sara said. She and Karina doled the money out.

"I brought a bunch, too," I said. I reached into my pocket and jangled the coins.

Angie had postponed our usual Friday date till Sunday so she could take a workshop at Berkeley Women's Health Collective, and Holly wasn't interested in the action. So I was glad when Mort beckoned to me. "Let's do North Shattuck with Lyle," he said.

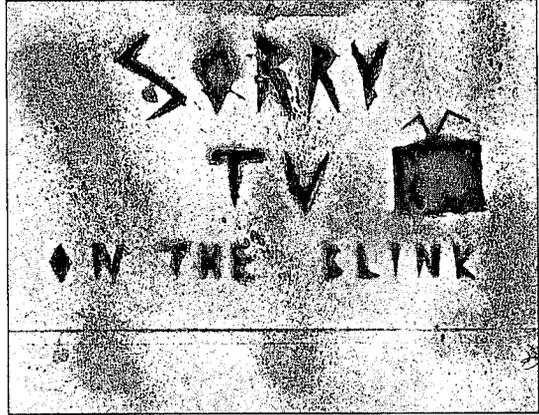
The rest of the crowd divided up the town. "Does everyone have the legal number?" Karina said. "Walt said he'd stay by his phone till ten o'clock in case someone gets busted."

I wrote the number carefully on my wrist, even though I planned to be extra careful. The West Berkeley crew set off to get their car. The rest of us started away from the plaza in our respective directions. But Sara called us back. "One more thing — who's going to do the box on the plaza here?"

Now there was a challenge. Sure, the cops were ignoring us. But to pull it off right under their noses?

Karina gestured at Alby. "You set up a diversion," she said. "I'll nail the box."

Alby strolled across the plaza to a Chronicle newsstand, pretended to drop a quarter in the slot, and when it wouldn't open, started rattling the door and berating the machine. The forces of law and order zeroed in on the commotion. Across the way, Karina popped open the *USA Today* box, slipped the "TV" sign into the display window, and squirted superglue into the coin slot. Mission



*Stencil from an action targeting USA Today stands.*

accomplished. As she strode away, Alby gave his machine one last angry tug, then turned to the approaching cops and loudly proclaimed his dissatisfaction with modern technology.

"That's an inspiring send-off," Hank said as we parted.

"Yeah," I said. "After tonight, no more McNews in Berkeley."

"Hey, don't forget pinball later on," Hank called after me. "We'll meet back at my shop around nine."

"I'll be there," I promised, then glanced over at the cops. "Knock on wood!"

The evening was warm with a light breeze. Lyle and I were in T-shirts and jeans. Mort wore his usual button shirt and slacks, but his shirttails were half untucked. We strolled across Shattuck and came to our first stop. Mort and I stood lookout while Lyle went to work on the newsstand. Thirty seconds later, we were on the road again. "The only risk is the glue," Lyle said. "Otherwise, it just looks like you're buying a paper."

We crossed over to Bank of America plaza. After Mort glued the news box, I proudly pointed out the spot where Angie and I had recently done our Blood of Africa graffiti. The bank had painted over it in gray, but you could still see

the outlines of our B of A logo. "They've actually preserved it for future archaeologists to excavate," I said.

The next intersection had a whole herd of stands clustered around the stoplights. "If we have enough signs," I said, "we could do the *Examiner* and *Chronicle* boxes while we're at it."

Mort shook his head. "No, not the local papers."

"Why not? It's all just big corporations controlling the news."

"It isn't that simple," he answered. He took off his glasses and wiped them on his shirttail. "With local corporations, we have other means of access. We might influence them via local actions, if necessary right at their offices. If it's a multinational with headquarters who-knows-where, how do we hold them accountable?" He put his glasses back on. "It's in our interest to play local corporations against an outsider like *USA Today*. Capitalists fight among themselves, and we can affect the outcome of the fight."

We approached another box. Lyle gave the all clear sign, and I took my turn on the glue-gun. "Local papers or not, I don't suppose we'll get any media coverage for this. You have to blow something up to get in the news."

"Well, maybe we could escalate next time," Lyle said. "I tell you, I have it in for *USA Today*. It's the victory of style over substance."

"Just like LAG," Mort said. "All style and no substance."

"That's a cheap shot," I said. "Livermore Lab is on the map because of our actions."

"Sure," Mort said without looking at me. He stretched his back and grimaced as we waited for the light to change. "Direct action can focus media attention. But people get sucked into a trap, doing flashier actions trying to get press coverage. Things like education and coalition work that don't excite the media get ignored. Look at the Democratic Convention. Who's doing outreach or coalition work? All people care about is where to protest."

The light took forever to change. "Maybe we need to start from where people are," I said. "The Democrats deserve to be protested for caving in to Reagan."

"As if a protest is going to have any effect on the Democrats," Mort scoffed as we finally got the green light. "If we'd already built a cross-issue movement which could effectively pressure the Democrats to challenge Reagan, and then they waffled, that would be the moment for a big protest. If we were the direct action wing of a broader movement, we could be the voice of conscience for liberals. But it's naive to think that protests by themselves are going to have any effect on politicians who spend their lives isolated in Washington or Sacramento. They don't even know we exist."

I jumped in as soon as he finished. "What better way to reach them than CD? If we disrupt the Convention, that'll get their attention."

Lyle gave me a funny look, and I had to wonder myself at what I'd said. Disrupt the Convention? Was that really the logical outcome of my views?

But Mort seemed to take it in stride. "That's just what I'm talking about," he said with no rancor. "You get sucked into fringe actions that most people in LAG won't support. You get a smaller and smaller base of people doing outrageous actions to make themselves feel important. It's dramatic. But is it building a movement?"

We walked along in silence. It was frustrating debating with Mort. Couldn't he at least go through the motions of considering what I'd said?

We were approaching Cedar Street, and spotted a *USA Today* box in front of Andronico's grocery. "I think it's my turn," Mort said, taking the glue from Lyle. I glanced up Shattuck — a cop car! "Ssssst!" I hissed at Mort. He looked at me in alarm. The patrol car pulled to a stop right near us. Mort thrust his hands into his pockets — a sure giveaway. Lyle tucked the signs under his arm and acted like he didn't know Mort.

But the cops never even looked our way. The light changed, and they cruised on down Shattuck. My chest was tight, and I gave a sharp laugh. Mort looked pale beneath the streetlights. He started away from the newsstand. Lyle caught his arm. "Come on, the cops are gone. We can't skip a box."

I nodded. I checked the street, pulled out a quarter, and held the door open as Lyle slipped a sign in. Then I took the glue-gun from Mort and shot a bead into the slot. "See? We've got to start with direct action."

Mort gave a laugh, and we headed north at a more relaxed pace. "The problem with the way we're doing CD," he said as if thinking out loud, "is that there's no analysis of how to expand our base. Who historically has done direct action? Partly it's been activists and students, young people acting at a privileged moment of their lives, before they take on responsibilities like careers, houses, families. But that hasn't accounted for the major movements of the past century — Labor and Civil Rights. Both have been far more broadly-based. They've involved working people who have a lot more at stake. We've got to connect our work to these constituencies. And we won't do that by organizing self-indulgent affinity group actions. It's going to take economic and social analysis, a grasp of class dynamics that I don't see LAG undertaking."

True, it was hard to imagine most affinity groups engaging in class analysis. But did that mean we should disband? "A group like LAG can do other things," I said. "We can break new ground that later groups will expand on. That's the justification for smaller, flashier actions."

"That might occasionally work," Mort shrugged. "But unless you see a potential mass base for what you're doing, you just attract more people like yourselves. Look at the actions in the financial district. What's that laying the groundwork for? All they reach is anarchists who won't subordinate their egos to a group process. Those kinds of actions won't build a movement. You end up escalating your tactics until everyone burns out or winds up in prison."

Before I could think of an answer, we reached Walnut Square, a yuppie

shopping enclave at the foot of the North Berkeley Hills. “Keep an eye out,” Lyle said, “I’ll get this one.”

Mort and I checked the street. “All clear,” I said.

Lyle approached the newsstand. Suddenly he halted. “Whoa — check this out!” Mort and I abandoned our posts and went over to look. The box’s face was melted into a warped mass of plastic. Black soot stained the upper edges of the front door. Lyle dropped in a quarter and gingerly opened the door. Inside, ashes and charred newsprint bespoke an earlier visit. “Looks like someone else got here first,” Lyle said.

“Think it was someone with us?” Mort said.

“No,” I said, shaking my head at the gutted stand. “I think we have competition.”

We admired the handiwork for a moment longer. “I don’t think we should leave a stencil,” I said. “It’s too incriminating if we get busted somewhere else. And wipe your fingerprints off the door.”

Lyle complied, then shot a stream of superglue into the coin slot. “Might as well slow down the repair crew.”

That was pretty much the end of the Shattuck commercial district. “We still have to cover the area north of campus,” Lyle said. A semi-trailer rolled by, drowning out the rest of his words. But once it passed, the night was still. We headed up Cedar toward Northside. A slight breeze rustled through a row of small trees.

Mort was silent, and I couldn’t tell what he was thinking. But I thought I spied a flaw in his logic. “The problem with what you’re saying,” I said, “is that it’s CD that pulls people together in the first place. It’s fine to talk about education and coalition work, but it’s protests that get people involved. You can’t just write that off, or you don’t have any movement, period.”

“I’m not saying don’t protest,” Mort said. His breathing was heavy as we walked uphill. “But it exhausts people. It can highlight injustices or throw a monkey wrench into the system, but it can’t be a permanent tactic in any struggle. The enemies we’re fighting — government, corporations, the military — have bottomless resources compared to us. We can’t fight them forever. We have to build alliances with liberals who can consolidate the gains we make via direct action. Look at labor. Unions initially won their rights by wildcat strikes, sabotage, and outright battles with the cops and military. But they couldn’t fight those battles indefinitely — they had to get their rights consolidated by ‘legitimate’ channels, by Congress and the courts. There’s a time and place for direct action. We need to use CD when it can be effective, and recognize when it isn’t.”

I didn’t know enough Labor history to contradict him. Still, something nagged at me. I looked at Mort. “Where does that leave us? LAG was built around CD.”

As we reached the top of the hill, Mort paused and put his hands on his

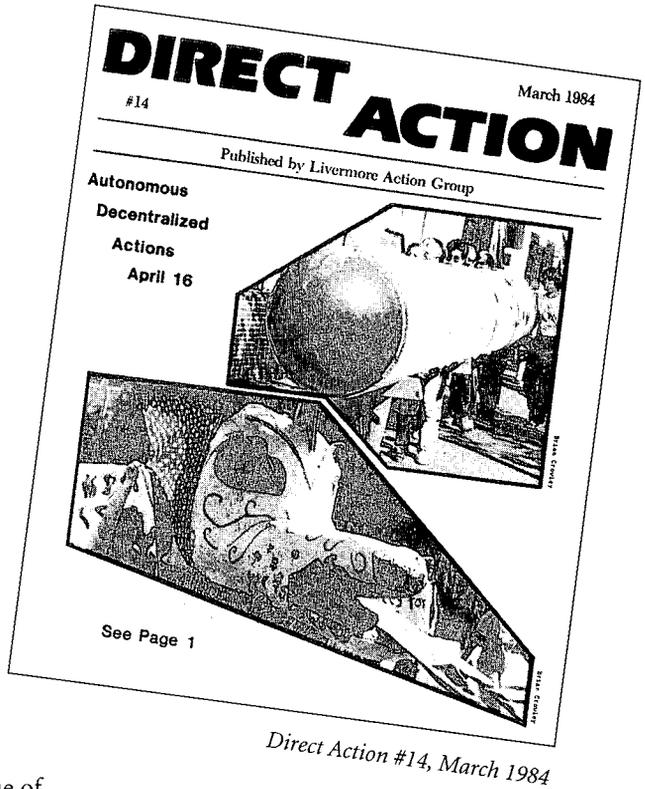
hips, catching his breath. "You can't build a movement around a tactic. The question is whether LAG can grow beyond mere tactical unity. We need to analyze the role of direct action in a broader strategy. We have to broaden our focus to include environmental and social issues that speak to working people and people of color. That's the value of People's Convention — it offers a starting point. Of course," he added with a dry laugh, "it's not a protest. So nobody in LAG has any interest."

Real funny, I thought. Was it a laughing matter to mock the most active people in LAG, just because they didn't want to go to coalition meetings? Maybe we needed to figure out how to work with younger anarchists, not force them into a leftist mold. If they wanted protests, give them one. People's Convention had talked about doing a march from Embarcadero to the Democratic Convention to deliver our People's Platform — why not latch onto that idea and try to get LAGers involved? It didn't have to be an ordinary march. We could make it what we wanted. With a little imagination, it could be a highlight of the week.

I was tempted to share the inspiration with Mort. But not quite yet. He'd counter with ten reasons why it would never work.

We reached Northside, a little commercial strip just north of the UC campus, where we found two *USA Today* boxes. By this time, we were a well-oiled machine, and in a couple of minutes we had finished our work and stood outside La Val's pizza house. "Let's stop in for a beer," Mort said.

"Why not get a six-pack and head over to Hank's shop?" Lyle answered. "It's nine-thirty. Pinball's probably open."



"Assuming Hank got home okay," I said. "I wonder if anyone got popped? Maybe the others weren't as lucky as we were."

ALTHOUGH EVERYONE was invited to Hank's shop, it didn't surprise me when we got there and it was all guys. It had been a month since I'd been to pinball, and I felt out of synch with the scene. No one but me was working on the April actions. I wasn't sensing much involvement around the Convention, either. Wasn't that the whole point, to party *and* rabble-rouse? If we weren't organizing together, was it just another place to drink and smoke weed?

Well, it isn't just any old place, I had to admit as my eyes took in the row of glistening machines. The jukebox cranked out "My Generation" by the Who. Tai was playing an old pre-flippers game with a circus tent and a bunch of clowns on the back-glass. Craig was leaning against another machine, watching Hank fiddle with the wiring on his latest rehab project, an Americana number called "Crossroads."

"It's a real beauty," Hank said as he emerged from under the machine. "Just needs a little cleaning up."

Lyle stashed the beer in the corner fridge. Hank pulled out a thick joint and fired it up. "I was up in Humboldt last weekend for an Earth First! gathering, and I made a pit stop on the way back at a friend's farm outside Willits. He gave me a big bag of tops as a 'disarmament dividend' and said to make sure people from LAG enjoyed the harvest."

"Harvesting in March?" I said.

"Yeah, he grows year-round in a greenhouse. It's a great set-up, with natural and artificial light. You practically get high walking in the door."

"Nice of him to make an in-kind donation," Lyle said.

Soon a smoky haze hovered over our little circle. "How was the Earth First! meeting?" Mort asked.

"Pretty good," said Hank. "They're organizing to stop a logging road up near Headwaters Forest. People figure it's either stop the road now, or get ready to sit in the trees."

I accepted the joint from Craig. "Were there any people from Livermore or Vandenberg?"

"A few," Hank said. "But I didn't know most of them. They're too adventurist for me, doing backcountry actions into logging areas. But they're really dedicated people. They decide what to do, and they do it. They spend a hell of a lot less time arguing than we do."

The door opened, and Walt entered. "Hey, it's the legal team," Hank called out. "Anyone phone from jail?"

"No, it was a boring night. I watched the Knicks' game and played dominoes for three hours." Walt took off his jacket and accepted a beer from Lyle. He leaned back against a machine. "Looks like almost all the men are here. Is Norm coming over?"

Tai shook his head. "I don't think so. He had something else going on after we finished."

Hank took a long toke. "Who is this Norm guy, anyway? Where'd he come from? Am I the only one who's nervous about someone that no one knows volunteering full-time in the office?"

"Aw," I said, "Norm's been around since last Fall. He does a ton of work."

Mort scowled. "That doesn't mean anything. When Alliance for Survival down in L.A. found out they were infiltrated last year, it turned out to be some of their staff people."

"Yeah," Hank said. "If the FBI is paying you, you have a lot of time to volunteer."

I tried to picture Norm as an infiltrator. Were most FBI informants so laid-back? And did they all jump in and help with the messiest jobs the way Norm did? I looked from Mort to Hank. "All I can say is, if Norm's an agent, I hope they send a few more like him to help in the office."

Walt laughed. "Yeah, I'll take a few more like Norm." He looked around at us. "So how did the action go?"

Mort lit another joint and passed it to Lyle. "Tell them about the burned-out box," he said.

Lyle took a hit and passed it on to Hank. "Oh, yeah, we saw this one box that somebody had torched. The whole front was melted, and the inside was full of burned papers."

"We saw something like that," Hank said. "Somebody had dumped a can of red paint inside the box, like the papers were dripping blood." Hank wiped his hands on a cloth tucked into his belt, then rang up a game on Queen of Diamonds. "Better get your fill of playing tonight," he said. "I'll be gone the next two Fridays. Next week I'm going to a pinball tourney in Sacramento. And the week after that, me and Lyle and Tai are heading up to the redwoods. You guys want to go?" He looked at me and Mort.

"Camping?" I asked.

Lyle took a drink of beer. "Yeah. We're gonna do some target practice along the way, too, if you're interested. Do you have a gun?"

"No," I said, surprised at the question.

"The way this country is going, you're crazy not to," Hank said.

Craig gestured at Hank with his beer bottle. "You think owning a gun is protection against the U.S. government? They'll just bring out the tanks."

"Sure," Hank said, "in an all-out confrontation, we're screwed. But if it comes to death squads, like in Guatemala or El Salvador, a gun at least gives you some chance."

Mort exhaled a long stream of smoke. "Face it, the right wing has us outgunned. Our only hope is to keep the conflict in the nonviolent arena as much as possible. That's the political challenge, to define the terms of the struggle."

Lyle eyed Mort suspiciously. "I don't know if it's ours to define. If we're attacked, aren't we going to fight back? You've got to have at least the threat of resistance, or you get walked on."

Mort leaned back onto a machine. He seemed to be gazing at a purple lava-lamp perched on top of a tool cabinet. "It's a question of context, of the relation to a mass movement. Take the Black Panthers, who formed a Black militia to 'fight back.' The Panthers didn't spring up in a vacuum. In the Sixties, there was already a huge Civil Rights movement. There was rioting in a lot of American cities. The establishment knew that the Panthers might be the vanguard of a larger uprising. They were crushed, but the government also had to let off steam by expanding civil rights. Even in defeat, the Panthers and their rhetoric had a major impact." Mort took a drink of beer. "But outside of the context of a mass movement, talk of violent resistance has the opposite effect. The government and media portray it as lunacy or terrorism, and use it to discredit a movement."

Lyle laughed sharply. "So we're supposed to wait for a mass movement before we learn to fire a gun?"

Mort fidgeted with his beer bottle. "I'm fine with target practice. But if you start talking guns, you've got to be aware of the implications. Yeah, sometimes a radical threat can force the government to compromise with liberals. It's a plausible strategy. But watch out, because the liberals will strike their deal, cut you loose, and let the government crush you. That's what happened to the Panthers, and that's what happens to most armed radicals around the world."

I had been standing behind Mort, listening carefully. Now I stepped forward. "I don't want to come off like a pacifist," I said. "But is it really the threat of violence we're talking about here? Or is it the threat of disruption? If we can shut down business as usual, close financial districts, or shut down highways, we could cause just as much havoc as an armed uprising in other countries."

Mort actually stopped and thought about what I'd said, which I appreciated. But Hank scoffed. "If you really disrupt the machine, they'll cut you down whether you're armed or not. Nonviolence isn't going to save you."

"It all comes back to the political struggle," Mort said. "Whatever we think of 'democracy' in this country, public opinion does play a role. If the government tries to repress us, we have to have mainstream allies. And that's hard if you use extreme tactics. I'm not just talking about violence, but the sort of mindless disruption that people are talking about at the Democratic Convention. You can't ignore the implications of your tactical decisions."

"Or lack of decisions," Hank interjected. "The spokescouncil for the Convention last weekend was hopeless. Five hours of arguing, and not even close to a consensus. The idea of a LAG protest at the Convention is dead."

"That's not how I heard it," I put in, frustrated with the direction of the

conversation. "We consensed way back in December to do something at the Convention. You can't just throw that out."

"The meeting was split down the middle," Hank said. "A protest at the Convention would be totally divisive." He turned to change the music. I wanted to pursue the issue, but Tai was clamoring for Hank's attention on a broken pinball machine. I'd have to wait till later.

I joined Craig and Lyle for a game on "Old Chicago," my favorite machine. As Lyle took his turn, Craig leaned onto the adjoining machine, his eyes following the trajectory of the ball. "This whole Democratic Convention thing is irresponsible," he said. "Talking about CD at the Convention makes us look like the lunatic fringe."

"So we're supposed to sit and do nothing?" I said. "I'd rather be a futile protester than a passive bystander."

Craig seemed oblivious to my jab as he stood in for his turn. "We can't be everywhere at once," he said.

I wasn't going to let him off that easy. "The Convention is what's happening. Somebody needs to light a fire under the Democrats' butts."

He shrugged as his ball drained. "I don't see it inspiring many people."

Speak for yourself, I thought as I took my shot. Quit if you want. Some of us aren't ready to give up yet.

I almost said as much to Craig. But I was still hoping he'd come work on People's Convention. I didn't want to push him further away. I jammed the flippers hard and fired the ball back to the top of the machine.

Behind us, Hank finished fixing Tai's machine. "Ah, yes, pinball surgery was successful, and the patient has revived."

"Do you ever think about doing this as a business?" Craig asked, turning away from me.

"Naw," Hank said, "I love it too much for that. But sometimes I restore a game and then trade it for a couple of fixer-uppers. That's how I get new ones."

Mort gestured at the machines lining two walls of the workshop. "You're going to overflow your shop pretty soon."

"Yeah, it's time to buy a house, isn't it?" Hank said. "Judith and I are actually saving money for a down payment. Can't you see a whole basement full of these things? I'd have the jukebox in one corner, one of those big old bowling machines in another, and the electric train running around the whole place." His eyes glazed over for a moment. Then he shook his head. "It's just a dream. Even with both of us working, it's hard to afford anything in the Bay Area."

He lit a roach and passed it on to Craig. "Hey, I almost forgot — we need a test crew for the nukecycle tomorrow. I just about have it up and running."

"No kidding?" Craig said. "Pedals and all?"

"Yeah. The frame is welded together, with four motorcycle wheels. The steering is a little off, but I'm working on that. It should be ready for the

financial district next month. We'll have to cart it across the bridge on a trailer, but then we can pedal it down Market Street."

Craig chuckled. "What sort of license do you need to drive a nukecycle?"

"Type N, I reckon." Hank looked around at us. "But there's altogether too much talking going on. We're here for pinball therapy, not another meeting. Who's up for a game of Old Chicago?" He punched out some Rolling Stones songs on the jukebox and put on a tape of the Three Stooges in the background.

