

THE BELIEVERS

Anna's "friends" believed in striking a blow against capitalism and for the environment. Anna believed they were dangerous terrorists. Did she lead them down the primrose path to self-destruction, or did she save us from extremists run amok? Maybe not even Anna knows for sure. **By Andrea Todd**

Former FBI informant "Anna" returns to the Nimbus Dam, one of the sites, she says, environmental extremists had considered bombing



It had been a long day at the 2005 CrimethInc Convergence in Bloomington, Indiana, a day of extremes: extreme heat, extreme stress, extreme opinions. Each year since 2002, hundreds of activists—environmental and animal rights radicals, anarcho- and crust-punk bands, tree huggers, vegans, and freegans—descend on urban centers from Athens, Georgia, to Winona, Minnesota, for CrimethInc (a nod to the Orwellian concept of “Thoughtcrime”). The event is a conflagration of protests against all things capitalist and consumerist: record labels, the market economy, corporate influence, working for a living. Food is available in exchange for information (holistic healing, legal advice, propagandist leaflet publishing). No money is allowed; sharing is required. Signs, posted everywhere, announce **POLICE NOT WELCOME**.

For two years now, a young woman in camo pants, black sweatshirt, military boots, and pink hair, known to both her fellow eco-

activists and FBI employers as “Anna,” had been crashing the party. At her first CrimethInc (Des Moines 2004), she’d met 26-year-old Eric McDavid, now seated beside her in her compact car. He’d hit her up for a ride to Chicago rather than make the 230-mile journey via the anarchist-favored mode of transport, train-hopping. Both looked forward to the ride for different reasons. McDavid wanted to spend time alone with this woman he’d met a year earlier, who liked to talk about blowing things up; get to know her better. She wanted to get to know him better too. Just not in the same way.

The car stank of body odor and sweat, thanks to the extremists’ rejection of regular bathing and hygiene products like antiperspirant (too many brain-withering chemicals). Vicks VapoRub, which Anna routinely dabbed inside her nose, made it barely tolerable. After a few minutes of idle road-trip banter about the conference and flirtations among their fellow activists, Anna, doing as she’d

Douglas Adreho

been instructed by the FBI, steered the conversation toward a college buddy of McDavid's, Ryan Lewis.

Lewis was an environmental extremist—at that time sitting in the Sacramento County Jail, awaiting his trial on charges of conspiracy to commit arson. Lewis had allegedly planted bombs in office building and housing development sites, crediting ELF—the Earth Liberation Front, a loose network of radical environmentalists—with his work.

“So, did you help him?” Anna asked. He said no, he hadn’t.

“I don’t believe you—you’re pretty militant,” she sassed back.

“I have my own plans,” McDavid responded, and talked a bit about the bomb recipe he’d scored at Mountain Justice. He asked Anna, whom he knew as a medic in the movement, if he blew his hand off building a bomb, would she take care of him?

“I’d have to think about it.”

After a tense silence, McDavid told Anna that if he ever found out she was a cop, he’d kill her.

Anna had a split second to react and get it right. Did he know? Did he suspect? Was it all over?

“Fuck you!” she shouted back, keeping her eyes on the road, feeling her face flush. “You think that about me after all this time? Fuck you! If I find out you’re a cop, I’ll kill you!”

McDavid smiled and settled back in his seat. “Good,” he said.

This is Anna’s version of the story (McDavid denies this conversation ever took place), and like so many of her spy tales, it unfolds with cinematic flourish, showcasing her rapid thinking under pressure. Arranging to meet her has been no easy task. She will not tell

that I come from a line of cops and firefighters, she’s comfortable with that.

The second time we meet—same place—Anna apologizes for not greeting me right away. She said she thought she’d spotted my car, pointing to another white Honda Civic. “But it wasn’t your license plate.” She also apologizes for being so paranoid, detailing the threats against her life, via phone, e-mail, and in posts on ELF message boards. “I’ve just started rebuilding some of the personal relationships I had to let go,” she says, including a boyfriend. She had no way to explain to her parents the money she was getting from the FBI—“They thought I was dealing drugs.”

Later, the FBI told her that her work was “nothing short of heroic,” that they’d placed undercover agents in eco-terrorist cells before, but they had all been found out. Even her bitter enemies admit her sleuthing has rocked the environmental extremist movement.

Some critics dismissed her as “an easily bribed student,” but truthfully, money had nothing to do with it. Anna says she grew up “happy” in an upper-middle-class family, the middle child and only girl, who, like the stereotype, yearned for attention. Her father was an educator, her mother a homemaker; both were once what Anna describes not unaffectionately as “former Vietnam-era protest hippies. But that was 35 years ago,” she quickly points out. “I wasn’t rebelling by adopting moderate conservative views.”

As a 15-year-old, Anna says she was so enraged by 9/11 that just days afterward, she e-mailed a site called Militarywomen.org expressing her desire to join the Army and study counterintelligence. “My friends and I saw that plane fly into the World Trade Center, and we thought right away that it was [some Palestinian]

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me where she lives; she will come to me, insisting on a public spot in Folsom, California, near Sacramento. As I drive into the lot in front of an area coffee shop, my cell phone rings. “I think you just pulled in,” she says. Then, “It’s Anna.”

I check my rearview mirror. “Where are you?” I ask, but the line’s dead. I snap the phone closed, check again, and there she is. These days, she’s a brunette. In jeans, a blazer, and makeup, she looks older than I expected (she won’t confirm her age, but according to newspaper reports, she’d be about 22 now); still, she has the skin of an adolescent and the creamy, pudgy hands of a child. When she drops her keys and bends to retrieve them, you can spot a colorful tattoo on her back.

Before acquiescing to a face-to-face, she had laid down some ground rules in our e-mail exchanges (which, though her tone is wary and businesslike, are also punctuated with the occasional emoticon): no talk about where she’s from, her family, what she studied in college, what she’s doing now. As we get to know each other better, as we will over the course of several days, driving her rental car to revisit the sites her cell targeted for bombing, and over wine she orders as expertly as a sommelier, she opens up, then just as quickly changes her mind about what details I can print. She makes many snap judgments: “I heard you went to Berkeley and was like, Oh, no, a hippie.” But when she learns

terrorist group,” she recalls, adding, “Keep in mind, we were teenagers reading *The Economist*.” By 2003, to escape her parents’ acrimonious divorce, Anna had left high school, taken the GED, and started college in Miami.

Perhaps, as part of a generation shaped by 9/11, Anna remained attuned to terrorism—any terrorism—on U.S. soil, developing a hatred of those who would kill innocent Americans and a heightened sense of retribution. (While so many of her generation today burn with Obama fever, Anna staunchly supports McCain. “I’m a hawk,” she proclaims.) And so when in October 2003 one extremist group claimed responsibility for the ammonium nitrate bombing of the Pleasanton, California, offices of Shaklee Inc., a maker of personal care products (and which, ironically, has ranked since 1989 on PETA’s list of companies that don’t test on animals), “It showed me that anyone can be a target,” Anna says, darkly. The well-publicized anonymous e-mail explaining the violent act—though damage was minimal—read like a serial killer’s, declaring that the size of bombs would be doubled with each attack: “Customers and their families are considered legitimate targets,” it read. “...You never know when your house, your car even, might go boom.”