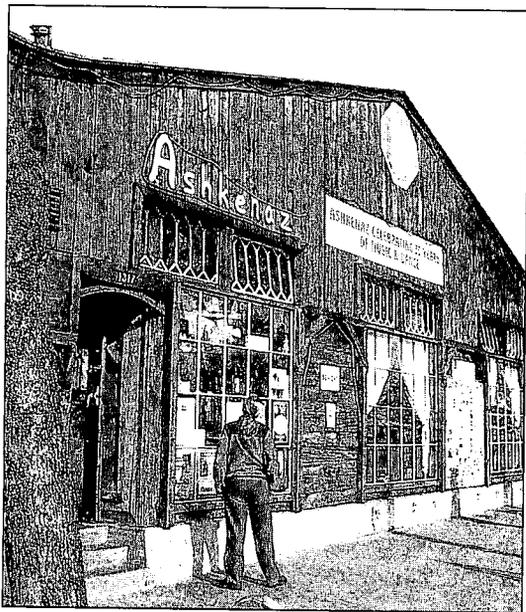
Well, so much for talking. I considered going out for a long, quiet walk. But there was no time to waste. Matters had to get settled. Just stick around, play some pinball, and hopefully later I'd have a chance to talk with Craig about the next crisis meeting. And with Hank about the December consensus to protest the Democrats. And with Mort about the People's Convention meeting this weekend... Things had to get moving.

Friday, March 23, 1984

"YOU DON'T want to hear anything negative," Angie said. She wrapped her scarf tighter. "I can't say anything about LAG or you get defensive. And if I'm mad at someone, you don't want to hear about it."

I just don't like it when you trash someone, I wanted to say. But I wanted to put the argument behind us. It was my one night seeing Angie all week. "I can see your frustrations about living with Jenny," I said, trying to be sympathetic as we walked stiffly down the dark sidewalk.

"It's beyond frustration," she answered, looking straight ahead. "Jenny and I never even talk anymore. She spends all her time with Raoul. When they formed their



*Ashkenaz dance club, fabled West Berkeley home of World Beat music.*

new affinity group with Jacey, they didn't even ask me if I wanted to be in it. I guess I'm not radical enough for them, just because I don't want to run around in the streets at the Democratic Convention."

"I can relate," I said. "There's more to the Convention than street demos."

She let out a loud sigh. "The whole Convention is such a bore," she said. "I'm so sick of hearing about this protest or that coalition. I'll be glad when it's all over."

And I'll be glad when we get to Ashkenaz, I thought. We were walking down to the north Berkeley club to hear the West African High-Life Band. I was plenty nervous about dancing to African music, but it seemed like a piece of cake compared to fighting with Angie.

Was it blowing up in our faces? How much longer could we take the pressure? Angie had been talking more about a trip to Portland to visit her pregnant friend Isabel, and I wondered if she might just decide to stay.

I groped for some way to engage her. "There's a lot of other things happening," I said. "We have the next issue of Direct Action coming up. And there's the Livermore action in April that really needs energy."

She growled her response. "Nothing LAG is doing is going anywhere."

"Well, it sure won't if people don't work on it," I snapped. "Sometimes we have to work on things that are good for the movement."

"So now LAG is the movement?"

"Until we figure out something better. We can't give up. Times will change, and we need to be ready."

"Maybe we need to be ready to let go when times change," she muttered.

Damn, I thought. Why had I taken the bait yet again? I put my arm around her shoulders. I could feel her bristle. "Nothing I'm involved in is going anywhere," she said. "Something has to give."

Was that something LAG, love, or life? Was she quitting LAG? Was she getting ready to break up with me?

And what could I say if she did? Was I going to beg her to stay? Sad as her leaving made me, I also felt relieved that she might be the one to call it quits. Let her initiate the break-up, and I'd graciously accept that we needed to say goodbye. Time for us to move on. Time for me to re-commit to Holly. Time for a fresh start for all of us.

SOUTH AFRICAN music really is easier to dance to than rock and roll. Somewhere amid the polyrhythmic drums and guitars I found a beat that had always eluded me. I welcomed the escape from trying to converse with Angie, and we were on the floor through two entire sets. On the last song, with the eight-piece band in high gear, I found myself bouncing up and down, casting off my worries about Angie, about LAG, and even about dancing — simply surrendering to the buoyant music.

We left Ashkenaz barely in time to catch the last train back to her place in

Oakland. I hoped that the spirit of our dancing would carry over, but once we got outside the confines of Ashkenaz the cloud descended again. All it took was a phonepole flyer announcing a protest at an electroshock facility which I made the mistake of stopping to read.

“Not another protest,” Angie said. “Is that all anyone knows how to do, protest?”

“There’s a lot that needs protesting,” I said, feeling my fists clench.

She thrust her hands into her pockets. “Well, I’m tired of it. It’s so one-dimensional. Even if we’re against nukes or intervention or Reaganism, I want to be creating something, not just protesting.”

My hands gripped again, then loosened. Whether it was the dancing or the beer or both, I felt lighter on my feet. “Speaking of Reaganism, you know what I heard? BCA isn’t going to do the Berkeley Anti-Reagan Festival this year — they’re too busy with the city council campaign to do another BARF?”

“No BARF? You’d think they’d do it as part of the campaign. What better way to get their message out than a festival?”

“They’re probably stretched too thin,” I said.

Angie suddenly bounded a step ahead and turned to face me. “We should do BARF! I bet we could get a great work group together to do it. There’d be dance bands and game booths and clowns — and there has to be a Reagan piñata.”

“Sure,” I said. “That’s a great idea.” Already I was fitting the festival into our Fall fund-raising plans. But even more, it was a chance to work with Angie on something that excited her.

Once we got seated on the train, she leaned against me and closed her eyes. I put my arm around her and held her close, leaning my head down so it rested on hers.

It was nearly two when we got back to her apartment. We went into her room. I took off my jacket and tossed it on the floor. Angie lit a few candles and pulled back the sheets, then sat down on the edge of the bed. I sat next to her and kissed her on the cheek, letting my hand glide over her breasts. She didn’t resist, but there was no answering touch. I leaned back. “Is something the matter?” I asked. She looked at me silently, and a chill ran through me. I braced myself for the worst.

She reached out and took my hand. “There’s something we have to talk about,” she said quietly. Her finger traced a spiral on my palm.

I took a breath and held it. Was this goodbye? Would she ask me to leave? Please, no. Let us have one last night together...

She looked at me intently. “We have to start being more careful, Jeff.”

I didn’t follow her. “Yeah?”

“Jenny is pregnant.”

“Oh...” So that was what was on her mind. I almost laughed in relief, and had to feign a cough to cover it up. “Wow. How’s Jenny doing?”

"I think she's doing okay, besides being sick a lot. I think she's going to have the baby. She and I haven't talked much about it. She's mainly been over at Raoul's." Angie looked at me again. "Anyway, we have to be more careful. I can't risk getting pregnant. Not now."

I nodded. "You're right," I said. "I'm sorry."

"It's my responsibility, too," she said, looking down. "I had an abortion when I was younger, and I don't want to go through that again."

I wasn't sure what to say. I kissed her cheek. She didn't look up. "Can we just be together tonight? Without sex, I mean?"

"Sure," I said. I was so relieved that she wasn't breaking up with me that a night of celibacy seemed like a minor inconvenience. We lay down and nestled together. Her hair caressed my cheek. I wrapped one arm around her. She took my hand and pressed it to her heart.

She soon drifted off, and I felt her grip on my hand relax. I leaned up on one elbow, watching her in the candlelight. She looked peaceful, almost childlike. Awake, she was so restless, brimming with challenges and doubts and dreams. And sure, I treasured that about her. But now as I gazed at her untroubled brow, her slightly-parted lips, the lock of hair falling over her cheek, I felt more in love than ever.

As I lay down, though, the unease crept back in. Sure, the evening had ended gracefully. But how long could I expect Angie to be content with a once-a-week lover? And how would I feel if she ended our relationship?

Yet surely it had to end...

But maybe it was ending only because I wasn't offering a commitment. What if I were to leave Holly and pledge my love to Angie? Was I throwing away my opportunity?

I rolled onto my side, away from Angie. Come on, get real. We'd never last. And if we didn't end it soon, who knew what Holly might decide. There was the real pressure. How long did I expect Holly to sit and wait?

Time to get my priorities straight. Do what had to be done. Now.

I just wanted to be sure I got it right.

Monday, April 2, 1984

IT WAS NOT where I wanted to be.

The April actions were just two weeks away, though, and there was no way I could skip Coordinating Council, even if it meant a trip into the City. Mort offered me a ride, but I made an excuse and took BART, just to get some time alone after a hectic day working on People's Convention and the Livermore demo.

On BART, I opened a history book for the first time in a week, a collection of essays on Baroque music. But though I managed to turn a few pages, my

mind never stopped reeling off lists of urgent phone calls, last-minute mailings, and a hundred unattended details. It was a relief when I finally got to Melissa's house.

I was one of the later arrivals, and I walked into a roomful of familiar faces, none of whom I was overly delighted to see. There were Doc and Belinda, all but absent from the April organizing... Over in a corner sat Jenny, avoiding eye contact... Karina, primed to fight anyone who didn't jump on board every wild proposal she came up with... Monique, whom I was seeing plenty of at the April Livermore meetings... Mort, increasingly dismissive of anything to do with the Democratic Convention...

Conspicuously absent was Holly, who had been coming to Coordinating Council as the spoke for the peace camp. It was our one shared meeting each week, and I felt irked that she'd gone and made dinner plans with Caroline, who was just back from Nicaragua. Couldn't they have chosen another night? A year earlier, they'd both have been at the meeting.

Actually, as far as Caroline, I wasn't sorry she was absent. I'd seen her once since she got back, and I could feel her silently judging me for my relationship with Angie. I didn't need an evening of her frowning at me. Still, it bugged me that Holly considered Coordinating Council expendable.

We gathered as usual in the front room at Melissa's, which might have been some comfort. Not tonight. The house was being remodeled, and a gaping hole yawned where once a wall separated the living room from the kitchen. Dusty tarps were strewn behind the couches, and paint-trays were stacked in front of the fireplace. I took a seat on a couch next to Sara, where I didn't have to stare directly at the hole. But it loomed over my shoulder just the same.

Artemis offered to facilitate, which was a plus, since she wasn't caught up in any of the feuding. The agenda was imposing: the April actions; finances, which were looking worse and worse; what to do about the stalemated Democratic Convention meetings; and a dozen smaller disasters that demanded attention.

All of this I was prepared to sit through. But before we could get started, Craig and Claudia walked in the door. Some of the others seemed to know they were coming, but it was a jolt to me.

"Can we go first?" Claudia asked. "I don't want to stay for the whole meeting." People assented, and I silently acquiesced.

"What we came to propose," Craig said as he passed out copies of a densely-typed letter, "is that Coordinating Council call a series of meetings later this month to discuss the crisis of LAG."

I stared at him, but he didn't look my way. Craig paused as if to let his words sink in, then continued. "It's time we face the fact that LAG has lost its direction. Since last June's blockade, we've consensed to nothing of substance. And with the Convention coming to San Francisco, the situation is getting worse."

Around the room, people were nodding. "We need to act while we can," Claudia said. "LAG still has the credibility to bring a hundred people together. If we wait another six months, even that may be lost."

I twisted in my seat. Here we are, two weeks before our biggest actions of the year, and what are we discussing? Not

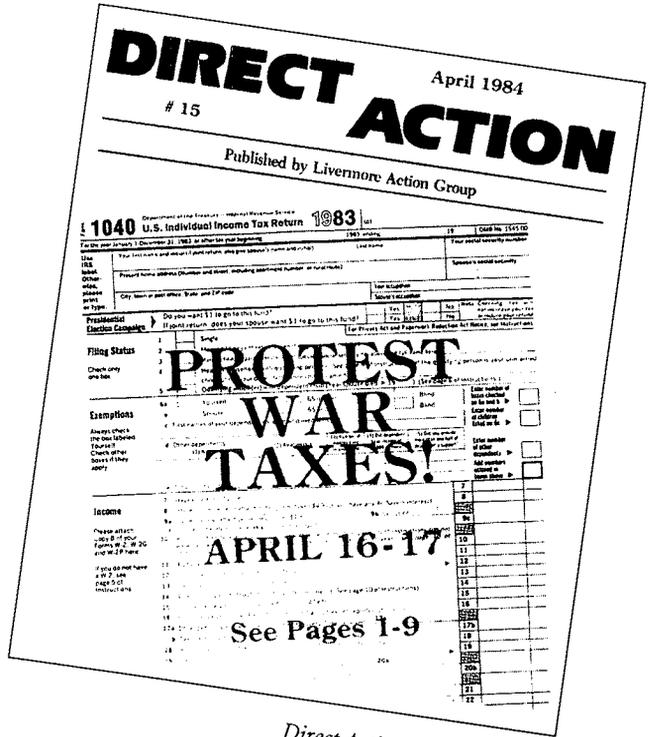
how to make them a success, but how to deal with their failure. Where were Craig and Claudia when we were trying to figure out what actions to call? Where were they when we split over Livermore versus the financial district? Missing, ever since their Strategy Proposal didn't get everyone's unquestioning devotion.

Claudia looked around. "LAG dropped the ball on the Strategy Proposal last Fall. That might have spared us the mess we're in now. But we need to do what we can. We're proposing two all-day meetings, a couple of weeks apart. The first will deal with the crisis, and hopefully the second can come up with some concrete steps to move forward."

"It's an excellent idea," Belinda said. "There needs to be wider input. We need to reach out to all the old affinity groups, try to get as many people as possible together. Coordinating Council can't deal with the problems alone."

I folded my arms across my chest. As if it were Coordinating Council's fault that no one was working on the April actions! Yet once again, everyone seemed to be nodding.

After a moment, Melissa spoke up. "I'm not opposed to having these meetings," she said, looking at Claudia. "But I think it's ridiculous to call them 'Crisis' meetings. LAG has been one of the most successful grassroots groups in the country the past two years. Just because we're in a slump after the Euromissiles and Grenada is no reason to despair. We need to have more faith



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in ourselves than that. We need to look at what has worked for us in the past — blockades at Livermore — and have the courage and conviction to stick with it.”

Claudia let out an exasperated sigh, but before she could speak, Artemis stepped in as facilitator. “This is not the time to debate the future of LAG,” she said. “What we need to consider is whether or not to call the meetings that have been proposed. Are you objecting?”

“I suppose not,” Melissa said.

“Does anyone else object?”

I looked around. Wasn’t there anyone else who felt how outrageous this was? Not a soul spoke. I looked at Artemis, who peered back quizzically. Now or never, I thought.

Artemis took a breath. “If there are no objections —”

I scowled and looked away. I could drag the discussion out, but what was the point? We could spend all night hashing it over, and still come to the same morbid conclusion. Let’s just get on with the meeting.

“ — then we have consensus.”

Craig looked triumphant. “We’ll pin the dates and location down, and call the office later in the week,” he said. “Now if you’ll excuse us...” The two of them left so quickly they seemed to suck the air out of the room. People slouched in their seats, and no one spoke.

I looked down the hall after them. Thanks a lot, I thought. Glad you could drop in. Come by again when you’re in town.

Artemis took a deep breath, and I emulated her, letting out a sigh on the exhale. Consenting that we were in crisis wasn’t a very inspirational opening, and LAG finances were next on the agenda.

Jenny lurched to her feet. She shuffled her notes, dropped a paper, and retrieved it. I hadn’t heard directly from her that she was pregnant, but Angie had mentioned it again, and told me that Jenny and Raoul were planning to have the baby. LAG finances were probably the furthest thing from her mind.

She ran down the grim figures: \$3000 in debt, with no relief in sight. The Spring mailing, calling for support for the April actions, was barely bringing in enough to keep up with current expenses. And even if LAG could agree on an action around the Convention, it could hardly be expected to raise much money.

Jenny folded up her papers and glanced around the room like a trapped animal searching for an escape. “So that’s it,” she said tentatively.

“Are there any questions?” Artemis asked.

“Yeah,” Melissa said. “What ever happened with those bumper stickers about not voting?”

I cringed for Jenny. The infamous bumper stickers, which read, “Don’t Vote: It Only Encourages Them,” had been Karina’s idea. But Jenny had been the one to okay the funds for printing them.

"So what happened?" Melissa demanded.

"I thought we agreed that they couldn't be used," Mort interrupted. "That's a stupid message to put out when we're trying to build coalitions around the Convention."

"So we had to destroy \$300 worth of bumper stickers?" Melissa said scornfully. "As if our finances aren't bad enough already."

"No, no," Jenny said hurriedly. "We didn't destroy them. We just cut LAG's name off the bottom." She glanced around the circle beseechingly.

Melissa looked incredulous. "You're still going to sell them?"

"Why not?" Karina cut in. "You never said we couldn't sell them. You just said it couldn't go out with LAG's name on it. Anyway, it's true. Voting is a fraud. Why are people so afraid of the truth?"

Melissa was on the edge of her chair, but Walt intervened. "Come on, we sell all kinds of bumper stickers and buttons. No one thinks that we endorse every slogan on them. We need the money. As long as LAG's name isn't on them...."

"Let's talk about the April actions," Sara pleaded, and no one contradicted her. Jenny looked relieved, and retreated to her corner.

Karina, with one last glare at Melissa,

launched into a report on the San Francisco Tax Day actions set for Monday, April 16th. "The big news is that Henry Kissinger is coming to town the same day. The Central America groups have called a rally at the Hilton for noon. We're moving our starting time back so we can be part of it, and then we'll march to the financial district for our actions. Probably a lot of people will come with us."

I was lukewarm on the Kissinger protest. Celebrity demos were usually a bore, a bunch of people marching in a circle chanting slogans. Just our luck to

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*Flyer for an affinity group action at Wells Fargo bank, planned as part of LAG's Tax Day protest in April 1984.*

have it fall on the same day as the action we'd been planning for months. "How many AGs are doing financial district actions?" I asked.

"It's looking really good," Karina said. "We have eight affinity groups confirmed, and several more possibilities."

Whoopie, I thought. As if eight AGs was some phenomenal number. The big Livermore blockades had a hundred or more. I knew better than to say that out loud, though, because the April Livermore demo was next on the agenda. And if it drew eight AGs, it would be a miracle. Hardly anyone had been showing up at the spokescouncils. And to complicate matters further, Daniel and Melissa had been pushing the idea of doing part of the action at Site 300, Livermore Lab's non-nuclear test area. Sure, it was still part of the Lab. But it meant that our blockade at the Lab gates would be even smaller.

Walt gave the Livermore report, which I appreciated, since I'd been giving it every week. As I expected, no one was very interested, except for one item. The previous day, Walt told us, Imagine affinity group had done its third annual April Fools Day action at the Lab. It was a routine action until the cops came for Pilgrim, who was taking the forty-second bust of his career. Ordered to stand, Pilgrim didn't budge. The arresting officer tried a wrist-lock, got it wrong, and fractured Pilgrim's seventy-year-old wrist in two places.

I flexed my arm involuntarily as Walt concluded his report. "We'll bring a lawsuit against them," he said. "But folks doing the April action need to realize that the police are upping the ante out at the Lab."

"Not just at Livermore," Hank said. "It'll be the same in the City. With the Convention coming up, you know the pigs have orders to keep things under control."

What a perfect segue into the next part of our agenda. Another spokescouncil had met the previous day, trying to break the logjam around the Democratic Convention. To my relief, agreement had been reached to endorse People's Convention as well as the Freeze's "Vote Peace in 1984" rally.

But discussions of a LAG protest had stalemated again. Half of the people were determined to protest in the City, the other half insistent that LAG should steer clear of the morass.

I sank into the couch. How could I be holding onto any hope? As if Melissa was going to budge. As if Karina was going to temper her rhetoric. As if Raoul was going to bother showing up at a LAG meeting again.

But without a Convention protest, we had nothing. Oh, there was some vague talk about a September action at Livermore. But given how thrilled everyone was with April, another Lab protest seemed like a dead letter. The Convention was our only hope.

Hank shuffled in his chair. "What more is there to talk about? The meetings have been split right down the middle. There's not a hell of a lot more we can do..."

Sara took a sharp breath. "We can't just drop it. There was a decision in December that we would organize something."

"There was obviously no consensus yesterday," Hank tossed back.

"Oh, I see," Sara said petulantly. "We're just dropping the previous decision?"

Melissa's jaw jutted out. "There was never a consensus on a specific action. And there clearly won't be. We have a responsibility to everyone in the group, not just the action junkies."

"Just as I thought," Karina said with a toss of her head. "People are getting scared. We're finding out who really believes in direct action."

Several hands went up. Before anyone could speak, Artemis held up both of her hands for silence. "This is getting personal. Could we all stop for a moment and take a breath together?"

People followed her request, but the exasperated exhales hardly sounded encouraging. I raised my hand, more to preempt Karina and Melissa than because I had something particular to say.

"Consensus requires patience," I said. I looked around the room. "We aren't that far apart, are we? No one wants to sabotage the Democrats. We just want to hold them accountable." I glanced over at Jenny. She seemed lost in her own thoughts, but I tried to draw her in. "Some people are working on protests exposing the corporate connections, the War Chest Tours. Can't LAG get behind that?"

Jenny at least looked up, but Melissa jumped in. "A message about corporate connections will get lost," she said. "The media would never grasp it."

"The point isn't the media," Sara said. "It's a question of integrity, of seeing an injustice and protesting it. That's what LAG should be doing."

Melissa looked pained. "I'm getting sick and tired of people trying to hijack LAG's name for every protest they think up. LAG was formed to do protests at Livermore Lab. Fine, go run around in San Francisco. Just keep LAG's name out of it."

Not this debate again, I thought. I glanced at Jenny, who was staring at the floor. What was dragging her down? Her condition, the meeting, or both? Why wouldn't she speak up about the War Chest Tours? Had she and Raoul and Jacey already decided to dump LAG and organize separately?

And what about Karina? She must have some plan for protesting the Democrats. Was she writing off LAG too, going on some adventurist spree and leaving us in the cold? I couldn't believe it, two LAG staffers completely ditching the group.

As if that weren't enough, Belinda chose that moment to offer up her unique perspective. "Why is Coordinating Council even discussing this? No decision can be made here. It's for the spokescouncil to decide —"

"Or not decide," Karina interrupted.

“— or *not* decide.” Belinda glowered. “We have that prerogative.”

“Coordinating Council is empowered to set up meetings,” I pleaded. “We can call another spokescouncil to try to reach consensus.”

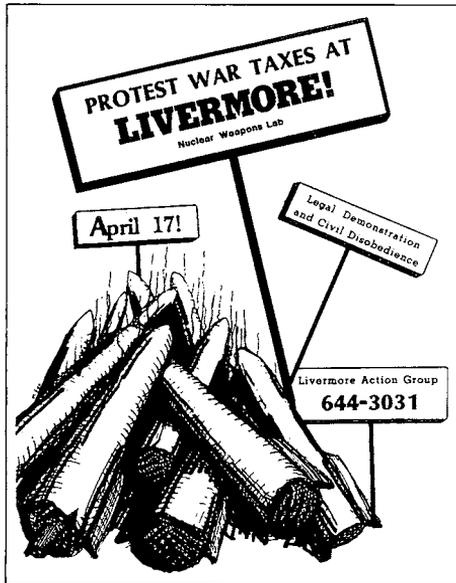
“Oh great,” Karina groaned. “Another useless meeting.”

I shot a harried look at her, but she was staring off into space. Around the room, heads hung in discouragement. For a moment, no one spoke. I looked around at Jenny, Karina, Sara, Doc... Come on! Someone back me up! Are we going to let it all slip away?