Enrolled in a challenging night class (she won’t say on what subject), Anna was determined to impress her “brilliant” profes-

sor. Reading in the paper about activists gearing up to protest the Free Trade Area of the Americas Miami conference—the FTAA seeks to unite the North and South American economies, but critics say it exploits underdeveloped countries—she decided to attend some of the meetings for an extra-credit project. On her

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(Counterclockwise, from top) The handbook of the now-defunct Black Tea Society, an anarchy group formed to protest the 2004 Democratic National Convention; a family photo of Eric McDavid; Anna (front, second from right) marches to protest the G8 summit in June 2004; United for Peace and Justice protesters rally in front of New York City’s Madison Square Garden the day before the 2004 Republican National Convention

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Anna’s first assignment would be to attend the G8, or Group of Eight summit, near Atlanta later that summer. An international forum for the governments of the eight nations who represent 65 percent of the world economy and the majority of military expenditure, G8 summits are extremist hot spots. The Miami agents also wanted to book her for both the Democratic and Republican National Conventions, in Boston and New York, respectively, later in the summer. For any investigation of these groups to be legitimate—to get around the “freedom of assembly” right U.S. citizens are afforded—law enforcement needs to have proof of illegal activity. Anna’s FTAA report gave them the green light. “This was Christmas come early for them,” Anna says with a laugh.

Although ELF and its furry-friendly cousin, the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), are intent on destroying government and corporate property without any loss of life—in the roughly 15 years they’ve been organizing, there has been an estimated \$100 million in damage without a single fatality—the Bush administration likens these groups to Al-Qaeda, and considers them “one of the FBI’s highest domestic priorities,” as FBI Director Robert S. Mueller III has said. Under Bush, since 9/11, the number of members in the Bureau’s Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs) has more than quadrupled. The Feds’ efforts have resulted in several high-profile busts, including “Operation Backfire”—the government’s decade-long investigation and subsequent indictment in 2006 of 11 of the country’s most notorious environmental activists, known as “The Family,” credited for much of the big-damage, “direct-action” eco-terrorism, including the \$12 million torching of a ski resort in Vail. Meanwhile, ELF activists claimed responsibility for the costliest act of eco-extremism on U.S. soil, the \$50 million incineration of an apartment complex under construction in San Diego. Eco-extremists believe that developments like these desecrate the surrounding natural environments. “We must all act our consciousness and inflict economic harm upon all of those who are

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Hanging around the gathering, it was easy for Anna to pick up information about the protestors’ plans—from where marches would be held to where the trade talk bigwigs were staying. The following evening she presented her report. The professor wasn’t the only one impressed. Afterward, one of her classmates, a Florida highway patrol officer, approached her, asking if he could take home a copy of the report.

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McDavid: courtesy of the McDavid family; globe: © Win McNamee/Reuters/Corbis; photo: © Win McNamee/Reuters/Corbis

responsible for the destruction of the earth and its inhabitants. We encourage others to find a local Earth raper and make them pay for the damages they are inflicting," reads a typical statement from one-time ELF spokesperson Craig Rosebraugh.

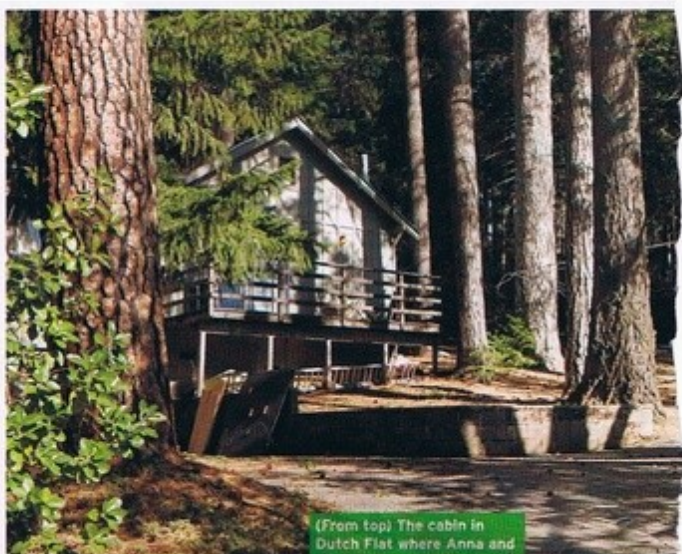
Environmentalists refer to the government's ongoing sweep of these radical groups, many of which have no "list" membership but are composed of a loose network of anarchists and activists, as the "Green Scare," an overt reference to the Red Scare of the McCarthy Era. The stage for the investigation had been set by the broad reach of Bush's Patriot Act and the fact that after 9/11, then-Attorney General John Ashcroft amped up the guidelines for counterintelligence gathering—approving aggressive investigative tactics previously reserved for CIA operations. "The government has it in for a group of individuals they sloppily lump together as anarchists, radicals, ELF and ALF environmentalists—the collective bogeyman," says Ben Rosenfeld, a civil rights attorney in California's Bay Area. "Now they have a slew of new resources and laws to target people for their ideology."

The FBI insists that, because these cells are tightly knit and transient, intensive undercover work, secret surveillance, and aggressive pressure of those arrested and charged with crimes to cooperate, is the only effective way to stop the attacks before they are carried out. Civil liberties groups naturally oppose such tactics in the name of terror-watching. "Calling individuals associated with any of these groups 'the No. 1 threat to security' is really hyperbolic," Rosenfeld says, as FBI Deputy Assistant Director John Lewis did in 2005. Since 1990, more than 1,800 criminal acts in the U.S. have been attributed to ELF, ALF, and similar groups, says FBI spokesperson Bill Carter (but they include everything from vandalism and arson to threatening letters and phone calls). "Basically, the FBI no longer concentrates on crime solving, but has moved to crime prevention"—which creates some serious constitutional issues, namely that innocent-until-proven-guilty cornerstone of our legal system.

Yet, nonviolent environmental groups such as Greenpeace, Earthjustice ("The Earth's lawyers"), and even Earth First!, the original eco-terrorist organization, are quick to distance themselves from these extremist factions. Most contend that eco-terrorists have the same negative effect on the green movement as Muslim terrorists have on the Islamic faith: guilt by association.

"To believe that these people aren't capable of harm or serious attack is not giving them enough credit," Anna says, as we speed along California's Highway 80 in her rental car to the cabin in Dutch Flat, the wooded spot where the group attempted its first homemade bomb. "These people believe in this movement on a very deep and spiritual level.... The earth is feeling the pain of the dying birds and trees, and she is sending out a call to arms, a spiritual and religious call to arms."

But there's no mistaking the typical anarchist/eco-activist gathering for an Al-Qaeda training camp; a three-ring circus is more like it. G8 was no exception, and activists were cooking up big plans. "These people look back to the World Trade Organization riots in 1999 as their big moment: We had the revolution for a little bit," Anna says, referring to the five days during which 50,000 protestors swarmed Seattle, rioting and looting, resulting in 600 arrests. "G8 was supposed to be WTO II." Anna put school on hold in order to throw herself into the planning meetings for G8 and the political conventions—"I thought it would be temporary, like a summer break, and then I'd be right back in school." In the meantime, she had been perfecting her undercover role. Choosing the identity of a medic—one offering the most passivity within the movement—Anna would offer aid or assistance to protesters suffering from hypothermia or heat exhaustion and carry supplies of holistic medicine: lavender bandages, homemade splints, natural



(From top) The cabin in Dutch Flat where Anna and "friends" conspired; one of their targets: the Institute of Forest Genetics, which genetically develops trees

oils and herbs. Her uniform consisted of the camo pants, boots, sweatshirt, red armband, and Palestinian kaffiyeh scarf that help members blend in during protests. An "initiation tattoo"—a skull and black flag on her shoulder—is part of her undercover work as well; she intends to have it removed as soon as she can save the three grand it costs to do so.