It was Artemis who broke the silence. She wasn't a hardcore pacifist like Melissa, but she struck me as more likely to get arrested hugging a tree than shutting a street. She sat up in her chair. Her gray-black hair tumbled over her

shoulders. “I want to take a moment and acknowledge the passion in this room,” she said. “I'm hearing strong commitment to direct action at the Convention, and equally powerful concerns about the safety and the political wisdom of street demonstrations. I want to be especially sure these concerns get heard.”

A knowing smile crossed Melissa's lips. But her satisfaction evaporated as Artemis continued. “Sometimes, though, a situation cries out for action. Even if we don't see what it will accomplish, even if there are risks involved, we are compelled to act.” She looked around the circle. “When we



*Flyer for the April 1984 Livermore Lab action.*

plant the seeds of truth, we don't know what fruit they will bear. Months or even years later our actions may fire the souls of people we've never met. That's the enduring power of direct action. If we fail to act, that possibility is lost forever.”

As Artemis paused, I almost applauded. Walt nodded silently. Sara twisted a strand of her hair. Belinda looked troubled, Mort pensive. Melissa scowled, while Karina smiled to herself.

After a moment, Doc cleared his throat. “It's a moment like this that's the true test of consensus, isn't it? How do we formulate a proposal that takes everyone's concerns into account?”

Hank folded his hands and rolled his eyes heavenward. "Pray for a miracle?"

I laughed, but Melissa didn't seem amused. "So what are you proposing," she challenged Artemis. "That LAG organize a protest in the City?"

"I'm not proposing anything," Artemis said calmly. "I'm just saying that when so many people are inspired to act, maybe the rest of us need to sit up and listen."

Here at last was an opening. If only someone would take it. I considered speaking up myself. But the initiative needed to come from someone who was already organizing street actions. One of them needed to take the lead, and I'd be right behind them. I looked at Karina, Jenny, Sara — none spoke.

Finally Doc raised his hand. "I think we're making a mistake by looking to a spokescouncil to come up with the answer," he said in a troubled voice. "Large meetings are great for airing concerns, and for ratifying final proposals. But as far as synthesizing ideas into a concrete proposal, we should delegate a smaller group to do it."

"Good suggestion," Artemis said, facilitating again. "It sounds like you're suggesting that people with strong feelings set up a meeting, formulate the various ideas into a proposal, and bring it to the next spokescouncil."

Amazing, I thought. A voice of reason. Maybe we could work this out after all. Maybe I'd been demanding too much, too fast. Just be patient. Give us a little more time, and we might yet pull off an action.

Around the room, people nodded. Even Melissa seemed to grudgingly accept the idea. For a moment no one spoke. I settled back in my seat. Good job, Artemis. Now change the subject. Let's get through this meeting without another fight.

Next to me, Sara raised her hand. "I'm fine with setting up a work group. But whatever we do, it needs to be direct action. Direct action defines LAG. If we have a message to convey, it isn't going to be done by giving speeches or drafting a 'People's Platform.' We need to be out in the street."

Several hands shot up. Oh, no. Couldn't we have left well-enough alone?

Monique, who had barely spoken all evening, was first. "There is no way my affinity group is going to agree to that," she said. "The Walnettos may endorse a rally, but we are not going to authorize a street protest."

"Thank you," Melissa said in a loud voice. "If LAG really wants to be radical, we should just ignore the whole Convention."

"Well, then stay home," Karina said.

"Try that yourself," Mort muttered.

A half-dozen more hands went up. I slumped in discouragement. Even Artemis seemed dismayed. "Let's all stop and take a breath," she urged. "Let's remember why we're here."

People did pause for a moment, and after more grumbling agreed to move on with the agenda. It was nearly eleven, and amid the general grouching about

the late hour, it wasn't clear whether we had consensed on setting up the smaller work group to synthesize a proposal. We'd have to deal with it next week.

We trudged through the last few items without incident. After a few announcements, the meeting broke up. No blood was shed as we parted, but the farewells lacked their accustomed warmth.

I was hoping to hitch a ride home with Jenny. We needed to talk. Time was running out, and with Raoul and Sid unwilling even to attend Coordinating Council, Jenny was the key to keeping the War Chest Tours in LAG. Why had she been so quiet at the meeting? Had she given up on LAG? Or was it because by the Convention, she'd be five months pregnant? I wondered how much she'd even be involved in the protests.

I tried to catch her eye as she hugged Karina. But she turned and started a conversation with Doc. I thought about interrupting to ask for a ride, but Mort came up and invited me to ride back with him and Hank. I hesitated a moment, then picked up my jacket and followed them out the door.

As we trailed Mort toward his car, Hank looked at me with a worried expression. "So how are you doing?"

"Fine," I said, surprised at his concern. "Why?"

"I heard about you and Holly splitting up."

I stopped in my tracks. "Huh? Where did you hear that?"

He looked embarrassed. "Gee, I don't remember. Maybe I misinterpreted something...."

"Probably," I said, none too sure of myself. "At least as far as I know."

"Yeah, yeah, I'm sure it was my mistake," he said hurriedly.

Was it? Maybe Holly had confided in someone who didn't keep the secret. Was she just waiting for an opportunity to tell me? I felt a sinking in my heart. I never meant for it to go this far. Would she be at home when I got back? Hopefully she'd be awake, and we could talk right then. Maybe it wasn't too late.

"Hey, don't take it hard," Hank said. "Really, I'm sure I misinterpreted something."

I wasn't so sure. But Mort had come to a halt in front of us. "Where did I park?" he asked Hank. "I wasn't this far down, was I?"

Hank stopped and looked around. "No, we didn't even park on this street."

Mort scratched his head. "Then where were we?"

"I think we were over on Sanchez."

We retraced our steps and eventually located Mort's car. I got in the back seat. Up front, Mort and Hank talked about the nukecycle, which they had taken for a test ride over the weekend. I tried to put aside my worries and follow their discussion.

But I couldn't stop thinking about what to say to Holly when I got home. I cracked my window as we started across the Bay Bridge. The cold air streamed

across my forehead. Focus. This might be my last chance. I folded my hands in my lap. I gazed down at them then out the window. I better be clear on what I wanted.

Friday, April 13, 1984

I TARRIED AT the LAG office till almost eight, making last-ditch phone calls for the April 17th Livermore demo. I got a beer at the corner store and walked the long way home, swinging all the way up to Hillegass Street. Holly still wasn't back when I got home.

We needed to talk. Hank's rumor about her leaving turned out to be a false alarm, but it showed how out of touch Holly and I were. With the endless barrage of meetings, we hadn't spent an evening together for a week, and I had little idea what she was feeling.

Which was a worry. She was having dinner again with Caroline. If Holly were wavering, Caroline wasn't going to urge her to be patient. In fact, with Caroline house-hunting, they might decide to find a place together.

I opened the beer and ate some peanuts. Everything seemed up in the air. How to get people to the actions in the City and at Livermore next week? What to do at the Democratic Convention in July? Where to go with my relationships with Angie and Holly... Something had to be done. I just wasn't sure what.

I straightened up a stack of cassettes, watered the plants, and got the recycling together. I even tried to think about what I might say when Holly got home, but with no idea what she was thinking, it seemed pointless.

Why hadn't I talked with her earlier in the week? Not just to know what she was feeling, but to share my thoughts with her. My relationship with Angie seemed headed toward its natural end. Any day now we'd probably call it quits, at least as lovers. I should let Holly know it was her I wanted to be with for the long-term.

Was it, though? If only it were that simple. That's what I needed to figure out. A pang of guilt struck my heart — guilt for my vacillation, guilt for not having the answers, guilt for expecting Holly and Angie to wait around for me to make up my mind...

As I cracked a peanut, it occurred to me that there might be a baseball game on the radio. Baseball. I'd hardly thought about it all Spring. The season was already two weeks old. I flipped on the tuner and scanned the stations. Sure enough, the A's had a night game. I sat down and ate some more peanuts, picturing the white of the uniforms and bases against the deep brown of the infield dirt. I didn't recognize most of the players, though, and the slow pace aggravated my restless mood. When the commercials started, I switched it off.

I picked up my guitar and fiddled with a few chords, but a plant that I'd

overlooked distracted me. It was a fern that Holly and I had bought up on Telegraph the previous Summer. Its stems drooped. Needles fell off when I touched it. I got the water jar, and was telling myself I should be giving the plants more attention when I heard the lock turn in the apartment door. My chest tightened. I saw Holly, jaw set, packing her bags. I set down the water jar and leaned against the living room wall. The door swung open and she stepped in.

Her back was toward me as she pulled her key out of the door. I stood rooted in the living room. "Hi," I said. "How was your dinner?"

She turned toward me with a slight smile, and I was relieved that she looked happy. "We had a great time." She gave me a quick hug, then went to the kitchen and poured a cup of juice. "Caroline was telling me more about her trip to Nicaragua. She's decided to go to nursing school, get her degree, and go back down there. There's a real shortage of medical people."

I took a breath and put on a Bessie Smith tape. Had I just imagined all the tension between us? Maybe there wasn't so much to worry about after all.

Still, why not talk now and clear the air? Maybe this was the time to air our concerns, when it wasn't a crisis. Why delay?

Well, maybe it will go away altogether. You never know. Why stir up the muck if you don't have to?

Holly came into the living room and took a seat at the table. "I forgot how great it is to have someone who knows me so well," she said reflectively. "Caroline and I decided to do the Site 300 action together. We're going to hike in on Sunday night and occupy the test area. If we can find a place to hide in the underbrush, it could take them all day to find us, and they couldn't do any testing. A handful of people could shut the place down all week."

I paced behind her. "Sunday night? I thought the idea was to do Site 300 later in the week. You'll miss the financial district action Monday."

"Yeah," she said, turning in her chair so she could see me. "But if we do Site 300 on Sunday, we'll catch them off-guard and have a better chance of getting onto the site. I wasn't excited about the San Francisco action anyway, especially since I heard about the Kissinger protest happening the same day. It's just not my style."

"What about Livermore on Tuesday?" I felt a tinge of desperation in my voice. I still clung to the hope that on April 17th, as if by sheer force of tradition, the old guard would show up at the Lab and save the day. But if I couldn't count on Holly, who could I count on?

Count on Holly? The irony sank into my heart. Trust was a two-way street.

She turned back to the table. "Oh, I'll be at Livermore," she said matter-of-factly. She took a drink of juice. "I'll cite out if we get arrested at Site 300. I want to be at Livermore so we can keep leafletting the workers. We want to let them know that just because the peace camp closed, we haven't gone away."

I sank into the chair next to hers, straining not to show my relief. Holly would be at Livermore.

Okay, so she was using our demo to promote the peace camp. The key was that she would be there. Maybe the demo wasn't hopeless after all.

"I heard the peace camp found some land for the Fall," I said.

Holly yawned as she nodded. "Yeah, Norm met with the owner, and it looks like we may be able to reopen in September."

"That's great, Holly," I said. "I know how much you want that."

Her brow furrowed. "It's the only thing I've done since International Day that has mattered," she said. She gazed at her empty cup. "What I want more than anything is to feel like my work is touching people. At the peace camp, I could see it, especially when local people stopped by. I could see how isolated they felt, and that we helped bring them together."

I reached across the table and took her hand. I chided myself for the times I had argued with her about the peace camp, hammering away at some obscure political point. What did that have to do with Holly's reasons for being there? Why couldn't I trust her inclinations and give her my undivided support?

I squeezed her hand just as the tape player snapped off. An echo of Bessie's blues lingered in the air. Holly squeezed my hand back, but didn't look at me. Should I say something?

But what? This was hardly the time to interrogate her about our relationship.

Well, just tell her how I feel. Tell her how important she is to me. Here's the chance.

At that moment, Holly stretched and stood up. "I need to go to sleep," she said. She yawned. "Will you come tuck me in?"

I got up and started down the hall after her. Okay, I guess we weren't meant to have the conversation tonight.

But was Holly deliberately avoiding it? Maybe she sensed I was going to ask something, and went to bed to escape having to discuss it. Was she holding something back?

Surely not. That wasn't Holly's style. If she and Caroline were making plans, she would tell me....

She sat on the bed and took off her shoes. "I'm getting together with Sara tomorrow morning," she said.

"What are you two doing?" I asked. I didn't mean for it to sound like a challenge, but Holly looked up in surprise.

"Just hanging out," she said. "I think she's feeling pretty depressed over Karina, so I want to give her some support. She's been there for me when I've needed a friend this Spring."

She slipped off her slacks and pulled back the covers. "Are you going over to Hank's tonight?"

"Hank's? No, I don't think so." I had totally forgotten about Friday night pinball. "I need some personal space. I've got a People's Convention meeting all day tomorrow."

Holly pulled the covers up to her shoulders. Her thick hair tumbled over the pillow. I sat down on the edge of the mattress and stroked her head. She smiled, then closed her eyes. "Have a nice evening," she said.

I bent over and kissed her lips. "You mean so much to me, Holly."

She opened her eyes. They glistened in the dim light. "Thanks, Jeff. I love you." Her eyes closed, but a soft smile settled on her lips.

"Goodnight, sweetie," she whispered.

"Goodnight, Holly. I'll join you in a while."

I left the room carrying a faint glow of peace. But by the time I reached the living room, it had dissipated. The finance report I had to make the next day at the People's Convention meeting weighed on me. But in truth, my mind was stuck on Holly and Angie. I filled my pipe and went out on the deck. A misty fog shrouded the city, punctuated by the orange glow of streetlights. I gazed into the night, trying to discern the usual landmarks, but nothing stood out clearly.

What to do? I searched for a way out, but every road seemed blocked. Damn. I wasn't cut out for this sort of doubt. All I was getting from two relationships was two sets of worries: Who was I hurting? Who was I shortchanging? Who was going to dump me first? The way things were progressing, it might happen simultaneously.

I looked over my shoulder into the apartment. So much of my stuff, but so much of Holly's presence. I pictured her sitting on the living room floor, teacup at her side. I imagined her watering the plants near the living room window. I thought of her lying in bed, her blonde hair billowing over the sheets.

I shook my head. I remembered my first meetings with Holly, how sure I'd been that she was the one for me. How empty the past two years would have been without her. A raindrop flicked my face, then another. The fog melted into a light, cold mist. I shivered. It was time to make a decision.

"Angie, I have to stop seeing you." "This has to end, now." "It just isn't working for me..."

It wasn't going to be easy, however I phrased it. But it had to be done. I shivered again and turned to go inside. It was time to act.

Wednesday, April 18, 1984

WASH THE hall windows. Had to be done. Get a clearer view.

I'd been working all afternoon, polishing the plate glass, but it wasn't like I was giving it much attention. The past two days, I had a one-track mind, obsessing over Monday's Kissinger demo. Images of the demo leapt incessantly to my mind. Arriving with Angie. Arguing and going our own ways. The crowd, a thousand strong, packed onto the sidewalk by the row of riot cops.

The horse cops assembling at the corner. The chants that kept fading. Raoul and Jenny's AG going into the street. Skirmishes with the cops. More of us get in the street. Angie and I dodge the cops. The horses paw the concrete, poised to charge. And then the punks march in, black flag aloft, throwing the police into confusion! Occupying the intersection with a die-in. Clearing out when the cops charged. Retreating around the block — then standing by myself as Angie went off to get arrested.

A chill ran through me as I bent down to get the squeegee. I pictured Angie turning and walking away. Over and over, the scene played before my eyes. Turning and walking away. I'd coax the story forward. On to the arrests. Sara getting clubbed in the head by the cop. Sid getting beat up by undercovers. Hank coming up from behind and scaring the daylight out of me.

But try as I might to reach the end, the reel kept rewinding to Angie. Turning and walking away. Turning and walking away.

Friday, April 20, 1984

*He came closer to the city, and when he saw it he wept over it, saying, "If you only knew today what is needed for peace! But now you cannot see it."*

— *Jesus of Nazareth, quoted in Luke 19:41-42*

"NO, NO, DON'T nail the cross there!" Hank yelled as he ran toward the flatbed truck.

"I'm just trying to stabilize it," answered Les, a Mustard Seed AG stalwart. He knelt at the foot of the big wooden cross on the back of the truck.

"Use this rope — we can't go nailing crosses to the truck bed."

I tried not to laugh. There was irony in Hank even being present, let alone having such a central role in the Good Friday demo. Hank had spent his early years in a Catholic school, and still nurtured a smoldering resentment toward religion in general and Christianity in particular.

And this was a Christian protest, to be sure. Good Friday was a "traditional" date at Livermore Lab, predating the big blockades. I'd never been to one, so when Hank and Mort got recruited to drive the rented flatbed out to the demo, I told them I'd come along.

A couple of hundred people were scattered around the gravel parking lot across from the southwest corner of the Lab. Many carried homemade crosses, and several nuns in full regalia added a touch of color. Off to one side, a twenty-foot replica of a Cruise missile lay on the ground.

I looked at Hank, who had just handed the rope to Les. "How come you didn't haul the nukecycle out here?"

He cleared his throat and looked away. "I don't know what we could have done with it. It can't be carried, and it can't be pedaled."

“Still the problem with the chain?”

“Yeah. It was actually up and running outside my shop last weekend. But the damn chain keeps snapping. I have to find some way to ease the pressure.”

“Maybe if we pushed it first, so it had a rolling start,” I said.

“That would help. But as soon as we hit an incline, it would break.” He shook his head, then lowered his voice. “Speaking of breaks, I need one. Want to smoke a joint?”

I didn’t think getting high was going to enhance my enjoyment of the Good Friday action. “I’ll watch the truck,” I said. Hank wandered off to find Mort.

I turned back to the crowd, which seemed subdued. Here and there a small circle prayed or sang. Across the street, a couple of dozen state troopers put on their helmets and gloves and lined up along the chain-link fence of the Lab. I wondered how many people they would have to arrest. Maria had told me she expected about thirty, but hoped that other AGs would join at the last minute.

However many it was, it wasn’t going to change the outcome of our week of actions. So far there had been a grand total of eighty arrests at Livermore, counting fifteen at the Site 300 Test Area. Good Friday would push the week’s total just past one hundred — a blip on the radar. Reagan and his cronies weren’t losing any sleep.

And LAG’s financial district action had been even smaller. Of course, there was a reason — the near-riot at the Kissinger demo. With almost two hundred arrests, it siphoned off most people who planned to get arrested that day.

The Kissinger protest gave us an alibi for our small numbers, so I guess I should have appreciated it. But as often as I remembered Kissinger, I’d feel my jaw tighten. What was to celebrate? The biggest action of the year and I watched from the sidelines.

Folks who got busted at Kissinger suddenly seemed like a caste apart — the true radicals, willing to defy the state on a moment’s notice. The rest of us were relegated to tending the home fires, maintaining our dutiful presence at Livermore Lab.

Actually, Jenny and Sid, two of the Kissinger elite, were at the Good Friday demo. I walked over to where Jenny was staffing a literature table. “Hey, thanks for bringing Direct Action,” I said, straightening the stack on the front of the table. I looked over the flyers, most of which were for non-LAG organizing around the Democratic Convention.

Jenny looked at me suspiciously. I stepped around the table, reached out and rubbed her shoulder. “Glad to see you here. I was feeling a little out of place.”

She nodded but didn’t say anything. Did she think I was going to pressure her about the Convention? Or was she feeling guilty about drifting away from LAG? Maybe if I showed some support for the War Chest Tours without lobbying her, it would ease the tension between us. But how to start?

Luckily, Sid came jogging up and broke the ice. "Jeff Harrison, ace reporter for Direct Action, on the beat."

"Just call me Scoop," I said. A shaved patch on the side of Sid's head caught my eye. The shaving might be the latest punk fashion. But the row of stitches probably wasn't. "How's your battle scar?"

"I'll live," he said offhandedly.

Jenny reached out and touched his head, carefully examining the wound. "Yeah, it's healing."

My brow furrowed. "I heard you had to go to the hospital. What happened?"

Sid's eyes squinted for a moment. Then he cocked his head back. "After the cops started herding people into the trap behind the hotel, some of us, mainly punks, circled back down the far side. We were dragging newsstands and stuff into the street, creating obstructions. The cops were cordoning off Taylor Street, and they had left a line of squad cars unprotected. I couldn't resist. I got behind a car and started letting the air out of the tires. I wasn't trying to damage anything, just playing a joke on them. All of the sudden, two plainclothes cops came charging toward me. I tried to run, but they tackled me. Some punks ran over and tried to pull me away, but one of the cops had his arm around my neck, and I just about passed out."

"So they busted you?"

He shook his head sharply. "Not then. A bunch more punks came running up, people who had stayed out of the arrests. The plainclothes guys panic and let me go. The punks are trying to revive me, and I'm staggering along, when some cops come running up and pull guns on us! I'm still only semi-conscious, and then one of the cops whacks me in the head, and I'm totally out. Next thing I know, I'm in the hospital getting stitches. Then they take me back to jail and slap me with a felony for assaulting a cop." He looked at Jenny and they smiled as if at a private joke.

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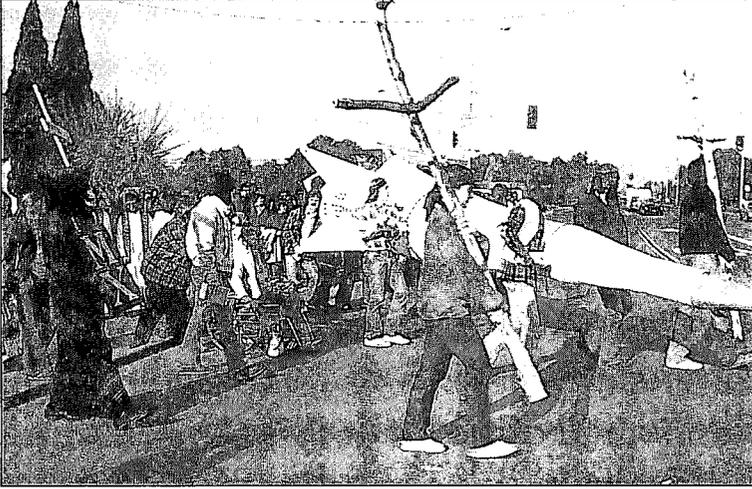
**Democratic War Chest Tours Through S.F. Financial District Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday July 16th, 18th and 19th 1984**

STARTING TIME: NOON

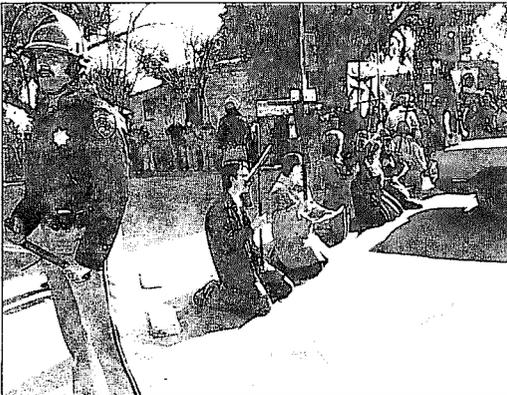
PLACE: MONDAY: HALL OF AMERICA, CALIFORNIA • LEGALITY WEDNESDAY: DEMOCRATIC CENTER HEADQUARTERS AT STUART THURSDAY: WORKSHOP CENTER

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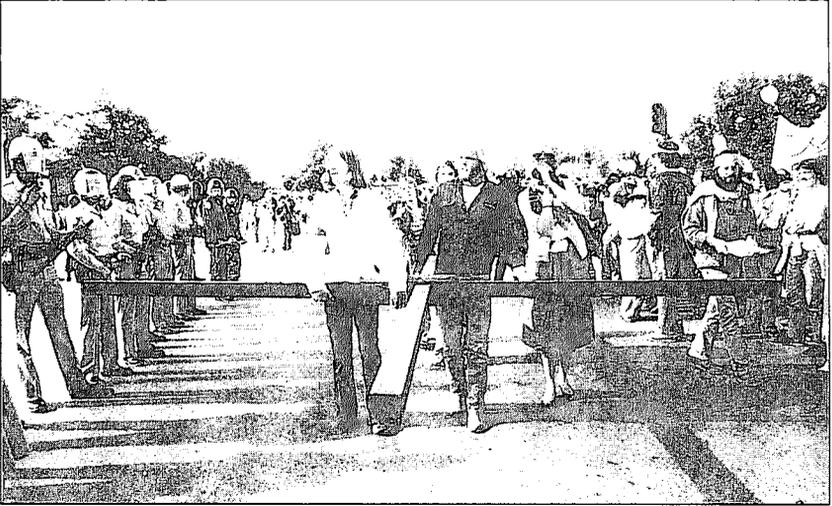
Flyer for the War Chest Tours. Planning meetings took place all through the Spring.



*Props, crosses, and missiles adorned the procession on Good Friday at Livermore Lab. At right, an AG deployed an early form of lockdown technology.*



*Christian groups have continued Good Friday protests at the Lab. For more information on upcoming actions at Livermore Lab, visit [www.directaction.org](http://www.directaction.org)*



“A felony,” I said. “Bad news.”

“Not really,” Sid said. “The lawyers say they’ll get dropped to misdemeanors.”

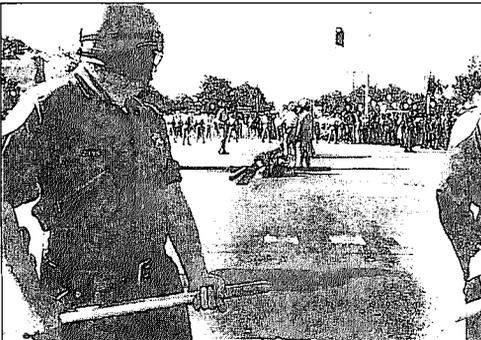
I looked at his shaved patch again. “Was it worth it?”

“Sure,” he answered without missing a beat. “In some ways we got our butts kicked. Six people ended up in the hospital. But we took the streets. The police had to go to brutal lengths to restore control. Three months before the Democratic Convention, we forced them to lay bare the real basis of their power.”

Jenny was focused on Sid, and I felt a twinge of jealousy. I thought about Angie, remembering her chagrin when I bowed out of the Kissinger demo. I scuffed my shoe in the gravel. For once, couldn’t I have dropped my worries and joined the crowd? Sure, I’d have been flaking on my obligations at

Livermore the following day. Major responsibilities, etc., etc. Great excuse. But I’d spent the past four days feeling like I couldn’t pull the trigger. The clarion of revolution had sounded, and I’d rolled over and gone back to sleep.

Enough brooding, already. I picked up a flyer for the War Chest Tours that



bore Sid's cut-and-paste imprint. "Nice design," I said. "How is the Kissinger demo going to affect your organizing?"

"They're raising the ante," Sid said. "We have to respond."

"Which means...?"

He bounced on his toes. "We've got to keep on the move. At Kissinger, we fell into their trap, fighting them for control of a single block. We played right into their strength."

I nodded. "Doc was saying the same thing."

Jenny glanced at Sid, then looked at me with more enthusiasm than I'd seen from her in a long time. "Last October, we showed what we can do by staying mobile. The point is to disrupt the whole downtown, not to capture a particular street. That's what May 22nd is about, a chance to try out new tactics."

"May 22nd, right," I said. "I'll be there." I made a mental note to talk to Angie about it when I saw her later that evening. Hopefully we could go together. With Angie, I'd feel like I belonged. And this time I'd clear my calendar so I could get arrested.

The Christians had gathered their crosses and formed into a loose circle. Led by a half-dozen clergy, the crowd bowed their heads in prayer. Jenny, Sid, and I hushed our conversation. Hank and Mort had come back from the van, and stood at a respectful distance. Even the cops stopped their shuffling about and observed a moment of silence.

The prayer ended, and a ragtag procession moved into the street. Several people carried the big Cruise missile right to the center of the intersection. Maria rolled her wheelchair alongside it. Les pulled out a length of chain and bolted the two of them to the missile. Melissa and a couple of her Spirit AG friends secured themselves to the opposite side. Around them, other protesters knelt and commenced a call-and-response litany.

The cops filed in, bolt cutters at the ready. But the arrests proceeded slowly as the officers seemed embarrassed about interrupting the Good Friday liturgy.

I turned to Sid and Jenny. "Now there's how you capture a street," I said.

For once, Sid was standing still. His eyes were glued to the protest. "Yeah," he said. "I'm taking notes."

THE SOLEMNITY of the action stayed with me all day, and I drew strength from having witnessed it. As I rode out to Angie's apartment that evening, it was clear what I had to say. We need to end this, now. The moment had arrived. However difficult, I had to do it.

The way things went when I arrived at her place, you'd have thought breaking up would have gotten easier. The front door would only open partway due to a big heap of stuff that looked like rejects from a garage sale. We cleared a space on the couch, sat down, and picked up right where we left off at the Kissinger demo — arguing.

The only thing was, we'd switched sides. After talking to Jenny and Sid at the Lab, I'd adopted their view that we had to respond to the Kissinger arrests with fresh tactics, show the cops that we couldn't be suppressed.

But Angie responded in a detached voice "I'm tired of the whole us-against-them mentality. They arrested us, so we lost that round. Now we have to go back and win the next round. It's totally reactionary."

A lightbulb with no shade glared at me. "So we should let them get away with beating people?"

She laughed dryly. "As if our protests are going to stop them."

"We have to do something!"

"Then how about something more creative than another protest."

I looked away in frustration. This was not how I pictured our last night. I'd seen us going for a walk, talking things over under the moonlight, reluctantly agreeing that it was best to end our relationship, coming back to her apartment, going into her room, and making passionate love one last time...

I reached out and took her hand. "This is our first night together in a week," I said. "Is this how we want to spend it?"

She looked down. I paused for a moment, then suggested we go into her room.

She shook her head without looking up. "No, we need to talk, Jeff."

"We can talk in your room, can't we?"

"We can't have a serious conversation in there." Her eyes rose and met mine, as if challenging me to accept her terms of negotiation.

Miffed at her businesslike manner, I one-upped her. "If we're going to talk, then let's go out for a walk." I picked up my jacket to underscore my point. She went silently to her room, returned with a sweater and scarf, and led the way out the door.

We headed away from the freeway, up the Oakland Hills. I was feeling stretched about as far as I could go, and I had a notion to blurt out, "Let's just call it quits. I'm going home right now."

But as we found ourselves retracing a route we had walked one night back in January, back when things were so different between us, my exasperation dissolved in a wistful sigh. I pulled a leaf off a bush and tore it into little pieces.

Angie lit a cigarette. She rarely smoked, but when she did, she did it with a vengeance. She stared straight ahead, blowing out long streams of smoke that curled around her head as we strode uphill. Her hair was pulled back in two thick braids that fell across her shoulders. She turned and looked up at me. "I'm leaving," she said in a low voice. "I've decided to go to Portland."

My head felt thick and heavy. I barely registered her words as she told me that she and Jenny were planning to move out of their apartment anyway, that she'd been wanting to quit her job, that she wanted to spend time with her friend Isabel while she was pregnant — so she'd given everyone two weeks' notice and was leaving for Portland in early May.

I could hear the words, but it was hard to grasp. My knees felt weak, and I must have wobbled a bit, because Angie reached out and put her arm around me. I pulled her close, steadying myself. Was it my fault? Did my ambivalence drive her away? Was it too late to speak up? Yet what would I say?

"You're moving to Portland?" I finally managed.

"I don't know if I'm moving there or not," she said. "I just need to get away for awhile, see someplace different, do some thinking. I don't want anything to do with the Democratic Convention this Summer. And I need to get out of this." She gestured at me and herself, then took a long draw on her cigarette. "When Holly and I went to the Equinox ritual, it was so clear. Holly's been my friend as long as I've been in LAG. She's the one who got Jenny and me involved in the newspaper."

I nodded, and she continued in a contemplative voice. "At the Equinox ritual, we got into small circles. First we passed a bowl of salt water counterclockwise, and each person told of a time they felt powerless. Then we passed pure water clockwise, and spoke of a time we felt powerful. At the end, we sprinkled some of the water on our heads and said, 'I bless my power.'"

She took one last draw on her cigarette, knelt and stubbed it out, then flicked it into a trash can. "Being in my power means doing what would be best for me and the people I love. Whatever happens between you and Holly, I don't want to be part of it."

She looked up at the sky as if searching for a special star. I put my arms around her again, and she laid her head against my chest. We rocked gently back and forth. Tears trickled from my eyes and trailed down my cheeks. She'll never return. This is the end. I pictured her climbing into a car and disappearing forever.

This was the only way out. I belonged with Holly. If I had any hope of saving that relationship, it had to be now.

Then why was it so hard? Angie and I had always known it wouldn't last. It wasn't exactly a big shock.

But now the end was real. I felt a wave of nostalgia for our time together — working at the office, spraypainting, making love, looking at art, going to actions... Would I even know her in a year?

appearance at the People's Convention's Saturday evening program. But any formal link was out of the question. The Revolutionary Workers Party's wheeling and dealing had fallen through. I felt bugged at myself for not having objected more loudly to the closed-door process back in the Spring.

So here we were at the main event, held at Laney Community College in downtown Oakland. I had just come from a steering committee meeting. The Jesse Jackson fiasco cast a pall over the RWP clique, and their response was to circle the wagons. I settled for voicing my one overriding concern: that no one from the RWP — and particularly not Lionel, their head honcho — “facilitate” the final plenary, when the People's Platform was to be adopted. I addressed my objection directly to Lionel and a couple of other RWPers. It felt good to make one last stand for democracy.

“No problem,” Lionel himself told me. “I don't want to do it. We'll ask someone from the Federation for Afro-American Unity. How's that suit you?”

Great, I thought. A nice tokenistic touch. But it beat having Lionel railroading the RWP agenda.

Having delivered myself of that burden, I left the meeting. I walked out into the lobby and got a drink of water. A poster on the wall listed afternoon workshops. Nathaniel was doing a slide show on the history of nonviolent resistance. CISPES had a report from the front lines in El Salvador. Daniel was helping facilitate a workshop on the upcoming action at Bohemian Grove.

Holly would probably be at the Boho Grove workshop. The previous day she'd been on her way to an overnight date with Norm, and even though she stopped long enough to tell me that she and Norm weren't lovers any more, it seemed like she was generally avoiding me. She had plans that evening with Sara, and had talked about spending the night in the City. Was it Angie's

**COME and JOIN US**

THE PEOPLE'S CONVENTION will provide an opportunity for us to actively support those progressive issues being raised on the issue of the Democratic convention by Jesse Jackson and to raise issues that may not come up at all on the inside. Furthermore, it gives us the chance to share issues and explore ways of supporting each other's local efforts and building ongoing organizations at the local, state and national levels.

AT THE PEOPLE'S CONVENTION, we want to strategize on how to enhance our ability to capture political power on a local level and to amplify our efforts nationally. Starting with 1984, we can make significant gains on a local level in electing progressive candidates who can serve the grassroots movements in our struggle for JOBS, PEACE AND FREEDOM.

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*People's Convention was a leftist-inspired alternative gathering aimed at bringing together the left wing of the Democratic constituency with radical non-electoral groups.*

return, or a deeper malaise? How weird it would be if we ran into each other at People's Convention, former friends meeting by chance.

I looked back at the schedule. Claudia was co-facilitating a panel discussion on alternative media that I knew I should be at. I wanted to show her there weren't hard feelings about our argument a few weeks before. What better way than sitting through her panel?

Then I looked out the lobby windows at the central plaza. A big swath of the plaza was bathed in sunlight. If I had to sit, it could at least be in the sun. Why not set up a LAG table? Get some of our own alternative media out to the masses.

The plaza was a concrete square punctuated by steel benches and potted trees. Bland buildings of brick and glass abutted all sides. I found a picnic table in the sun and set up shop, laying out a half-dozen issues of *Direct Action* and a tray of buttons for all and sundry causes. Our bright red "Blockade Livermore" bumper stickers went up front, while the "Don't Vote" ones, with LAG's name neatly trimmed off the bottom, got tucked behind the buttons.

Conventioneers — mainly lefties from the Bay Area, with a smattering of visitors from around the country — drifted past the table for an hour or so, occasionally stopping to ask a question or offer an opinion. Nothing too taxing. I pictured a low-key afternoon, following which I might skip the evening plenary and benefit concert. If Jesse Jackson made the scene, he'd have to get along without me. How about a long walk around Berkeley? Later on, I could get high and look at art books, maybe play some guitar. Come back refreshed the next day.

A drop of sweat fell into my eye. I wished I had some cold water, but I didn't want to go look for it. Why didn't we have strolling vendors, like at a baseball game? Baseball. For all I knew, the A's might be playing just down the freeway, two BART stations away. Was there ever such a gorgeous afternoon to be out at the ballpark? Midway up the right field bleachers, beer in hand, gazing down at the vast expanse of fresh-mown grass.

I looked out across the barren plaza. Even Santa Rita jail was greener than this place. I remembered my last day in jail, a year earlier, how I lay in the little patch of grass waiting for my name to be called over the loudspeaker. If only it were that simple today: "Jeffrey Harrison, thank you for your contribution to global revolution. You may now go home with a clean conscience."

The plaza seemed to undulate as the heat rose from the parched pavement. The potted trees drooped like they were melting. Off in the distance, I spied two figures heading my way. Against the glaring backdrop they were silhouettes, one tall and massive, the other short and wiry. Like Raoul and Jenny. Was I hallucinating? Raoul at the People's Convention? What for, to tell me that Melissa was leading the War Chest Tours?

As the spectre drifted closer, I ventured a few words: "Hey, you guys, what's up?"

"We've come to relieve your watch, soldier," Raoul called out. "At ease!"

"Wow," I said, unable to contain my surprise. "What's the occasion?"

Jenny brushed her wavy hair back over her shoulders. "We were down at Raoul's print shop, and decided to see how things were going here," she said. Her eyes fell on the "Don't Vote" bumper stickers, and I felt bad about hiding them.

"So when does People's Convention nominate Jesse Jackson?" Raoul said.

I smiled wanly. "I'm not sure. It's a back room deal."

"Not surprising," Raoul said.

"Not really," I said hastily. "People's Convention is about networking, not nominations." I felt irritated at Raoul for making me defend People's Convention. I cast for another subject. "So, how's the War Chest Tour plans?"

Jenny looked concerned. "It's hard to say. The meetings have been amazing. There's a whole community forming around this, people I never met before. As far as the Tours themselves, well, I'm trying not to worry about how many people show up."

Raoul's eyes narrowed. "We've covered the bases. Word is out. We'll see who has the guts to be there when it really matters."

I thought of having to miss the Monday Tour because of the end of People's Convention. "I'll be there Wednesday, for sure," I said. "And Thursday."

Raoul took a seat at the picnic table and flipped through the box of buttons. Jenny looked at me carefully. "Have you talked to Angie?"

I looked up quickly. "No, have you?"

Jenny shook her head. "I probably won't be the first person she calls," she said.

I wondered if I would be. "I think she gets in late tomorrow," I said. "I'm hoping to see her Monday." It surprised me that I hadn't been thinking more about Angie. Maybe I'd let go more than I realized.

I accepted a dollar from Raoul for a button, then looked up and saw Melissa walking our way. I'd heard she was around, but it was the first time I'd seen her. I looked from Melissa to Raoul. There you have the two extremes of it, I thought. Their presence felt like an affirmation, not so much of People's Convention, but of my conviction that we were all in the struggle together. I'd be at their events, and here they were at mine.

Then I remembered the graffiti on the office window. Oh, boy. I stepped out to intercept Melissa with a hug, hoping she would say hi and continue on her way to a workshop. But she came over to the table and set her daypack down. "Hi, Jenny," she said. "Did you ever talk to Raoul about who had to clean up the mess he left at the office?"

Jenny shuffled her feet and didn't answer. Melissa continued to act as if Raoul weren't present. "I wish I got paid for every time I had to pick up after someone so immature."

Raoul stood up. "You can say it to me," he said. "I can handle it."

Melissa slowly turned to face him. "Maybe when people grow up and stop spraypainting and running around in the streets, we might actually accomplish something."

Raoul stiffened. "So what are you accomplishing?"

"I'm staying focused on what really matters," she said. "Not chasing after every new fad that comes along."

"Great," Raoul said, exchanging a knowing look with Jenny. "Let's go back to Livermore where we can be completely safe and totally irrelevant."

I winced, thinking of the April Livermore demo. Melissa put her hands on her hips. "You act like street protests are this great moment of freedom," she said impatiently. "But what's free about everyone following the person with the biggest mouth? How's it different than the Democrats following the corporation with the biggest checkbook?"

I had to admit she had a point. At City protests, I never got that feeling of shared decision-making, of direct democracy, that we'd had at Livermore and Vandenberg.

Raoul frowned. "If people come to a protest and act like sheep, you can't prevent it. You can't force people to be free. All you can do is create opportunities."

"Opportunities for what?" Melissa said, her eyes widening. "That's the whole point. For what?"

Big chance of agreement on that question, I thought. Yet it wasn't like the two of them were miles apart. Neither one had any use for the Democrats. Both believed that direct action was the only way to change the world. What we needed was a middle voice. An anarchist feminist pacifist street protester. Sara! Where was she when we needed her?

I tried to get between them. "We're talking about two different types of actions here. It's not a contradiction. There's no reason we can't be doing both."

"No reason except nonviolence," Melissa scoffed. "You're not going to see me trying to start a riot."

"We're not going to see you, period," Raoul shot back. "If you're scared to be where the action is, stay home."

Melissa stuck her face right in his. "What do you know about courage? You'll go start trouble with the police, then run away. So what will the police do? They'll go and take out their frustration on homeless people who can't run away. That's real brave."

Raoul took a step back, and I tried again to intervene. "This isn't accomplishing anything. What good does it do to trash each other's work?"

Melissa turned on me. "Work, I respect. Running around like a bunch of kids, seeing what sort of trouble you can cause, I don't respect."

"Melissa," I said sharply, "it isn't about age. There might be something happening that you don't understand."

"Maybe there's something *you* don't understand," she snapped back. "Like

principles.” She slung her daypack over her shoulder, gave me one last aggravated look, and stalked off.

I watched her go, retracing my words. Was I that offensive? I felt an impulse to call after her. But the words stuck in my throat. I’d spoken the truth. I wasn’t going to apologize for that. If she didn’t like it, was it my problem?

Raoul turned to Jenny. “What a mother hen! Did you hear what she said about kids? That’s how she sees it. Kids are unruly, and adults have to keep them in line.”

Now I felt like I had to cover for Melissa. “She has good intentions,” I said. “She’s trying to do what’s best for LAG.”

Raoul eyed me coolly. “Yeah. It’s ‘for our own good.’ Where have we heard that one before? It’s all about control. Fear of spontaneity.” He turned to Jenny. “We need to get going if we’re going to be at Jacey’s by five,” he said.

Jenny cast an apologetic look at me. “We’d stay longer, but we have a meeting.”

“Sure,” I said. I stood up and gave her a one-armed hug. Raoul leaned back as I turned to him, so I just bid him goodbye. “Thanks for coming by,” I said. “Hope to see you Monday at the People’s Convention march, after the War Chest Tour.”

“Yeah, we’ll try,” Jenny answered.

As they walked away, I surveyed the plaza. Although it was only mid-afternoon, the shadows of the faceless buildings covered most of the area. I wished I had a sweatshirt. Was it too early to go home?

Damn. Why not go find Melissa and ask her to sign a permission slip?

I stood there a while longer, debating what to do. Finally, I started packing up the buttons and newspapers. As I did, weariness washed over me. I leaned one hand on the table and tossed the rest of the papers in the box. What a relief it would be to get away from all this.

Sunday, July 15, 1984

SHE WAS back. Well, at least as close as San Francisco. She called from Stonehenge around nine that evening. I wanted to get on BART and go straight over there, but Angie seemed to be hanging back.

“What’s going on?” I finally said, hurt that she wasn’t just as impatient to see me.

“I want to see you, too, Jeff,” she said. “But not tonight. I thought about it a lot on the drive down here, and I just don’t know about sleeping together while I’m here.”

“Why not?” I hadn’t even considered this possibility.

She sighed. “It doesn’t feel right. I mean with Holly. To come into town and sleep with you.”

"Oh, no," I said, "Our relationship is definitely open. It's different than in the Spring. Holly just had a fling with Norm last month."

Angie was silent. "It doesn't matter," she finally said. "It still feels the same to me."

My heart sank. I was glad we were on the phone and not in person. "So," I said quietly, "when will I see you?"

"Let's make plans," she said, lightening her tone. "How about Thursday, after the War Chest Tour?"

Thursday? What's wrong with Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday? But I held my tongue. No pressure. Just go along with Thursday. Probably something else will materialize along the way. "Okay," I said. "Thursday night, too?"

"Yeah," she said hesitantly. "I'll keep it open. Let's see how it feels then." I didn't say anything. After a moment, she picked up the thread. "I'll see you a lot this week. Starting with the War Chest Tour tomorrow."

"No," I said, wishing she were more tuned in. "It's the closing day of People's Convention."

"Why don't you skip it and come on the Tour?" A challenge lurked in her voice.

"I'm one of the core organizers," I said testily. "I can't just skip the final session."

"Sure, I understand," she said. "If you change your mind, that's where I'll be. Otherwise, I guess I won't be seeing you tomorrow."

"We have the People's Convention march at three," I said. "You should come to it after the Tour. That's why we set it for later. Do you want to meet up before the march?"

She was silent for a moment. "Let me get some sleep and I'll know better how much I can do. Right now, I'm exhausted from the drive down. I don't want to get sick. I'll have to see how I feel tomorrow after the War Chest Tour. But probably I'll be there."

"Great," I said with no conviction.

Her voice regained a little vivacity. "So, I want to get to bed now. I'll see you tomorrow, or Tuesday for sure."

I grasped at the possibility of seeing her the next day. "It'd be great if you made it to our march," I said. "I'm really looking forward to seeing you."

"Me, too," she said. "I'll talk to you soon."

Click. That was it. For a few minutes after she hung up, I just sat there on the living room floor with the phone dangling in my hand. So it all came to nothing? What was the point in seeing her Thursday afternoon, if she was just going to send me packing that evening?

But even in my gloom, something else was poking through. After all, what about last week when she told me she was coming back? Her voice had been all whispery then, and she'd told me she loved me. Something was out

of whack. How could she have changed so much? Once we saw each other, it would be different.