Despite organizers' aspirations, only about 50 protesters showed up at G8—though it wasn't a complete loss. As a "confidential source," Anna was providing the agency with names, reports on any illegal activity, and observations about the inner workings of the movement. And it was there that Anna met a quiet young protester called Ollie—"as in Ollie Oxen," Anna says, the phrase used in children's hide-and-seek games and the name of his pro-eco, anarchist website (most serious activists use handles). "Ollie" was actually Zachary Jenson, who lived in Tennessee and was so poor that he qualified for—and helped feed his comrades with—food stamps. Via Jenson and others, Anna scored an invite to the Crime+Inc Convergence in Des Moines, where law enforcement had most wanted to place her. "You are invited to attend these things when you serve a role, are considered trustworthy and important," she says.

In August 2004, Anna phoned Jenson from a Des Moines truck stop to say that she'd just hitchhiked up from Florida, and could someone come and get her? Jenson, accompanied by four friends, piled into a car to pick her up. One of those friends was McDavid.

Eric McDavid grew up in Orangevale, California, a middle-class suburb near Sacramento. Six feet tall and 200 pounds, the affable redhead played football for Casa Robles High School and worked as a carpenter for a bit while studying philosophy and conflict resolution at Sierra College. His parents—mother, a marriage and family therapist; father, a computer engineer—both from midwestern farming families, raised their children with a respect for the land. McDavid had been involved with the peace movement since the beginning of the Iraq war; when his parents gave him *Dude, Where's My Country?*, Michael Moore's anti-Bush policy polemic, it changed his life forever.

Today, seated on the other side of a glass pod in the Sacramento County Jail, McDavid has dropped more than 50 pounds from hunger-striking for vegan food, as a result of which he has also



Douglas Adesko

developed a heart condition. His collarbone juts from his orange jumpsuit. His head is shaved but his goatee is strawberry blond, giving him an incongruously jolly look. He reaches under the slot at the bottom of the glass and his handshake is light and quick. He sits down and smiles. Smiles even when I mention Anna's name.

McDavid reluctantly recalls details of their first meeting. "She had bright pink hair and wore a camouflage skirt," McDavid says. "I was scared of her. She had this strong, feminine energy. Very independent, which I thought to be very cool." The hitchhiking story, he admits, was part of the allure at first. "Now I know, hell no, she didn't hitchhike. I know now the FBI dropped her off." (When I ask Anna about this later, she just laughs.)

"So she arrives and starts throwing her stuff around," McDavid continues, noting that she wasn't exactly spouting activist rhetoric. "She was very subtle about everything."

Almost everything: "I'm out smoking a cigarette and she comes and stands next to me and says, 'So when are you gonna let

without incident, she said.'" (Meanwhile, Anna was actually sitting in a New York coffee shop being debriefed by the Miami FBI.)

The months following President Bush's reelection in November 2004 ushered in a time of heightened eco-terrorist activity. A series of crude explosive devices was discovered in upscale subdivisions and an apartment complex, all in northwestern California. Graffiti sprayed nearby declared WE WILL WIN—ELF, and letters sent to area papers said more actions were planned. Law enforcement ratcheted up their vigilance, and McDavid dropped out of sight just after investigators arrested his college friend Ryan Lewis on charges of arson. Two weeks later, FBI agents showed up on the McDavid family's doorstep.

The McDavids were puzzled about the inquest, describing their son as a peacemaker and an animal lover who settled squabbles between his two younger sisters, who would scare them with spiders and then transport the spiders, by hand, back to the garden. "He



“Anna is still inside the car and I’m asking myself, Why aren’t they worried about her, why are they leaving her alone? And that’s when it hit me. That’s when I knew.”

me go to bed?” McDavid recalls, grinning at the supposed implication. “I look at Jenson, he looks at me, and we’re like, Huh. Okay. So she’s like that.” The two ended up sleeping next to each other, but nothing happened. (“I think our feet touched,” Anna recalls emphatically.)