Monday, July 16, 1984

*Everything that is wrong-headed, cynical, and vicious in me today traces straight back to that evil hour in September of '69 when I decided to get heavily involved in the political process.*

— Dr. Hunter S. Thompson, “*Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail '72*”

I LEFT EARLY for the People’s Convention march to get away from People’s Convention. All morning I’d run errands, avoiding the final plenary. I could picture it: two dozen work groups getting up and reading their platform planks, to be debated and adopted by the larger group. What drama. What suspense.

But what really happened was worse. When I finally dropped in around noon, the ill-lit auditorium was half empty. Most people slumped in their seats, scarcely paying attention. The platform planks were being read, but it wasn’t the various work groups that were making presentations. It was Lionel, ensconced behind the rostrum, a John Deere hat on his head to show his solidarity with the rustic masses. He read each platform plank and called for a voice vote of acceptance. RWP ringers in the crowd guaranteed compliance.

“What’s going on?” I demanded of one of the other organizers near the back door. “Groups were supposed to read their own planks. And Lionel wasn’t supposed to be facilitating at all.”

“Yeah,” she said, avoiding my eyes. “We decided it would be too time-consuming to have each delegation go up and read their plank. And besides, the debates could get messy. So Lionel’s doing it. It’s more efficient.”

Efficiency? This was what I worked all Spring for? Efficiency?

I glared at Lionel, who droned on, never looking up. I simmered. Should I challenge the process, or just walk out? I looked around the auditorium for familiar faces. But between the dim light and the lowered heads, I saw no one I could count on. Disgusted, I turned on my heels and marched out, giving the door a hard shove behind me. Without speaking to another person, I headed straight for BART. Get to the City. Find the War Chest Tour. Maybe it’s not too late to join the real action.

I caught a train within minutes, but it wasn’t quite the escape I had hoped. Riding through the transbay tunnel, I chastised myself for not speaking up at the plenary. If Lionel was going to out and out lie to me, I had a right to disrupt him. Set the record straight.

For what, though? So a bunch of people could gape at me like I was some

loony who had wandered in off the street? Would even one person have supported me?

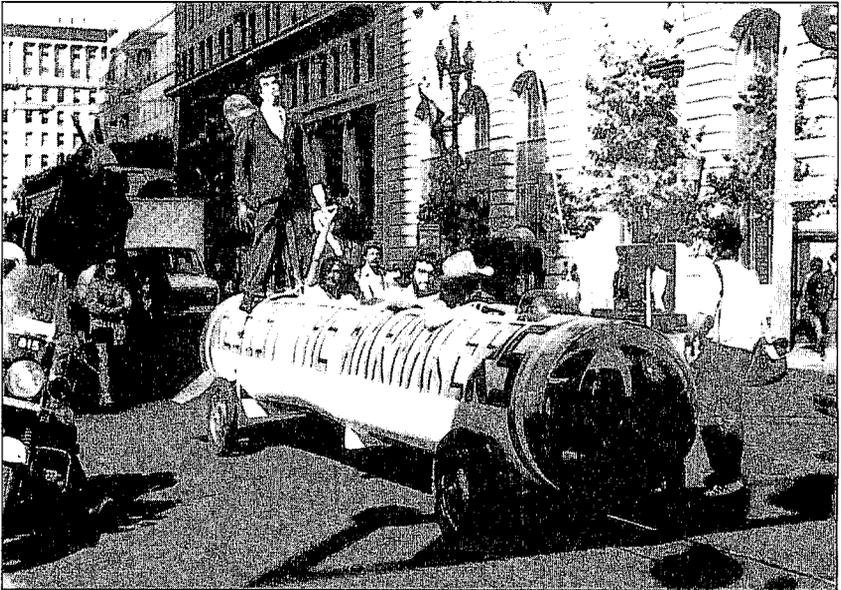
Was that the point? What about simply speaking the truth, plain and simple, and letting the chips fall where they may?

Too late now. Always too late. Probably too late to find the War Chest Tour. Why wasn't I part of it all along? I thought about all the fights over the Tours, how angry and polarized people had been, to the point of walking out. But however deep the misunderstandings ran, I knew in my heart that no one in LAG had lied to me. Right now, that seemed like a big deal.

I made it to the City by two o'clock and hurried into the financial district looking for some sign of the Tour. Hopefully I could find Angie in the crowd. Maybe we could skip the People's Convention march and go off, just the two of us.

But block after block looked like business as usual. I made it as far as B of A, and there wasn't so much as a cop in sight. Maybe I should ask the security guards if they knew. I went up to the big plate-glass doors and peered into the lobby. A guard slouched against a planter-box. He eyed me suspiciously, and I decided against knocking.

I meandered through the district, feeling more and more alienated. No one made eye contact, not the business-types, not the drivers, not even the



*The nukecycle was rolling for the People's Convention march, but the pedal and chain assembly wasn't completed. So the nukecycle was hitched to the back of a tractor and towed in the march down Market Street.*

bike messengers. I stopped and got a soft drink, and even the clerk didn't look up.

I ended up back on Market Street around quarter till three. I didn't want to go to the gathering spot for the People's Convention march yet, or I'd just wind up standing around for another hour. Maybe I should wander down south of Market and find a gallery or some good graffiti.

But who did I run into as I crossed Market? Hank, driving an old flatbed truck right up the street. "Hey, come help me find parking," he hollered, and I was hooked in again. For the best, I figured. Just see the march through, get some closure. Anyway, Angie might well be there. If she showed up, it would be worth the effort.

"Where's the nukecycle?" I asked Hank.

"I unloaded it back at Embarcadero Plaza. Mort and Lyle are watching it."

"So it's up and running?"

His grip on the wheel tightened. "No," he said in a low voice. "Never could get the chain to hold. We'll have to tow it."

"Oh." It wasn't that big a deal to me, but I could see that Hank was really depressed about it. "Too bad," I said.

"Yeah." He didn't look at me. "How many chances do you get to drive a nukecycle right up to the Democratic Convention?"

"Not many," I sympathized. "But there's still a few days left."

"No, this was it. This is the one day I'm taking off work."

"So you're not coming to any of the War Chest Tours?"

"No way. I'm not getting my head beat in for the Democrats. What's it gonna prove? Maybe I'll go to Rock Against Reagan, but not the Tours."

He wheeled into a gravel lot, and I let the matter drop. I'd about had my fill of politicking, of trying to persuade people to work together. If he doesn't want to be where the action is, fine. I'll find people who do.

We left the truck and hiked back to Embarcadero Plaza. Mort and Lyle stood guard over the nukecycle, which gleamed in the afternoon sun, replete with spoked wheels and a blue tailfin. In lieu of actual pilots, Hank had strapped in dummies wearing every mask he could lay his hands on — Reagan, Bush, Maggie Thatcher... Along the tailfin, he had painted "Livermore Action Group" in bold letters. "Had to let the Democrats know we were here," he said.

I smiled, but my eyes wandered from the nukecycle to the growing crowd, searching for Angie or any of the War Chest Tour people. Nothing so far. Relax. There was still time. They were probably on the way.

Mort came around the nukecycle and clapped me on the shoulder. I scowled. I was still upset with Mort, not just for being negative, but for being oblivious to boot. But this was hardly the place to hash it out. "I thought you'd be at the plenary this morning," I said by way of conversation.

"No, I had to work. Anyway, it wasn't like there were going to be any surprises."

I laughed ironically. “Well, not the sort you’d wish.” I told him about Lionel’s duplicity.

Mort shrugged. “Doesn’t surprise me. I thought the RWP had a little more integrity than that, but that’s the story on those sectarian groups. They may have good politics, but if you’re not a member, they don’t owe you anything.”

“Least of all the truth,” I said.

Five hundred people had gathered. I scanned the lineup. As promised, two big tractors were up in front. Hank worked with one of the farmers to hitch the nukeycycle to a towbar.

Earth First!, who hadn’t come near the People’s Convention itself, lined up with a banner protesting clear-cutting. Abalone Alliance brought a bunch of signs about Diablo Canyon. There was a cluster of nurses in uniform, a student group from S.F. State, and small contingents from several Labor unions — a more diverse mix than you’d see at a peace march. Now if only the War Chesters would show up to appreciate what we’ve got here. Surely they weren’t still marching, or I’d have seen some trace of them. Maybe they couldn’t be bothered. Could I blame them? I could think of places I’d rather be. Most of them involving Angie.

I sighed. Our Thursday night date seemed ages away.

A little after three, the monitors started lining us up. Fine, I thought. Someone has to get us going. Just don’t embarrass me by trying to keep us on the sidewalk. Especially if the War Chest Tour joins us. We’d take over Market Street with ease.

The arrival of the RWP honchos, fresh from hijacking the plenary session, dampened my mood. Naturally, they paraded right to the front with their



*Sista Boom, a women’s marching drum corps, enlivened many marches around the time of the 1984 Democratic Convention.*

banner. Lionel hoisted himself onto the back of one of the tractors and grabbed a bullhorn to tell us that the goal of the march was to deliver the People's Platform directly to the Democrats. I appreciated his insistence that we were marching to the Convention, but then he started into a speech on how the Platform represented the voice of "The People."



*The People's Convention march coming up Market Street? Well, probably not, given the umbrellas. But this shot from the same period shows what the People's Convention march looked like.*

I groaned. Lionel still had the John Deere cap on, and I debated walking over behind him and making a comment about urban agriculture. I looked around. Was I the only one with no patience for this?

Apparently not. "Let's go!" someone yelled. "Let's march!"

For the first time all day, a smile broke across my face. "Let's go!" I yelled. Through the crowd, other voices picked it up. "Let's march!" Signs were hoisted, banners pulled taut.

Lionel looked chagrined, but acquiesced to the will of the masses. The tractors lurched forward, and we were underway. It looked odd, the tractors and the nukecycle being out in the street while the rest of us marched on the sidewalk. Hopefully that would change soon enough.

Bullhorns pumped out the usual chants: "What do we want? Justice! When do we want it? Now!," "Hey hey, ho ho, Ronald Reagan's got to go," and the ever-popular, "The people, united, will never be defeated!"

Leafletters roamed the periphery, and I was struck by how many people seemed willing, even eager, to accept a flyer. Chalk that up to the tractors.

I filtered through the crowd. Several motorcycle cops cruised alongside of us, acting like an escort, while making it clear where the boundaries lay. Still, there were five hundred of us. If we decided to take over the westbound lanes of Market, there wasn't much a handful of cops could do.

How to get it started, though? I was wishing the War Chesters would show up and lend support, when a construction zone solved the problem. Up ahead, scaffolding and a bunch of sawhorses blocked most of the sidewalk. "Into the

street!” someone yelled, and a cheer went up as the march swung off the curb and fell in step behind the tractors, filling the right-hand lane.

“Yeah!” I hollered. “Take the street!” The cops on their cycles glided over a lane, as if they had expected it all along. I looked behind us. A couple of patrol cars brought up the rear, shielding us from any lunatic drivers who might try to get through. I pointed it out to Mort and Hank. “For once, the cops are doing their job,” I said.

But wouldn’t you know it, several monitors decided to fill the authority vacuum. Using bullhorns and hand signals, they tried to herd the march back onto the sidewalk as soon as we passed the construction site.

“What the hell,” Hank said. “Is this for real?”

Up front, some people got back on the sidewalk. I looked around, exasperated. But before I could think what to do, the Earth First! folks got in gear. Raising their banner higher, they yelled out, “Keep the street! Keep the street!” That was all I needed. “Keep the street!” I echoed. Dozens of other voices picked up the cry, followed by cheers as the monitors relented and we marched on down Market Street.

As the chants took hold again, Mort and Hank and I drifted further back. A TV van wheeled past us in the far lane, filming as it went.

“Not bad,” Mort said. “This’ll probably get decent coverage.”

“Yeah,” Hank said. “We should have tractors in every march.”

“And nukecycle,” I said. Now that we were underway, I was feeling better. Angie and the War Chesters would join us soon enough, and get to see that we were already in the street. “This will be the only memorable part of People’s Convention,” I said.

Mort nodded. “Luckily, it’s the part that the media will focus on.”

“There’s a lesson there somewhere,” I said.

“Yeah — stick with our strength,” Hank said. “We’ve got to get going on BARF. I’m a lot more psyched about that than anything happening at the Convention. Let’s go after Reagan.”

The Berkeley Anti-Reagan Festival. I’d hardly given it a thought lately. It was true, compared to the Convention, BARF was a breath of fresh air.

Mort looked at Hank. “I think you’re onto something. We need a way to participate in the electoral arena without compromising with the liberals. BARF might do it.”

As he spoke, I drifted off to thoughts of Angie. BARF had been her inspiration. At least she’d been the one who kept bringing it up back in the Spring and making people laugh until Coordinating Council approved the seed money. I smiled wistfully. Now I’d be doing it alone. Well, not alone. But it wasn’t going to be the same without Angie.

Lost in thought, I bumped into the person in front of me. I started to excuse myself, when someone stepped on my heels. “We’ve got a logjam,” Hank said.

I waited a minute, figuring it was a bottleneck as we turned the corner

toward Moscone Center. But up ahead, people were striking their banners. I made my way toward the front. The farmers driving the tractors had stepped down and were conversing with a couple of cops. "Just keep marching," I said to no one in particular. "The cops won't stop us if we just keep going."

"Oh, the cops didn't stop us," a guy from Abalone Alliance said. "Some flunky from the Democrats came out to meet us."

"Wait a minute," I said, pushing to the front where Lionel and a couple of other RWPers were conversing with a guy in a suit and tie. "We were marching to the Convention."

Lionel elbowed me away from the Democrat and eyed me coolly. "Change of plans," he said. "A couple of us are going with this delegate to deliver the Platform in person."

"No way," I said in disbelief. "The whole point was to march to the Convention." I looked for Mort or Hank, but neither was to be seen. Around me, people were drifting away.

Lionel spoke tersely. "There's no way they'd let us march to the Convention. It's cordoned off. The delegate came out to head off a confrontation."

I stared at him. "Do you really think they would have tried to stop us? Or could have? How would it look, arresting farmers on tractors?"

He cast an imperious glance around. "It's moot. The march is over. People are leaving."

They were. I turned away. Enough of you, I thought. I'm getting out of here. What a fizzle. Where were the War Chesters? They wouldn't have stood for this. I'd have had some allies.

But maybe it was better that they hadn't showed up. They never cared about this march. Maybe they were right. I stepped back and looked around one more time, wishing Angie would make a last-minute appearance.

I didn't feel like leaving alone. I hunted up Hank and Mort, who were with the nukecycle. "The tractors are going over to the Vote Peace rally," Hank said. "We're going to hitch a ride. Wanna go?"

"Vote Peace?" I shook my head. I wanted company, but not at the price of listening to a bunch of speeches about peace. "No, it's been a long day," I said. "I think I'll head home. Call me if you're going to Rock Against Reagan."

I COULDN'T SHAKE it. Sure, I'd see Angie at the LAG demo the next day. But it stung that she didn't show up at an event I'd worked on all Spring. One lousy hour out of her life. Was it too much to ask?

I wished Holly wouldn't be home when I got back, so I could have the apartment to myself. But she was there. I tried to tell her about the day. Although she listened, I could tell none of it mattered to her. And why should it? A fraudulent plenary, a boring march — why should she care? Politics as usual.

Holly looked at me with concern. "How are you doing? You look upset."

"Me?" I felt awkward, exposed. What was I supposed to tell her? That I wished she weren't home, so I could be alone with my disappointments? That if only Angie had shown up, it would all be different?

"I guess I'm angry over People's Convention," I said, sticking to externals. "I put so much of my life into it, and it came to nothing."

She looked at me consolingly. "That's too bad. That must be tough to deal with."

Holly went to bed early that evening. I lay down with her for a while, but had trouble keeping still, and got up again before she fell asleep.

I opened a beer and took my guitar out onto the balcony. It was a warm night, and the breeze wafted a faint scent of the Bay toward me. I picked out a pattern on the guitar, planning to run through my songs for the next day's rally.

Hopefully Angie would be there. I really needed to see her. Ask her to move back, the impulse came. As soon as you see her. Take her aside and speak your heart.

Wait, slow down. Scope out her mood first. Was she open to discussion? Or would it come across like an attack on her new life up north? Relax. She's here for five days. There'll be time to talk.

On and on my mind spun, till a cramp in my arm called me back to the present. I had been sitting with my hands poised on the guitar, ready to play, but not making a sound. I shook my head, trying to remember what I had been so intently pondering.

The phone rang, breaking my reverie. What now, I thought. Probably logistics for tomorrow. Let it go. But wait — what if it was Angie, trying to reach me? Maybe there was some good explanation. Maybe she was in Berkeley, and wanted to get together...

I hurried inside. "Hello?"

"Jeff," came a whispery voice.

"Angie — where are you?"

"Home, now," she said. "I've been in jail all day. They busted the whole Tour, didn't you hear?"

"No," I said, awash in relief. She had an excuse for missing our march. "What happened?"

"Hardly anything, really. I went down there with Sid and Ariel. When we got to B of A, where we were meeting, there were riot police, motorcycles, horses, everything. There were barely more protesters than cops."

"Many LAG people?" I asked.

"Some — Jenny and Raoul, Sid, Sara, Alby, Moonstone. But Karina wasn't there, that surprised me. I think she was doing some other action. Mainly it was punks and squatters, those types. We started with a die-in at B of A. We were on the plaza, so it was legal. There were cops all around us,

though. After that, we moved across the street to some corporation called Diamond Shamrock. Everyone was staying real close together, yelling at the cops. But people were pretty scared, you could tell. We got on the sidewalk again, in front of the building, and Sid got up on a trash can to give a rap. All the while, this line of cops is marching back and forth, hup-two-three-four. People started moving away, but the cops swung around and trapped us against the wall. They got on a bullhorn and announced we were under arrest.”

“And they busted all of you?”

“A few people got away,” she said, “but most of us just sat down. That was smart, because a lot of the punks weren’t used to dealing with riot cops. Raoul started chanting, ‘Democracy in Action,’ and we all picked that up. They arrested about a hundred of us. We were actually lucky. Some other people were doing die-ins up the block, and I heard they got beat up by undercover.”

“I’m surprised they let you out of jail,” I said.

“They wanted to hold us,” she said. “We heard that they wanted to stick us with felony conspiracy charges and keep us in jail till the Convention is over. But the National Lawyers’ Guild went to some judge and got him to sign an order saying that because we hadn’t actually disrupted anything, they had to let us loose.”

Well, I thought, there is a little justice. Or a loose wheel in the judicial grinder. Whatever, Angie was free. “Will I see you at the LAG demo tomorrow?” I asked.

“Oh, sure. I want to hear you sing.”

That’s what I needed to hear. “Are you going to the Central America march before?”

“Probably not. I need to catch up on sleep. But I’ll meet you at the LAG demo.”

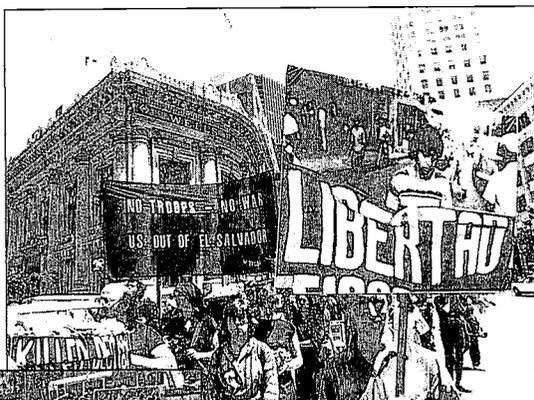
I nodded to myself. “Good, I’ll see you there,” I said. I paused for a moment. “I love you, Angie.”

“I love you, too, Jeff,” she said. “See you tomorrow.”

Tuesday, July 17, 1984

IT WAS SOMETIME in the middle of the night that it struck me — LAG should issue a press release, condemning the War Chest Tour arrests. I could go down to the office first thing in the morning, type up a statement, call some Coordinating Council people for approval, and send it off to the local media. LAG’s name would get far more attention than a statement by the War Chest Tour organizers. And it would be a way of rallying support for them. Whatever people’s concerns about the Tours, I was confident I could overcome dissent in the name of unity against police repression.

*Central America support groups organized a solemn funeral march through downtown San Francisco at lunchtime on the second day of the Convention. Several thousand silent marchers bore signs, coffins, and flowers through the streets.*



But I didn't figure on getting to the office and finding Claudia thinking exactly the same thing. I tried not to act too surprised, but I had to ask what inspired her.

"I heard about the arrests on KPFA last night," she told me. "It's an attack

on all of us. It isn't about supporting this or that faction. If we don't speak up now, we have no credibility."

We? That wasn't a word I expected to hear coming from Claudia. But I'd take her help any time. We hammered out a quick draft. I called Raoul and Jenny to check a few facts, and Claudia wrote a paragraph denouncing the arrests:

"Apparently the protest, directed at the role of the Democratic Party in the wars and military buildup of the last few decades, was intolerable to the authorities. Those arrested were not doing anything illegal. This was a preemptive strike by the police to prevent people from participating in other political events during the week. Its sole purpose was to create an atmosphere of intimidation."

Maria came in while we were writing and okayed it. Doc happened to call, and gave it his approval. I called Mort at work and Daniel at home, and both signed on.

Claudia undertook the toughest call: Melissa. I could only hear one side of the heated exchange. But Claudia never wavered, insisting that we had to stand together, and Melissa finally gave in.

"That's enough, I think," Claudia said as she hung up. "We should get it

out to the media today, while it's news. Rebecca has a computer at home that I can use to send it out."

I gave Claudia a big hug as I prepared to leave. She looked at me with surprise as I started away. "Thanks a lot for your help," I called to her, then headed home to get my guitar. If I made good time, I could be in the City in time for the Central America march. Then on to the LAG demo.

A WAILING FIGURE from Picasso's "Guernica" soared like an icon near the front of the procession. Hundreds of silent mourners dressed in gray, black, and white filled the street. Some carried coffins bedecked with flowers. Others held photos of the disappeared, or white crosses inscribed with the names of those killed in the civil wars. A brass band played a dirge that echoed off the high-rises.



*The Central America march ended with silent theater at the Powell Street transit plaza, a major downtown hub. As hundreds looked on from above, death squads executed dissidents to the beat of a solitary drum. Many LAGers took part in the procession, which was organized by groups like CISPES (see glossary).*



The Central America march wound its tortuous path through downtown. It was lunch hour, and the sidewalks were packed with workers and shoppers. All gave the funeral procession wide berth. I hadn't heard about wearing black and white, so I didn't join. I stood back and stared with the same awe and disquiet as the rest of the bystanders.

The march reached the multilevel plaza at the Powell Street cable car turnaround and filed down to the lower level, a concrete-bounded semicircle that made a perfect stage. I found a spot along the upper railing and watched as most of the marchers formed a ring around the plaza. Ten peasants, including Antonio and Claude, stepped forward. They were flanked by soldiers wearing red bandannas over their faces.

The eerie silence of the protesters cast its cloak over the spectators around the upper rim. Some whispered. A few snapped photos. Most mutely observed. The soldiers held their pistol-fingers against the heads of the peasants, and to the stark beat of a snare drum executed their victims. After the demo ended, the area remained hushed as the crowd filtered away.

The LAG demo wasn't till four. I planned to go over to the site early to check out the sound system and loosen up my voice. But after watching the executions, it was hard to shift gears. I wound up walking out around the piers at the Embarcadero for a couple of hours. Between reflections on the somber march and thoughts of what it would be like to see Angie, I didn't get much singing done.

Finally I turned my steps toward the assembly area. I reminded myself one last time to stay cool when I saw Angie. Don't overwhelm her. Just let her know I'm glad to see her.

As I approached the vacant lot where the rally was to be held, I spotted her standing alone near the back of the crowd. I headed straight that way. My chest trembled with anticipation. She saw me just before I reached her, and welcomed me with a warm hug. "Great to see you," she said as she stepped back and looked at me. I smiled awkwardly. Would we go off and spend time alone after the rally? Or was this it — "great to see you?"

There wasn't much chance to think about it, as Sara signaled to me that my set was coming up. I hadn't played a gig in several months, and I felt clumsy in front of the microphone. Luckily, my slot was after a couple of speakers, so music was welcome. I did "Minimum Wage," followed by a new song I'd written that Spring, "Screw the Rich." The performance was rusty, but people laughed and sang along. On "Screw the Rich," Moonstone came twirling out of the crowd and started dancing in front of the stage, his tie-dyed robe shimmering against the dull gravel. And for my finale — "Jailhouse Rock," dedicated to the War Chest Tours — Angie, Alby, Karina, and a few others joined Moonstone in the dance pit.

For me it was a kick. But all in all, it was shaping up as a lackluster protest. Raoul, Jenny, Jacey and Sid didn't even show up. Karina at least was there,

emceeding the show. But there was only so much you could do when you've been granted an official permit to exercise your Constitutional rights in a designated parking lot a block away from the Convention.

The demonstration area was only a portion of the parking lot. An arbitrary barricade, topped by yellow "Police Line — Do Not Cross" ribbon, defined the outer limits of free speech. The barricade was imposing, but the yellow ribbon had a short lifespan. "It's the perfect souvenir," Angie said as she rolled up a strand and put it in her pocket. I looked for a stray bit, but every inch had been pilfered.

We walked over to look at the Trojan Donkey, a big wooden prop built by Abalone Alliance folks as a warning to beware the Democrats' promises. "What they need is some people in business suits who pop out of it and try to sell us life insurance," Angie said.

Music, speakers, speakers, music. Angie was talking about leaving early, which made me edgy. Not that I expected us to go home and jump in the sack, but I was hoping we would at least hang out afterwards. Maybe her talking about leaving was a hint that I should make a proposal.

We were standing at the back of the rally, near Howard Street, when we heard shouts from the end of the block. I looked past Angie and saw three people marching toward us carrying an odd sort of flag. Already, protesters were hustling down that way, jeering at the trio. Angie and I started toward the action, but were herded back into the gravel lot by a line of police that formed a wall between us

and the interlopers. Three men were coming into focus. It wasn't a flag they were carrying, but a banner featuring Ronald Reagan's grinning face.

More people were pushing toward the street, pressing the row of cops back. A second police squad came marching our way double-time, and I

saw a row of horse cops forming up at the corner. From our crowd angry voices were raised, more at the cops than at the Reaganites, who had been corralled and escorted away from us. "Screw the police!" someone yelled. Here and there, a cop jabbed into the crowd with a billyclub.



*LAG's legal rally at the Democratic Convention failed to generate much excitement among organizers or participants.*

I sucked in a breath. Was this a set-up? Did the cops stage the Reagan thing just to have an excuse to attack? I looked behind us. No cops there. Just the entire crowd. I caught sight of the singer on the stage, looking forsaken. Ouch. Glad that's not me.

The horse cops pulled into formation facing us. I could see their tactics unfolding. The two rows of foot cops would peel to the sides, and the horses would charge right at us. I caught Angie's arm and tried to pull her to the side. "We should move back."

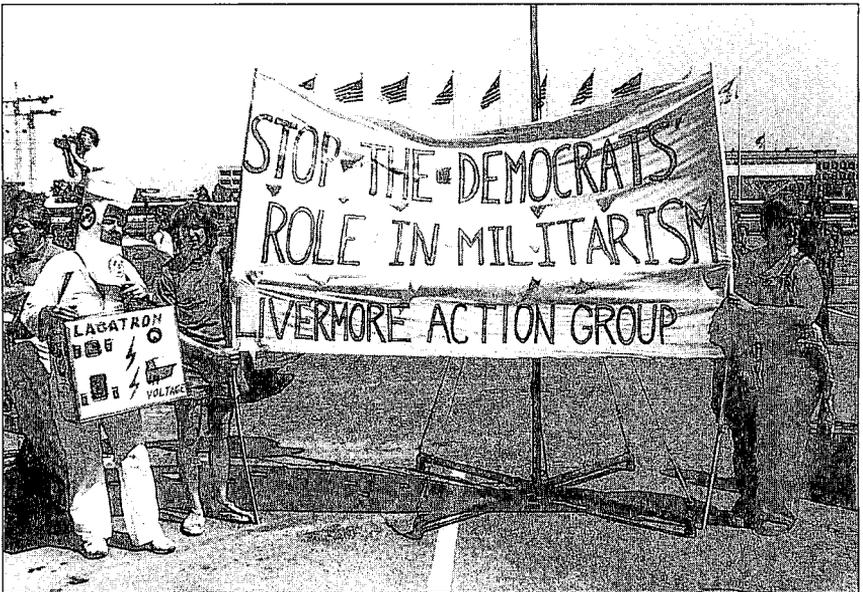
She didn't budge. "They can't attack us here. We have a right to be here."

A lot of good that's going to do, I thought. But I wasn't going to leave if Angie wasn't.

As if on cue, the foot cops turned and marched to the sides. The horses snorted restlessly. I braced for the assault.

Suddenly, from out of nowhere, a group of men sprang in front of the horses. One thrust a long pole toward the mounted cops. Another hoisted a metal contraption to his shoulder. Channel Seven News to the rescue! The cops looked dumbfounded. Emboldened, other photographers rushed into the gap. Click! Click! Click!

The absurdity of the scene cut loose the tension. In a moment, we were laughing and waving to the cameras like it was all a game. The cops recovered and patted their horses like good zookeepers. Onstage, Sara implored the



*LAG standard-bearers consult with the operator of the famed LAG-a-tron, capable of detecting nuclear profiteering in passing briefcases.*

crowd to turn their backs on the cops and come back to the rally, which most of us did, leaving a few die-hards to lecture the police on civil rights.

As we turned back to the stage, Angie let out a big yawn. "Sorry," she said. "I'm really glad I got to see you sing. But I've got to get home and sleep. After we got out of jail yesterday, we went back to Stonehenge and stayed up half the night talking." She stepped forward and gave me a hug, resting her head on my chest. "I'll see you at the Tour tomorrow," she said. "And I'm looking forward to our time together Thursday."

I squeezed her to me, savoring the way our bodies molded together. It was such a sweet moment that I forgot to be upset about her leaving early. Finally I let go and watched her walk away. Okay, so I didn't get what I wanted today. There's always tomorrow.

Wednesday, July 18, 1984

*Since the writing of the Constitution, the U.S. government's main interest has been to protect the rights of property owners. From slave owners to oil companies, government has been primarily influenced by the rich... Elections cost money and lots of it, and it is quite obvious who has the money to give (or should we say 'invest'). Not you, not I, but the large corporations...*

— from the *Democratic War Chest Tours Handbook*

"I BET THERE'S five hundred people," Sara said as we clustered at our home-away-from-home, Embarcadero Plaza. "That's way more than Monday."

I looked around the sunlit plaza. Shadows of potted trees and benches were etched sharply onto the pavement. Familiar faces dotted the crowd. If most of LAG had sat out the first Tour, it apparently wasn't for fear of getting busted. Once word spread about the Monday arrests, people came out in droves. Winston and Jürgen from the International Group, Cindy and two other Commie Dupes, Les from Mustard Seed, Artemis from Matrix, Lyle and Tai from Overthrow, Doc and Rick from Enola Gay, Belinda and several others from Spiderwomyn, and just about everyone who'd ever been in Change of Heart. Sure, most of those folks were predictable. But Nathaniel? There he was, standing calmly off to one side. And Claudia? She had just read our LAG statement at an impromptu press conference, and looked like she was sticking around for the action.

And of course, the best news — Angie. Maybe my "no pressure" policy was paying off. She greeted me with an exuberant hug when she arrived at the Plaza. She took my arm and looked around the plaza. I got the feeling that despite her Monday arrest, she still felt out of the loop, and was glad to hang with me as the organizers made their final preparations.

Standing with her, I felt more like I belonged than at the past several street

actions combined. Finally, a comrade. Angie wasn't afraid to get right in the thick of things. Right where I wanted to be.

Of course, the thick of things might include jail, where I had no great desire to be. I hadn't eaten anything that day, and once in the tank, my only hope would be Bit o' Honeys. Worse, I'd be separated from Angie. What was the point in doing something together if it meant getting split up in the end?

But look at it this way. Whenever we got out of jail, Angie would have to spend that night at Stonehenge before driving back to Portland. So we'd have our date, regardless.

I could risk it.

I checked out the cops. There were a few at the periphery, and I spotted a couple more up on a balcony watching us. But compared with the hundred



*People from It's About Times newspaper built a giant Trojan Donkey to symbolize the empty promises of the Democratic Party, and hauled the beast around to the various Convention protests.*

that met Monday's Tour, this was distinctly low-key. Was it a trick? Were they luring us into a trap? Or were they backing off, cowed by our numbers?

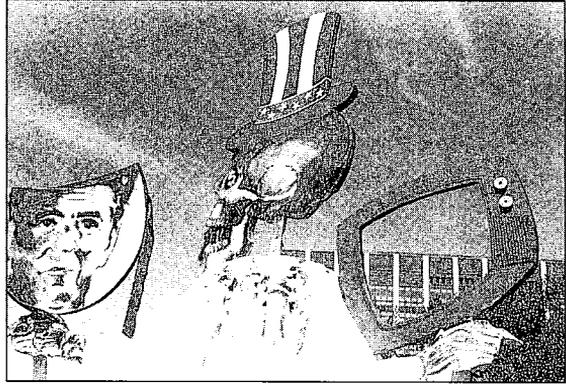
People milled about restlessly. Sid and Karina were talking nearby. I tried to listen in, to get a sense of the game plan. I caught a few names like Bechtel and Wells Fargo, but couldn't make out the details.

Beyond them, sullen, stood Flint. He was isolated from the main crowd, surrounded by a small coterie. I remembered his "back to ground zero" rap at the planning meeting, and couldn't help smiling at what it had come to: zero. It wasn't just LAG that never figured out what to do.

Jenny and Sid climbed up on a trash dumpster, and the crowd gathered round.

Angie took my hand and we moved up closer to hear. Sid, who was wearing a tattered gray T-shirt with a spraypainted circle-A, welcomed us and gave a quick recap of the Monday Tour.

Jenny followed with a short talk about the Democrats' corporate connections. She looked out at us from her dumpster-perch. "We're all in this together," she said in a loud, pleading voice. "Look around. Recognize the people



*Props and giant puppets were not as common in early 1980s protests as they were by the end of the decade, but this media puppet joined the 1984 actions.*

around you, and watch out for them. If you get arrested, try to stay in solidarity. The Lawyers' Guild will be there to help out, so don't agree to go to court for arraignment until you talk to them." She looked at Sid. "Anything else?"

"Yeah," Sid said, gesturing at the dozen or so cops scattered around the perimeter of our crowd, "we've hired armed monitors to accompany us on this march. You'll recognize them by their blue uniforms."

People laughed, and Sid jumped down from the dumpster. Jenny made a few more comments about die-ins and dealing with horses. I noticed that there was no mention of nonviolence. Maybe it was taken for granted, but with Flint and Jacey hovering in the wings, I doubted it.

"One last thing," Jenny said. "We're not going to travel as one big group today. It's too easy to round us up. We'll leave here in three or four tours and take different routes, to confuse the cops."

Jenny climbed down, and several people stepped forward to guide the routes: Ariel, Sara, Jenny, and Raoul. I was surprised Sid wasn't leading one, then realized that the punk AGs probably had their own plans.

I squeezed Angie's hand. "Want to go with Jenny?"

"Let's go with Sara," Angie said quickly. She tugged me away. When we were out of earshot, she spoke just above a whisper. "I know it's ironic," she said. "A big reason I came back was to support Jenny and reaffirm our friendship. But I get the feeling she's uncomfortable with me around, that she feels like I'm judging her, or that I think she's judging me, or something like that."

I put my arm around Angie's shoulders and we joined Sara's group. Karina had gone with Jacey to join Raoul's group, and Sara looked happy to have us.

A lot of Change of Heart seemed to be in our group: Alby, Antonio, Megan, Walt, plus Doc and Rick and a couple of others from Enola Gay. "It's like a cluster reunion," I joked to Antonio.

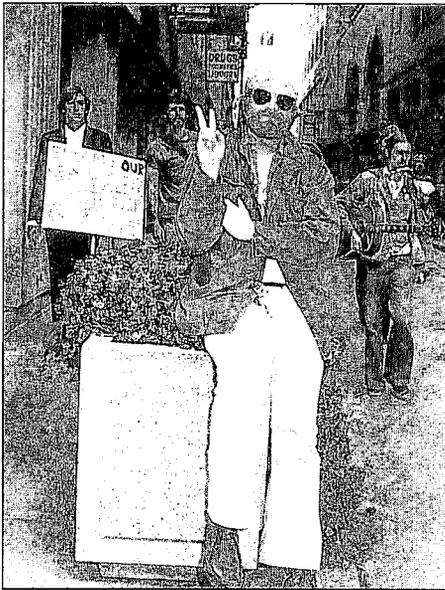
He turned a serious face toward me. "This was the only possible response to Monday's arrests," he said. "In Central America, our brothers and sisters stand up at the risk of death. The least we can do is risk arrest."

My smile faded. "I hadn't thought of it in those terms," I said.

"We have this right because people have fought for it," he said. "When we stand up against repression, we're keeping free speech alive."

A woman who looked like a downtown secretary walked through our crowd passing out little yellow business cards. I accepted one and looked at the print: "Get Out of Jail Free." I laughed aloud, prompting people around me to take a card. "Hope we don't need this," I said to no one in particular.

A hundred or so protesters followed Sara away from the Embarcadero



*When playing "Spot the Narc," try the hippie who looks like he's on the way to a barroom brawl.*

toward the financial district. We walked in a loose clump up the wide sidewalks, with a half-dozen skateboarders riding alongside. Right away, a squad of motorcycle cops swung in behind us, working their radios. Probably calling ahead for reinforcements, I realized. Could be a short day.

We hiked two blocks north, sticking to the sidewalks. Then Sara suddenly reversed direction and led us back a block, where we came to a halt in front of Dupont's California Street offices. A guy with a long blonde ponytail got up on a concrete bench and spoke about how Dupont had built and operated the world's first nuclear plant, which fueled the bombs dropped on Hiroshima

and Nagasaki. He finished his talk with a countdown. The crowd joined in, dropping on the sidewalk and sprawling up against the doors. As I lay there moaning, I caught the eye of a woman trying to enter Dupont. She looked unnerved, as if she might just turn around and go home.

After a couple of minutes, we got up and headed back toward Embarcadero Center. The motorcycle cops were still with us, but if they had tried to alert other troops ahead, our backtracking fooled them. We did another stop at General Electric, a major weapons player and campaign contributor, then headed toward Market Street, where we did a die-in

outside IBM's headquarters in protest of their work on missile guidance systems.

Our hit-and-run tactics seemed to be holding the police at bay, and the crowd was exuberant. But compared with previous protests, there were no AG actions, no street theater. I had figured that with all the meetings for the War Chest Tours, something creative must have been planned.

Angie wandered off to talk with Alby as we headed away from IBM. Not like they were getting all smoochy, but I still wished she'd stayed with me a while longer.

A business-type walked past, looked me up and down, and made a remark about "getting a job."

"Doing what," I snapped, "building nukes with you?" He ignored me, and I didn't feel much release.

As we rounded a corner we ran into one of the other Tours. I spotted Moonstone and went over to say hi. The two groups melded into one, and our momentum carried us on to Bechtel. We paused in front of the entrance and heard a rap on Bechtel's corporate crimes, which were mainly of the construction variety, nuclear power plants being a particular favorite. As we paused, a squad of cops marched up and lined the entrance. There weren't enough to threaten us, but people pulled in closer just the same. "We should keep moving," I said to Moonstone.

"Yeah," he said, then turned to the crowd: "Let's march! Screw the cops, let's march!"

Behind us a voice echoed, "Let's march!" The cry resounded through the crowd. Two hundred strong we headed down Beale Street, leaving the cops in our wake. I looked at Moonstone, who surveyed the crowd with a big smile. Amazing. He got the whole crowd in gear. And with my idea. I sensed when it was time to move on. I was in the flow, part of a mobile disruption squad outrunning the cops and snarling the downtown.

As we rounded the corner onto Mission, a chill ran through me. Directly across the street stood a dozen thuggish men in blue jeans and sweatshirts. Some were unshaven, some sported baseball caps, and most wore dark glasses. They cocked their heads as if taking our measure. I knew in an instant who they were, and anger rushed through me. "Narcs!" I exploded. I turned back toward the crowd



*Truth-in-labeling.*

coming around the corner. “Get a good look at them — your friendly neighborhood undercovers!”

Others joined in my jeering, and I felt proud. But Antonio caught my arm. “Watch it,” he rasped. “You’re making yourself a target if they come after us.”

“Yeah, thanks,” I said, following him on toward the next corner. “It ticks me off how they pretend like we can’t tell they’re cops.”

We circled around to Bechtel’s back entrance. The cops hadn’t immediately followed, and some punks ran up to Bechtel’s rear doors and tried to get inside. Thwarted by security guards who had already locked the doors, the punks started banging on the plate glass. Flint pushed his way up near the doors and yelled, “Bechtel, Go to Hell!” The crowd picked it up. “Bechtel, Go to Hell! Bechtel, Go to Hell!” The punks banged out the rhythm on the doors, and the whole street reverberated with the racket.

I spotted Angie up close to the doors, and worked my way in by her. We could see through the windows, where a handful of men in business suits, safe behind locked doors, were yelling back at us.

“I wonder what their chant is?” Angie said.

Suddenly there was a fracas behind us. A squad of riot cops forced their way into the crowd. Angie and I got elbowed aside as the cops tunneled their way toward the punks. “Looks like arrests,” I said. I looked at Angie, wondering what she was thinking. But instead of grabbing anyone, the cops shoved the

punks away. Amid much yelling and jostling, they set up a cordon in front of the Bechtel doors, holding their batons ready to strike if anyone ventured too close. I felt claustrophobic, afraid people in the back might shove us into the cops.

Luckily, people in the back were yelling for us to march away. “Screw the pigs, let’s go!” Almost as a bloc, the punks headed out, and the rest of us followed, leaving the agitated cops behind.

We had been mainly on the sidewalks up to now. As we headed back toward Market, we ran into another Tour coming toward Bechtel. The collision spilled us out into the street and filled half the block. We persuaded the newcomers to reverse



*For much of the day, police let the crowd march in the street.*

direction and join us, and we all headed north, several hundred strong. Traffic backed up behind us. Two punk women ran along shoving parked cars, setting off their alarms. A tall guy whapped his skateboard against a "No Parking" sign, and people yelled and laughed as we came up to Market Street and spied the fourth Tour.



*Held back through most of the march, frustrated riot police finally got orders to move into position.*

A squad of cops met us there, but they backed away. We poured across, tying up traffic at the three-way intersection. A few people grabbed newsstands and dragged them into the street, but no one strayed too far behind.

We filled all three lanes as we started up the incline of California Street. The crowd looked smaller, like we'd lost people along the way. People's feet were dragging. I remembered Angie dancing along this route back in October. I wished there were a troupe of drummers to inspire us this time as we trudged up the hill.

The only cops were the cycle squad, still tailing us. I found myself walking near Raoul and Antonio. "Looks like they're going to let us get our exercise," I said.

Raoul squinted. "Yeah, they'll wear us out and surround us at the top of the hill."

"I don't think so," Antonio said. "I think that the order to release people on Monday showed them that they have to respect basic civil rights."

Raoul laughed derisively. "That's one lesson your typical cop won't ever learn." He peeled off to talk to Jenny and Jacey. Final battle plans, I thought. I wished I had someone I was scheming with. I looked for Angie and spotted her with Alby. I clenched my teeth and dropped further back in the crowd.

Luck was with me. I spotted Karina walking by herself. Her eyes looked heavy, like she hadn't slept much lately. She smiled sadly. On an impulse, I put my arm around her, and she slumped against me. I let my body mold to hers and breathed deeply. "You doing okay?" I asked.

She glanced at me furtively, then looked away. "Yeah, just really tired," she said. "I'm not sure what I'm doing here."

I nodded. "Me either." I brushed my face against her thick hair and

pictured the two of us slipping away, going off alone and just forgetting the whole mess.

As we crossed the last street before Bank of America, though, Karina straightened up. I let go of her shoulder and she walked away toward Jacey. So much for that daydream.

On the plaza, the crowd was bunching up. Was someone doing a theater piece? I moved in closer, and saw what the show was: fifty riot cops lined the far end of the plaza, batons at the ready.

“Go arrest the real criminals inside,” someone yelled over the general jeering. Ariel climbed up on the edge of a tree-planter and gave a quick rundown on B of A. I’d heard it before, and moved to the side to get a handle on the police. To our right, on Kearny Street, fifty officers. Down at the intersection, horse cops. Behind us on California Street, several paddywagons pulled up.

With the bank building closing off the south, we were just about hemmed in. A few people slipped away while they had the chance, but most of us pulled in closer. I saw Angie with Jenny and Raoul’s AG, which huddled off to one side. Angie waved me over. “We’re going to go around the block and start a blockade at the next intersection,” she whispered. “Come on. If we can shut down California Street, it will set off gridlock all down the hill.”

My heart jumped. This was what I was looking for. Not just an improvisation like at the Moral Majority, but a plan. A way to outwit the cops.

A dozen of us filtered out in twos and threes, and the cops didn’t seem to catch on. Jacey was up front with Raoul and Jenny. Sara and Alby were next, and a few people I didn’t know. We circled around three quarters of the block to California and Grant, directly uphill from the B of A intersection.

“Are we ready?” Sara’s voice drew me back to the present. I looked down California toward B of A, where I could see the horse cops. They seemed oblivious to us. What now? Jenny and Sara were the first off the curb. Raoul started waving his arms to stop traffic, and I picked it up. A smile broke across my face as cars came to a halt. One suit-and-tie guy was enraged, screaming out his window at us. But others seemed more confused than angry.

“We need a chant,” Angie said. “Something to tell them why we’re here.”

I looked at her, then at the rest of the blockaders. Why *am* I here, I thought. Why this intersection at this moment? What exactly am I protesting?

Raoul, the loudest voice among us, turned to face the cars. “Shut down the war corporations! No business as usual!” Fine sentiments, but not exactly a ringing chant. Others yelled out similar ideas to the stranded drivers and curious pedestrians. I called out “No business as usual” a few times. Cars were backing up.

Downhill at B of A, either the cops heard us, or they were alerted by the traffic jam. One looked up toward us and pointed.

"Let's go," Raoul shouted. "Let's get back to B of A." Before the cops could get in gear to come after us, we disappeared, retracing our steps around the block to the plaza. We blended in with the others, congratulating ourselves on our deft maneuver.

The rest of the crowd, hemmed in on the plaza, milled around restlessly. No one had been arrested, I learned. But where were Sid and the punk AGs? Had they marched off somewhere else?

Alby tapped me on the shoulder. He and Karina were rounding up Change of Heart people. Another plan? I found Angie and we joined Sara, Moonstone, Antonio, and half a dozen others, arms around each others' shoulders. I took in the familiar faces, thankful for the ease and trust I felt in this circle.

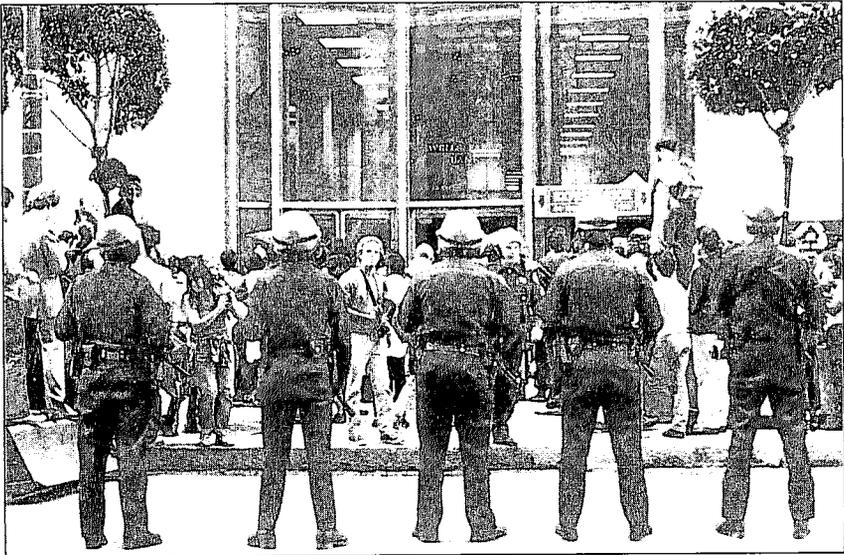
Karina knelt in the middle like a quarterback and diagrammed the movements on the concrete. "The punks are down in the next block. If we go out in the intersection here, it will draw the cops to us. Then the punks will close California down the hill."

"There's a hundred cops," Angie said, "and horses ready to go. There's no way we can take the intersection."

Karina looked annoyed. "When they come for us, we get back out of the street. It's just a decoy."

Angie scowled but didn't respond. The plan didn't seem very plausible to me, either, but I wasn't backing out. If we got arrested, so be it. At least I was in good company.

We edged toward the corner, acting nonchalant. The horse cops, who I



*Cops and protesters squared off in the financial district.*

figured would be our toughest adversary, were in a loose line on the opposite side of the intersection.

“Go!” Karina yelled, grabbing Alby’s hand. Angie grabbed mine and we streamed out into the street, forming a diagonal blockade. Traffic, already congested by the cops, halted. This time, the drivers seemed to grasp what was happening even without a chant. A gray-haired man in a Lincoln rolled up his window.

Karina, at the front of the line, thrust her free fist into the air. “No business as usual!”

I looked at the driver of the Lincoln, who gripped the steering wheel with both hands and muttered to himself. What if he rolled down his window and asked why I was blockading him? Nothing personal, I’d say. We’re just trying to stop business as usual.

The horse cops got their order and pranced out toward us. They reached Karina’s end of the line first, and she jumped away. The rest of us, still holding hands, followed around like crack-the-whip. I clung to Angie’s hand as we lurched across the intersection. The tug seemed to fire her spirit. “Come on!” she cried to the mass of protesters who had come down to the edge of the plaza. “Take the street!”

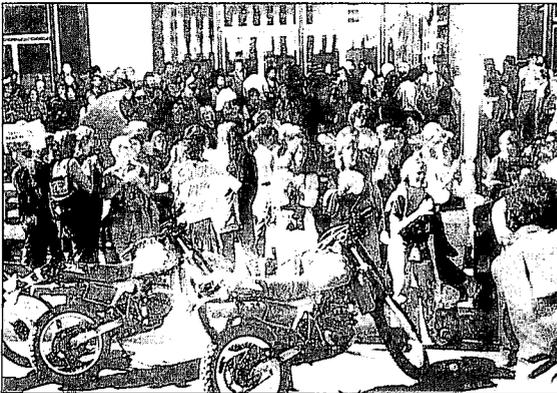
She squeezed my hand, and electricity surged through me. “Yeah, take the street!” I called. “Come on!” More people stepped out, but the horse cops managed to coordinate their efforts and force our whole line back onto the sidewalk.

We huddled again, still watching the horses. Next to me, Megan bit her nails. Her wavy black hair fell across her face. Two squads of cops marched down our way. Not much chance of us taking the intersection now.

But off to the right, California Street looked invitingly empty. Sort of odd, I thought, no traffic in the middle of the day. Then I realized — the punks

must be blockading down below. I helped make that happen! Two squads of cops trotted past us, heading downhill. A paddywagon did a U-turn and followed.

The dispatch of the cops left a vacuum in the intersection. Alby called out. We linked hands and swept into the street again.



*Police corralled protesters onto the sidewalk.*

With California blocked below, the horse cops took their time moving into formation and forcing us out of the intersection. By that time, the punks, who had ended their blockade and eluded the police, were filtering back toward us. Angie and I wound up across the street from B of A. Jenny was with us, and Sid jogged up. "Around the block," he whispered excitedly. "They're focused on the intersection. We'll come down the alley, catch them off-guard, and close the street."

Angie took my hand and we followed Sid and Jenny. I cast a quick look back at the cops. They didn't seem to be paying attention. The plan might work. If we surprised the cops at mid-block, others might take the intersection. For the first time, I understood, "why *this* street." It was a laboratory for an on-site social experiment — could we, in the face of repression, spontaneously organize ourselves to accomplish a simple logistical task?

We walked quickly up to Sacramento Street, turned the corner, and found the mid-block alley that ran back to California. So far, so good. But what if the cops got wind of the maneuver and trapped us in the narrow alley? Angie walked silently beside me. I reached out and took her hand. She squeezed mine in return. A warm glow suffused me. Bring it on, I thought. Whatever happens, I'm ready.

No one spoke as we approached the end of the alley. Were the police waiting to strike? We edged out onto the sidewalk. They didn't have a clue! Our ruse had worked. But traffic was flowing again. I looked toward the corner. At the edge of the plaza, a long row of cops formed a cordon, fencing off the intersection. People were drifting away, and the demo looked kaput.

Jenny cast a doleful look at Sid. A couple of cops looked down our way. I stepped back away from the curb.

Sid craned his neck and surveyed the scene, then turned to Jenny. "What a waste," he said. "All these people, and we didn't disrupt anything."

"Sure, we did," I said. Sid didn't respond.

Angie pointed to the far side of the B of A plaza. "There's still a lot of people over there. We should join them."

Jenny took one more look at the crowd. "No," she said quietly. "It's better to call an end today and come back tomorrow. We're not going to accomplish anything more here. And if we get busted now, they may hold us overnight, especially second-timers."

Angie eyed them intently, as if about to speak. Was she going to argue for rallying the crowd? Surely that would mean arrests. When we were out in the street, I was ready to go to jail. But now it looked different. If the demo ended here, maybe Angie and I could do something together besides ride in a paddywagon. Don't blow it now.

Before Angie could speak, Raoul walked up. "It's over," he said in a desultory tone. "Let's have our meeting. We've got to come up with something new for tomorrow." Jenny and Sid nodded, and they turned to go.

I smiled to myself. For once, Raoul and I were in synch. I looked at Angie. "How about going over to the Mission and getting something to eat?"

A troubled look crossed her face. "Jenny and I are having dinner after this," she said. "So I'm going to go with them." The others had started away, and she gave me a quick hug. "I'll see you tomorrow. We'll go on the Tour, and then Rock Against Reagan is in the afternoon."

I nodded glumly. "Sure. I'll be there." I watched her skip after the others. Let her go. We have tomorrow. Whatever that was worth.

I turned and started away. Over at the edge of B of A plaza, a TV news crew was trying to film a segment, using the dwindling protest as a backdrop. The anchorman was a pudgy White guy with a sweaty brow and what I hoped was a toupee. Flint and a couple of others were watching the crew.

I hadn't spoken to Flint all day, and I walked over toward him. "Hey, how are you doing?"

He jerked his head around to look at me for a moment, then abruptly refocused on the TV crew. Well, I thought, this will be a short conversation.

Just as the anchor began his spiel, Flint erupted. "News whores!" He glared at the anchor, whose eyes wore a "really, now" expression.

"News whores!" Flint shouted it again, and a couple of others picked up the line. The camera crew looked amused. The anchor clenched his teeth and turned his back, apparently hoping Flint would disappear.

A detachment of police was heading our way. Flint yelled once more, then walked off with a few people down California.

I followed them toward Market Street. Once we got away from the cops, my mind drifted back to Angie. Sure, her leaving without me was disappointing. But maybe everything was developing just as I'd hoped. Being around Jenny and Raoul and Sid would remind her what it meant to be in the center of the action.

But I couldn't count on other people to do all the work. It was time to step forward myself. The next day was ours.

We reached Market. Flint headed for the Muni trains. I boarded an escalator down into the sanctuary of BART. As I bought my ticket, a train pulled in. I double-timed down the stairs and through the doors.

As I took a seat, exhaustion swept over me. I leaned against the armrest, glad not to have to talk to anyone. I was running on fumes. One more day of this. Then I'm taking a long break.

Thursday, July 19, 1984

THE ALARM RANG louder than I remembered. I slapped it off, rolled over, and read the time: nine o'clock.

I rubbed my eyes. Holly was already up and had gone to work, then was to

have brunch with Caroline. Brunch during the War Chest Tour, I thought. There's a different agenda.

I pushed the snooze button and lay back. Images from the day before, of Angie walking away, pressed upon me. Was I the only one who cared? It didn't feel like she was making any effort to see me.

The phone rang, jerking me back awake. Who was calling at nine in the morning? Then I flashed — it might be Angie. I stumbled out of bed and grabbed the phone. "Hello?"

"Hey Jeff, it's Hank," came the voice. "Still going to Rock Against Reagan? I got the afternoon off from the sweatshop. Wanna meet at BART?"

I bent over, feeling dizzy. Why not skip the War Chest Tour and go with Hank? The Tour would probably be a rerun of the day before, so I wouldn't miss much. And maybe my absence would deliver a message to Angie — I'm not going to be at your beck and call. I could meet her at Rock Against Reagan, and we could have our date with a better power balance.

"Good plan," I said. "Noon at BART." I climbed back into bed and pulled the covers up to my neck. Two more hours of sleep. What a relief.

It was harder than I expected to get back to sleep. Stray memories of the previous day's Tour kept flitting through my mind. But eventually I drifted off. I forgot to reset the alarm, and it was almost noon when I woke again. I sat up with a start, rushed through a shower, and speedwalked down to BART.

I was ten minutes late. Hank wasn't there. Had he already gone? I could wait, but if the Tour ended early and Angie didn't see me at the concert, she might just go home. Punk rock wasn't her favorite music.

I decided to wait five more minutes. I stared at my fellow commuters,



*Several thousand people showed up for Rock Against Reagan in front of the Democratic Convention, whose flags fly in the background.*

mostly office workers and Cal students, sunk in their daily grind. What was the Democratic Convention to them, I wondered. A few headlines? An evening telecast? Did they care any more than I did who got nominated as the sacrificial lamb to the increasingly popular Reagan?

Still, their indifference irked me, and I chastised myself for passing up the final War Chest Tour. So what if nothing dramatic happened? Sometimes you just had to protest.

As the clock ran out, Hank hurried into the station. "Sorry, I had to call the bank," he said as we headed for the train. "Did I tell you that me and Judith made a bid on a house? It's on Grant Street, right in the middle of South Berkeley. It's a fixer-upper that we can probably afford if we both keep working full-time. Now we just have to jump through the bank's hoops. If they approve the loan, we've got it."

"That's great," I said, trying to summon interest in what felt like a distant reality. "When do you find out?"

"Not for another week. It's driving me crazy. I can hardly think about anything else."

When we got to the City, Hank had yet another phone call to make. "I'll meet you at the concert," I said. I started down to the Rock Against Reagan show, a block south. The sun had been shining in Berkeley, but here the sky was dull gray. The air felt heavy, as if a freak Summer storm might burst out and soak us all.

The Trojan Donkey caught my eye as I approached. The concert was on the same gravel free-speech lot where the LAG demo had been. But the demographic had shifted: in the place of hippie-ish anti-nukers were hundreds of punks, goths, scraggly teenagers, skateboarders, and a bunch of ragged adults whom I lumped together as squatters. Onstage a guy with massive dreadlocks bounced up and down as he sang to a ska beat.

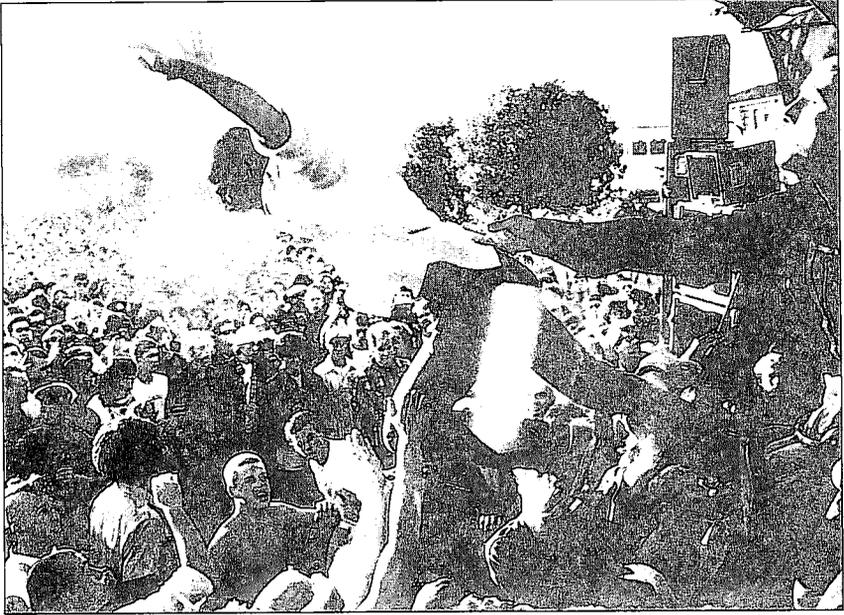
I didn't see Angie or Jenny or any of the others. In fact, in a crowd of a couple of thousand, I didn't see anyone I knew. That must mean that the Tour was still going. I was shuffling around on the sidelines, thinking of going out for a sandwich and coming back, when I saw Sid and Raoul running up the street. "What's up?" I called, suddenly alarmed.

They pulled up in front of me, huffing for air. "The cops busted half the Tour," Sid said between breaths. "Right at the end, at B of A — they surrounded us and busted a bunch of people!"

Angie? That was my first thought. Was she in jail?

"I'm going to go make an announcement," Sid said. He ran toward the stage. I felt embarrassed for thinking only of Angie and myself. I turned away from Raoul. Damn. Who better than Raoul to inform me that I had once again missed the action? Why was I never in the right place? All I had to do was wake up earlier, and I could at least have gotten arrested with Angie.

I shivered. Was that what I wanted? A sleepover in jail with a bunch of



*Crowd participation at Rock Against Reagan.*

punks? Well, it might have been entertaining. But not compared to spending the night with Angie.

Up front, Sid talked animatedly with the stage manager. The reggae singer was wrapping up his set. The stage manager nodded to Sid and pointed to the stage. As the applause died down, Sid bounded up the steps and took the microphone. "A hundred of our brothers and sisters were just arrested for daring to criticize the corporate system," he declared. "They're being taken to jail right this minute. And that's where we're going, too. As soon as the concert ends, we're marching to the Hall of Justice!" The crowd applauded, but it wasn't exactly a roar of approval.

"You've got to wonder," Raoul said as he looked around, "how many will do it? These people skipped the Tour in the first place. So what if they like punk music? How political are they in the final analysis?"

"I guess we'll find out," I said. I liked Raoul's logic, with its implication that going on the march would redeem those of us who skipped the Tour. We could still be "political" by the end of the day.

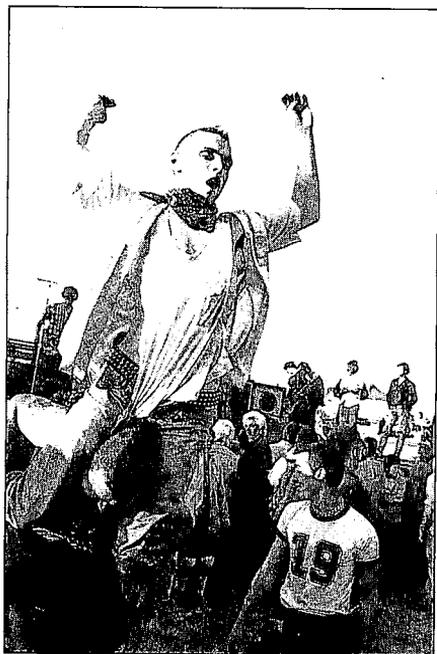
Of course, half the point of coming to Rock Against Reagan was to meet Angie. With her arrested, I was less thrilled about staying. Good music, yeah, but a little punk went a long way.

But I knew I couldn't leave. Angie was in jail. If solidarity meant anything, I had to stay for the march.

The warm-up bands were done, and it was down to the twin headliners. The Dead Kennedys kicked off their set with “California Über Alles,” their college radio hit. Dozens of people slam-danced in front of the stage, sending up a cloud of powdery white dust from the dry gravel. I moved across to the upwind side, and thought again about lunch. There was still one more band, MDC, so I had an hour before the march.

I started in search of refreshment when I spied a group of people hurrying up the street. Moonstone waved, and right away I knew who they were — survivors from the War Chest Tour! My heart jumped. I headed toward Moonstone to see if he knew about Angie, when I spotted her in the crowd behind him. “Angie!” I called out.

She cut over and threw her arms around my neck. I squeezed her tightly. “Wow,” I whispered. “I’m so glad to see you.”



*“So what if they like punk music? How political are they in the final analysis?”*

she said. “Now I’m supposed to march into another one?”

A flash went through me. We could leave. Be alone, just the two of us. But my fantasy evaporated as Angie continued. “Of course we have to do it,” she said. “We can’t let them get away with this.”

I knew she was right. Going on the march was the least I could do. Maybe there wouldn’t be any more arrests. Why should the cops care about a couple

“I am so glad to *be* here,” she said breathlessly. “They tried to surround everybody, right at the end, but some of us got away. We thought we were out of danger. But we forgot about the undercovers. We got a block away, and a bunch of them jumped out and grabbed people and dragged them away. They got a guy right next to me. It was awful.”

I hugged her again. “Sid already announced it onstage,” I said.

“Oh, good, I’m glad he’s here,” she said. “I didn’t see him after the first arrests.”

“Yeah, he announced a march to the Hall of Justice after the concert is over.”

I expected her to be excited, but she looked away and drew a breath. “I just escaped one arrest,”

of hundred people marching to the jail on the last day of the Democratic Convention?

After the Dead Kennedys finished, Sid and Jacey got up and exhorted the crowd to stay for the march. Again people applauded. A moment later, as if in response, a squad of police assembled back by the street. I wondered if a march would even be able to get underway.

Hank finally showed up. "I had to get something to eat," he said. His eyes narrowed as he sized up the police. "What's happening?"

"Well," I said, "You're just in time for the action. We're marching to the Hall of Justice."

Hank stiffened. "Marching where?"

"Didn't you hear? The War Chest Tour got busted. Right at the end, they arrested a bunch of people. So we're marching to the jail after MDC's set."

Hank laughed contemptuously. "For what? So they can throw us in the slammer, too? If we're lucky, maybe they'll crack a few skulls while they're at it."

His laughter annoyed me. Leave if you want, I thought. I've got to do it. But then I thought of Angie, of our night together. What was I doing, walking into an arrest?

MDC plugged in their amps and tore into the final set of the day. The singer screamed anti-capitalist-militarist-corporatist rants over screeching guitars and thrashing drums. I could catch only a few words here and there, but they were enough to explain the band's name. Multi-Death Corporations. Millions of Dying Children. Multitudes of Damned Christians. But the most popular song was their finale, the one that Angie told me first gave the band its name: "Millions of Dead Cops."

Dead cops. I turned and checked out the response of the officers lined up behind us. Apparently they had tuned out the cacophony, because they seemed unfazed by the song.

Sooner than I anticipated, MDC left the stage. They returned for a quick encore, and the show was over. The feedback from the final song still reverberated in my ears as Jacey took the mic and urged people to join the march that was forming at the back of the gravel lot. "Take the streets," he shouted. "Shut down the jail!"

Sid, Jenny, Karina, Raoul, and others were rabble-raising among the crowd. I watched Jenny approach a group of young punk women, her face a picture of nervous ardor as she pled with them to join the march.

Some people were leaving, but most stood looking at the growing contingent of cops out in the street. Hank came over to where Angie and I were standing. "Punks get hassled by the pigs all the time. No wonder they don't want to join a march to the jail."

Sid found a wooden pole and tied a black T-shirt to it. Waving it like a flag, he paraded out to the sidewalk. The cops in the street drew their riot

batons and formed a line, but made no move toward us. Jacey, still on the stage, yelled into the mic: "Let's march!" Angie took my hand. No turning back now. We joined the cluster forming around Sid. Yeah, I thought, let's do it. Those that are on board, let's go.

There weren't a lot of LAGers present, and I wondered whether others were arrested earlier at the Tour, or if like me they had skipped today after the previous day ended tamely. Leave it to LAGers to stay home if there were no arrests in sight. Still, scattered through the little crowd, I saw Moonstone, Karina, Alby, and Sara. Up front, Jenny, Raoul, and Jacey joined Sid.

"Alright!" Sid yelled, hoisting the black flag high and stepping into the street. A smattering of shouts answered him.

Angie and I were about twenty people back from the front. As we started out of the parking lot, the row of police braced. The commanding officer barked an unintelligible order. The squad snapped to attention, then stood stiffly as we paraded past and took over the left lane. It felt good to hit pavement after two hours of gravel. But the cops' acquiescence seemed odd. Were there more police ahead, waiting to surround us? I turned back to check on those we'd just passed, and couldn't believe what I saw. A river of people was filing past the officers. I looked over at the concert site. Except for a few stagehands, it was deserted. The entire crowd had joined the march, followed at the rear by the Trojan Donkey.

With ease we took over the four lanes of Howard Street. Cars on the cross streets gave us wide berth as punks taunted them. Here and there people yelled out, "Take the Street! Free the Tour!"

The crowd stretched for a couple of blocks. With no signs or chants, we looked like a couple of thousand people who just happened to be strolling down the middle of the street on a Summer afternoon. A few people carried bottles or rocks gleaned from the concert site. Must be their idea of being prepared.

Angie squeezed my hand. Then, leaving me with Hank, she bounded up toward Jenny and Raoul. I felt a bit abandoned, but I was glad to see her talking with Jenny, their heads leaning together. Old times, for sure.

I took in our surroundings. Cars of all shapes and colors sat watching us pass. White and yellow stripes were painted down the middle of the street, as if it were a playing field for some obscure competition. Traffic lights changed colors with no relation to our movement. What a strange city.

The colors seemed brighter. Was the fog lifting? I searched the sky, but could only see a faint hint of blue out toward the East Bay.

A dark shape flitted past the nearby buildings. I looked up to see a police helicopter hovering above us. Through the crowd, people yelled and flipped off the copter. A guy ahead of me pantomimed firing a bazooka.

It made me laugh, but Hank didn't look amused. "This is insane. It's a setup. There's probably provocateurs all through the crowd, to give the pigs an

excuse to attack. As if they need one.”

“Come on,” I said. “The cops wouldn’t attack a crowd this size.”

“No, but they’ll find a way to split us up, then go after a smaller group. It’s stupid to think they won’t.”

I turned away, weary of his attitude. I carried enough ambivalence of my own, without Hank compounding it. I searched for Angie, wishing I was walking with people who were more dedicated.

Sara came past me, and I caught her eyes, which were a mix of fear and determination. Good, I thought. I can relate to that.

Sara was dressed all in red, and I couldn’t resist commenting.

“It’s for my initiation,” she said. She seemed relieved to have someone to talk to, and we fell in step. “I got a challenge from my coven to wear each color of the rainbow for an entire week. This week it’s red.”

“That must tax your wardrobe,” I said. “What’s the initiation for?”

We were turning a corner, and the crowd bunched up. Sara looked around, then said in a low voice, “It’s to become a Witch.”

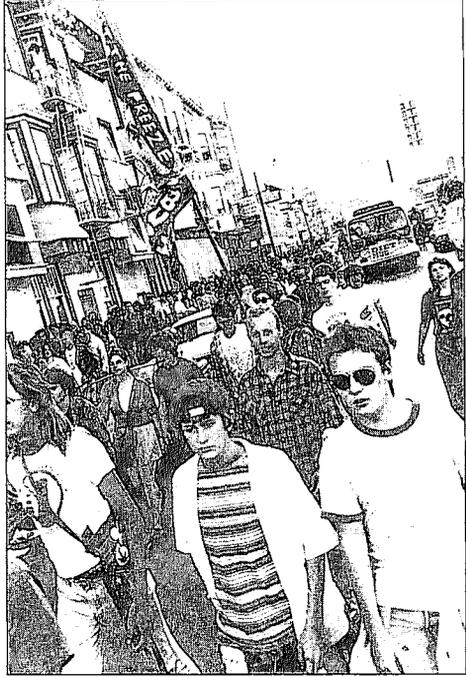
A Witch. I tried to take it in stride. “So there’s a series of challenges you have to meet?”

“Each person gets a unique set, lasting for a year and a day. The toughest one came from Artemis. She challenged me to go rappelling.”

“Rappelling? Like jumping off a cliff?” A queasy feeling rose in my gut.

“Yeah. I once told her that my worst fear was heights. So she challenged me to go rappelling with her. I didn’t see how I could say no. We rented the gear, went to the edge of a two-hundred-foot cliff up the coast, and jumped off.”

I felt a wave of vertigo. “Did you overcome the fear?” I asked in a weak voice. She looked at me thoughtfully. “I wouldn’t say ‘overcome.’ I was terrified.



*With few signs or banners, the march looked like a thousand people who just happened to be walking up the middle of the street.*

But I learned that being afraid doesn't have to render me powerless. I can act in the face of my greatest fear."

I nodded, turning Sara's words over in my mind. At that moment, someone called to her, and she said goodbye and moved off through the crowd. We were turning another corner. I felt lost. Where had Angie disappeared to? Why she wasn't looking for me? I felt irritated that she'd dumped me and gone gallivanting off with who-knows-whom.

The protest stretched over several blocks, and I was toward the end. Our section had fallen behind the main body, and I picked up the pace. As I strode into an intersection, a car lurched forward, slamming to a stop just short of my legs. I flared with anger. "Open your eyes, damn it! Watch where you're going!"

I could see the driver through the glare of the windshield. He was a big guy, but I was ready for him. Get out of the car, jerk. Let's go. Right here, right now. Me and you.

In my mind, it *was* just me and him. But the driver was staring beyond me, stark fear in his eyes. I looked over my shoulder. Other protesters were gathering around. "What's going on?" a leather-clad punk yelled.

I looked from him back to the driver. Suddenly I felt a flush of embarrassment. I shooed the car away. The driver jerked into reverse and hightailed it. "He almost hit me," I explained to the leather-punk. "Guess I lost my temper."

The guy gave me an odd look, then turned away. I took a breath, glad my outburst hadn't touched off a riot. Gotta watch what I say around here.

Alone again. Where was Angie? I blended back into the crowd, wishing I'd see a familiar face.

Who I spotted was Flint. He was wearing the same black beret as always, with dark sunglasses. My eyes went to his hands, expecting a rock or bottle, but they were empty. A couple of other guys walked alongside him, talking conspiratorially. I tried to listen in, but the noise of the copter drowned it out.

Hank overtook me again, and greeted me with a look that said, "Why the hell are we still here?" I reached out to rub his shoulder, and he flinched. "I'm sticking with this up to the Hall of Justice, but then I'm getting out of here," he said.

Great, I thought. Then I'll be totally by myself. Maybe I'll leave too. What was I doing here, anyway? Screw it all.

Up ahead, the march had come to a standstill. Then I realized — we're here. That's it, that gray monolith set back from the sidewalk by concrete stairs — the Hall of Justice. In the middle of the bleak facade was a row of glass doors fronted by riot cops. Other officers hastily erected a long string of bicycle-rack barricades to keep us from getting near the building. Maybe they're scared of us, too, I thought half-seriously. You stay on your side, we'll stay on ours.

People were shouting all sorts of slogans. Gradually it jelled into, "Set

them free! Set them free!" I chimed in: "Set them free!" It felt good to have some outlet, even if it seemed unlikely that our demand would be met.

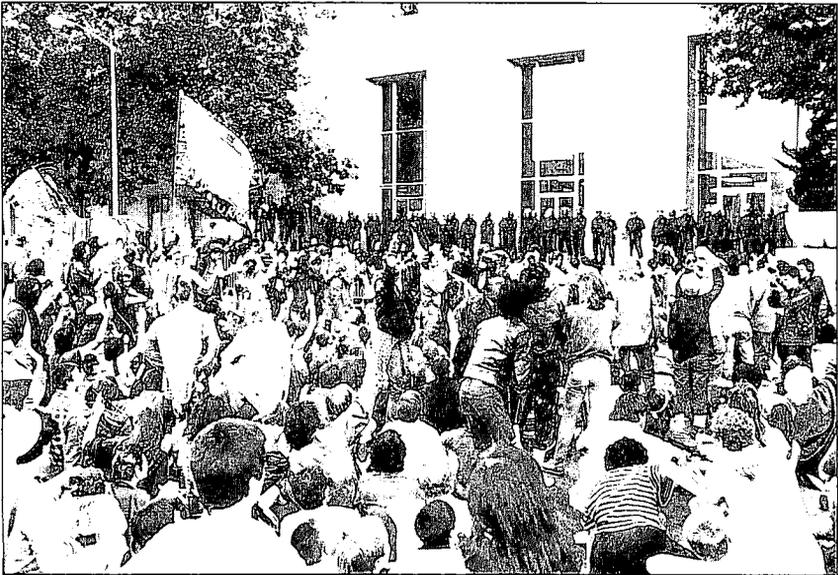
Overhead the helicopter still circled. I caught sight of Raoul and Sid. Both looked slightly dazed. "Shit," Raoul exclaimed as they flitted past. "Every cop in the City must be here. We should have marched to the Convention. They'd never have been ready. We could have pushed right on in."

I pictured us barging into the Convention. What an image for middle America, sitting at home in front of their TVs. Let's go, I thought. Let's race the cops to the Convention. We certainly travel lighter.

The cops finished the row of barricades. As they stepped back to admire their handiwork, Sid jumped forward. Grabbing the top of the waist-high barricade, he gave it a hard shake. Steel scraped on asphalt, setting my teeth on edge. Other people leapt in and set up a racket.

Without waiting for orders, several officers whacked with their batons. In front of me a woman yelped and shook her hand. People backed off, but down to the left, Jacey and some others lifted the end of the barricade and dragged it forward a few feet before the cops stopped them. The crowd yelled its approval, and the cops moved in tighter.

I dropped back from the barricades and filtered through the crowd, sort of looking for Angie, but mainly getting my bearings. We filled the entire block and then some. I thought about the Kissinger demo, how the cops maneuvered to surround the protest, but I didn't see how they could do that here, with the



*Marchers were met at the Hall of Justice by rows of riot police.*



*Protesters took over Bryant Street in front of the Hall of Justice. Squads of riot police, accompanied by mounted officers, faced the crowd on three sides.*

crowd spilling down the side streets. Too many escape routes to close off.

The biggest threat was the contingent of cops forming in the next block

to our left. I could picture them forming a wedge to force us out of the street and trap a small group against the barricades. I was ready for that. We had several lanes to work with. All we had to do was drop back when they charged, and regroup behind them.

I saw Raoul again, right up by the cops, and went to tell him my thoughts. But when he turned toward me, he looked scared. "The cops are losing it," he said. "It's gonna get ugly." He scanned the crowd. Looking for Jenny, I realized.

Where was Angie? Had she gone home? Or maybe she was with Jenny. No, because right then, Jenny walked up. She honed in on Raoul. "What do you think?" she asked him hurriedly.

"The cops are losing it," he said, hunching over toward her. "They're getting ready to thrash people!"

What to do? I flashed back to the Kissinger demo, when the punks had marched in and disrupted the cops' plan to attack us. Not this time. The punks were already here, part of the morass.

Jenny's eyes darted around the scene. She looked at Raoul for an instant, then abruptly said, "We've got to sit down." She turned to the people around



us. "Sit down, sit down!" she called in a beseeching tone. Raoul, still hunched over, gaped at her. Then he stood up and bellowed: "Sit down!"

It was the best plan, I knew right away. What could the cops do if we were all sitting down? It would take away their pretext for hitting us. Around us, people began to settle to the ground. I dropped to the concrete with them. "Sit down!" we yelled. "Sit down!"

The intent rippled through the crowd. Twenty feet away, Sara called out, "Sit down!" She squatted and took a seat. Alby was close behind, and Sid with him. "Sit down!" Dozens more joined us on the pavement. I saw Moonstone, eyes closed, chanting to himself. Grounding the energy, I guessed.

Flint, on the other hand, looked terminally disgusted. He stalked along the perimeter of the crowd, glaring. Sit down? We come all this way, I imagined him thinking, and now finally, finally, here's our chance to mix it up with the cops, and you sit down? He yanked his beret off and stormed away.

Off to one side, I spied Angie. In the midst of the chaos, she stood alone and still. She seemed to be looking at the police. I jumped to my feet and made my way through the crowd to her. "Come on," I said. "There's a bunch of LAG people over there."

She remained immobile. "I don't know," she said. "After not getting arrested this morning at the Tour, I thought I was done with jail for a while." She looked up at me. "I'm surprised *you're* thinking about getting busted."

I laughed nervously. "I hadn't actually thought beyond the sitting down part. I guess if we don't move, they'll arrest us, won't they?"

As if in response, a bullhorn blared out: "This is an illegal assembly. If you do not disperse immediately, you will be subject to arrest." The crowd raised a chorus of jeers, drowning out the cop's attempt to repeat the ultimatum. But the message was clear. Here and there, someone stood up and moved to the sidelines. Those seated on the pavement shuffled closer together. Some linked arms. One guy pulled a bandanna over his face. The rest of the crowd backed up to the sidewalks.

Which way for us? I put my arm around Angie, who showed no inclination to move. I sighed with relief. My sentiments exactly. There's no reason to get arrested here. We could stay and support those getting busted, then leave with a good conscience. I looked at her. "What do you think?"

She looked out at the crowd in the street and took a slow breath. "I have to do it," she finally said. "This was the whole point of my coming down here, to reaffirm my connection to these people. To Jenny more than anyone. This is her action. I have to see it through."

My chest felt heavy, and I stared at her blankly. Was it all about Jenny? Did I count for nothing?

She slipped out from under my arm. Still holding my hand she took a step toward the street. "Are you coming?"

It wasn't a challenge, but it wasn't an invitation either. What could she

invite me to? As soon as we got busted, we'd be separated. Over her shoulder I spied a punk with orange hair. That's who I'll be spending tonight with if I get arrested. "I don't think so," I said. "I don't see the point."

Her eyes roamed over the seated crowd. "The point is knowing that I did all I could."

"Yeah, well, I don't see what getting arrested here proves." I scuffed my shoe on the curb, wishing she'd change her mind.

She looked up at me, shielding her eyes from the glint of the sun. "Sorry about our plans for tonight. I'll call you when we get out." She rose to her tiptoes and kissed me quickly, then made her way over to join Jenny and Raoul in the street.

I sighed and gazed after her. Maybe she'll get out tonight. What reason was there to hold people in jail once the Convention ended? Maybe all isn't lost...

My reverie was broken by a policeman's bark. "Back on the sidewalk!" He poked at me with his riot stick. I retreated, but resentment flushed through me. Was I causing trouble? Was I not under enough control?

I looked through the crowd seated in the street. Just about everyone I knew at the action was out there. Well, not Hank. He'd probably left. It clearly wasn't his scene.

Not like I really belonged, either. I leaned against a lamppost at the edge of the crowd. Why did I think I would ever fit into this picture? What was I doing here?

Suddenly my heart jumped. There was Karina, not ten feet away, standing with her shoulders slumped. She must be feeling the same as I was. I started that way. Just what I needed — someone to share my frustrations, someone to think beyond this quagmire.

Then I saw that she was talking with someone — Jacey. I froze in my tracks. The two of them were leaning together, not quite touching. Jacey looked thoroughly disgusted at the sight of two hundred people seated in the street, and seemed about to stalk off.

Karina looked torn between her distaste for surrender and her passion for being in the middle of the action. She must know where she belongs, I thought, and I felt awkward at my own reticence. If only Jacey would leave, I could go offer Karina support, whatever decision she made.

But it was Karina who turned away from Jacey. She cast a glance at the blockade, sighed deeply, then picked her way through the crowd to where Sara and Alby were seated. Sara reached up and took her hand. Karina shook back her hair and took a seat.

A pang of guilt hit me. I couldn't just walk away. I looked around for Jacey. Little as I wanted to follow him, I figured he'd have a plan.

He and a few other people wandered out to the right end of the bicycle-rack barricade, well beyond the seated blockaders. I trailed a little behind. The

line of cops had relaxed, apparently thinking they were on break till the arrests began. Jacey drifted up close to the barricade, then suddenly grabbed the end of the metal rack and shoved it forward several feet. A cheer went up from the nearby protesters.

The cops reacted with alarm. The closest officer slapped at the barricade with his baton. Another rushed over and shoved the end of the barricade back in place.

Jacey, meanwhile, ducked back into the crowd spilling off the sidewalk, hissed a quick “come on!” to us, and reappeared at the barricade about fifteen feet closer to the blockaders. He wasn’t alone. Several others jumped forward. I gulped, and in a flash I saw the challenge we faced — can a group of relative

strangers spontaneously organize and execute a simple logistical task in the face of potentially violent opposition? We weren’t just closing a street — we were revolutionizing social relationships.

Spotting an opening, I grabbed hold of the barricade. With a shout we dragged it several feet forward. The vibration of steel on concrete rippled through my arms and chest. A

helmeted cop lurched toward us, baton raised. I stepped back quickly, scared and proud. I shot a glance at Jacey, wondering if he recognized me. If he did, he didn’t betray it.

We melted back into the crowd. Suddenly, out at the end of the line, a couple of men in business suits grabbed a woman by the arms. They dragged her behind police lines, jerked her around, and clamped handcuffs onto her.

“Fascists!” Jacey yelled at them. I wanted to yell, but my throat clenched. I’d forgotten about the undercovers. I looked around quickly. Had they seen me rattle the barricade? Boots scraped behind me. I jerked around. Hank looked back at me with surprise. “Hey, easy there,” he said. “Just came to see if you were thinking about leaving. I’m getting out of here before they decide to do a sweep of the whole street.”

Another squad of riot police marched up to the barricade. “You’re



*On-the-spot sketch of the stand-off at the Hall of Justice.*

probably right," I said. I craned my neck, looking for Angie. Down at the far end, a squad of cops was starting to arrest the seated protesters one at a time. Behind them, several paddywagons pulled up. Nice touch, I thought. What are they going to do, drive people all the way across the street to jail? Or were they taking them somewhere else?

I cast a final look at the crowd, but didn't spot Angie. Not much I could do even if I saw her, I thought. Not a lot to do, period, except go home and wait by the phone, hoping she gets out tonight.

"Yeah, let's go," I said to Hank. I felt glad for having someone to leave with. We made our way over to Gilbert Street, a two-lane alley leading away from the Hall of Justice. We weren't the only ones taking the back exit. Scattered along the block were little clumps of protesters, along with a few stray cops maintaining order. I even saw Jacey behind us. If he's leaving, I thought, the

action really must be over.

Something bugged me, though. Sure, I'd have been separated from Angie as soon as we got to the jail. But at least we'd have gone in together. And I'd know that I'd done all I could to be with her. Why had I walked away? Too late now. She's probably already in the paddywagon.



*Two armed officers, with plenty of backup, managed to arrest this protester.*

My musings were interrupted by a commotion behind us. A cop pointed at Jacey and yelled. As the officer started toward him, Jacey backpedaled toward Hank and me. Another cop was closing in from the side.

"Hey!" Hank hollered. "Look out!"

Jacey turned the wrong direction. Hank pointed and yelled, "No! Behind you!"

Jacey jerked around and almost ran into me. The cop grabbed him by the shoulder. An arm flew past my face. I ducked and jumped back. The other cop was running our way. Jacey tried to pull away, but the cop had hold of his jacket. No time to think. I reached out, grabbed Jacey's free arm and pulled for all I was worth.

Had I expected a struggle? A test of wills? A desperate tug-of-war with the forces of law and order? Nothing of the sort. Faced with resistance, the cop

melted. Jacey and I staggered backwards, and I fell on my butt. I scrambled away from the cop like a crab. Hank caught my arms and hoisted me to my feet. The second cop reached his partner. They shook their leathery fists and yelled at us. Another protester ran over and thrust a stocking cap into my hands. "Put this on, they'll be watching for you." I put it on, but it made me feel even more conspicuous, and I pulled it off.

Jacey had disappeared. "Come on," Hank said. "Let's get out of here before they come back with reinforcements."

Get out? How could I leave now? I thought of Angie back at the protest. She'd be thinking I'd abandoned her, that I never did anything spontaneous. Well, she was wrong. "I'm going back to the blockade," I told Hank. "I have to do it."

He looked at me like I was crazy. "If those cops recognize you, they're gonna go straight for you."

I started back toward the Hall of Justice. "Then the crowd will have to unarrest me," I said. "I've gotta do it."

He stood with his hands on his hips, shaking his head. "At least go around a different block," he called after me.

"Thanks, good idea." I circled back to Bryant Street without incident. The arrests were about half over. A couple of paddywagons pulled out, and another was filling up fast. I scanned the scene. A hundred people were still in the street. Bystanders jeered at the authorities and hollered about civil rights, but no one seemed to be pushing things further.

I spotted Sara. "Have you seen Angie?" I called to her.

"Yeah, she's over there."

I pushed through the spectators and sighted Angie just as she was arrested. The cop clamped the handcuffs tight behind her back, led her over to the paddywagon, and shoved her in. I yelled to her, but I couldn't tell if she heard me or not.

Picking my way through the remaining blockaders, I spied a cop getting out a fresh set of handcuffs. Without breaking stride I stepped right in front of him. He looked at me quizzically. "I'm ready to get arrested," I told him.

He grunted at my presumption. Then he swung a gloved hand out and jerked me around backwards. I crossed my wrists, and he cranked the handcuffs down hard. "Into that van," he directed, apparently trusting me to follow orders. I clambered in and greeted Angie with a big smile.

I figured she'd be surprised. But it felt even better when she welcomed me with a loud "Alright!" It made me feel like I was expected all along. I plunked down next to her. Hands behind our backs, without another word, we kissed as the next arrestees got on board.

I didn't know any of the other people, but each new face added to the energy cooped up inside the vehicle. "Let's rock the van," one guy yelled. Angie and I pitched in, throwing our weight back and forth to set the paddywagon

rocking crazily. We rocked and laughed until a cop stuck his face in. “You want to get teargassed?”

That cooled us down. A couple of guys jawed at the cop, but I felt dizzy. I wanted to tell Angie about unarresting Jacey, but it seemed like bragging, especially in front of ten other people. It would have to wait.

The cop started to close the door. “Wait,” someone yelled. “Here’s one more for that van.” The doors reopened and a tall guy with long dark hair was pushed in — Hank!

Forgetting Angie’s tactful greeting, I welcomed Hank, “Holy cow, I didn’t expect to see you here.”

“Yeah, well, I followed you to watch out for those cops. Once I got in the crowd, I figured, what the hell, it’s probably only a night or two in jail.” He squeezed in on the far side of Angie. “Did Jeff tell you what he did?”

“No,” she said, looking around at me. “What?”

“He unarrested a guy that the cops were trying to grab.”

I felt a wave of pride. What a lucky break, to have Hank tell Angie.

“That’s really great,” she said. She held me in her gaze and nodded her head. “Wait. I have an idea.” She stood up as best she could, hunched over in the paddywagon. “Reach in my pocket,” she instructed Hank. He worked his arms around so he could reach into her pocket. After a few tries, he fished out the roll of yellow police-line ribbon Angie had gathered at the LAG demo a couple of days earlier. She took it from him, her hands still cuffed behind her. Turning her back toward me, she unfurled the roll over my shoulder, then draped it around my neck like a military sash.

She sat down next to me. “With this ribbon, I do hereby commend you for meritorious valor above and beyond the call of duty.”

Hank laughed loudly. “Yeah, we hereby pronounce you Most Valuable Protester of today’s demonstration.”

I looked at them, then down at the ribbon. “Wow, thanks,” I said, struck by the turn of events. “I always wanted to be MVP.”

The back door was still open. Thirty feet away, the support crowd waved and hollered encouragement. “We need a chant or a song,” Angie said. “Something to show our spirits.” She looked at me expectantly.

I turned to Hank. “What’s a good song?”

“Uh — how about that Monty Python song, you know, at the end of *Life of Brian*, when they’ve all been crucified?” He took a breath and launched into the chorus: “Always look on the bright side of life!” We joined in, singing even louder as the van doors were slammed shut. “Always look on the bright side of life!”

I glanced at Angie. Her head was thrown back in laughter and song. Yeah, we’ll be separated soon enough. But right now, we’re together. And right now, that’s all that matters.