Anna describes her first impression of McDavid as “this chubby kid who played football,” “warm to everyone at the gathering,” and “a real gentleman.” She was aware of her effect on him, though conventional modes of flirtation weren’t going to win any points with the opposite sex. “One of the best things about this movement is the way women are treated and viewed,” Anna says. “They reject typical standards of beauty, that you have to be stick-thin, with Pantene hair, perfect skin. I was often told if I didn’t look so mainstream I’d be more attractive. They focus on a woman’s independence, her passion, her conviction. And she is treated as an equal.” Furthermore, Anna had fashioned herself into a “straight-edge asexual”: “I met a woman early on who had this persona, and I sort of adopted it for myself,” she says. “The idea being, my body is a temple. No drugs, no chemicals, nothing will come into my body, not even a penis.” Anna thinks it was partly her off-limits identity that continued to fuel McDavid’s interest.

And, no doubt, her ability to play the impassioned, balls-out protestor. When the four regrouped later that month on the steps of the New York Public Library for the RNC demonstrations—where AIDS activists protested nude, mothers of soldiers killed in Iraq carried signs that read BUSH KILLED MY SON, and eco-activists arrived with their giant Earth float and Crazy Glue to gum up department store doors—Anna headed for the eye of the storm, even as her comrades hung back. “Anna gets hyped up about moving to the upper platform and tries to recruit the rest of us to do the same,” McDavid says. “About five go up, and the cops converge on the whole group.” Handcuffed, she was led off to a van parked on the street. “I’m concerned. I’m wondering, Why they hell are they grabbing her?” he says. She never emerged from the van.

Jenson was also bothered by the arrest. “We talked later about how she just—poof!—disappeared. Held for two days, then released

wouldn’t let any of us kill spiders,” Eileen McDavid says. An open-minded mother, she saw the whole “traveling” period as part of her son’s journey to find himself. At one point, Eric had expressed that he was in love with two women (he’d been dating someone from outside the movement) and was trying to decide between them. “He was at that age, so yes, I thought, maybe this is it, maybe he’s serious,” she shrugs. It saddens her now to realize that one of these women was Anna.

Anna finally laid eyes again on McDavid that summer at the apartment of a friend of Jenson’s named Lauren Weiner, “Wren.” Brought up in the affluent New York City suburb of Pound Ridge, Weiner was active in the eco-movement while studying at the Philadelphia College of Art. McDavid was “barely recognizable,” Anna recalls. “He looked like a Viking. He was lean, buff, like he’d been working out. He had all these piercings and was suddenly so radicalized.” At one point, out on Weiner’s balcony, McDavid approached Anna: “I want to talk to you in private,” he said. McDavid confessed his feelings for her. “He said he thought we were soul twins, we needed to be together. He put his arm around me.”

In a later recorded conversation about that night (after Anna’s status had been upgraded to wear a wire), she reveals to Weiner that she called out McDavid on how much he’d changed and asked about his influences. “Well, you, for one,” he allegedly responded. How much of McDavid’s hard-core transformation was an attempt to please Anna, and how much of it was self-directed, would become a pivotal question later on.

Anna and McDavid were together that August at the Bloomington CrimethInc Convergence, at which about 300 people participated in workshops on subjects such as how to maintain a vegan lifestyle, be a political prisoner, or break out of handcuffs (“Master keys for handcuffs,” says Anna, adding, “Information from that workshop went out to everyone in the FBI.”). At the conference’s close, McDavid eagerly hopped that ride with Anna to Chicago, during which Anna says he talked about Lewis, confirming FBI suspicions about their association and leading the agency to tag him as a person of interest.

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At this point, Anna says she was giving serious thought to leaving the FBI. "I had no idea what I was getting into," she says. "Here I was, getting knocked to the ground by the NYPD, thrown in a van, having an eco-terrorist threaten to kill me. I felt like I was in over my head and that no one was watching out for me." The FBI asked her to stay on the job and to focus on McDavid. They also transferred her from Miami to Philly, where she met her handler, Special Agent Ricardo Torres.

She and Torres bonded immediately. "There were other agents there responsible for the investigation," Anna says, "but his job was to keep me alive." She spoke to Torres at least once a day; Torres was impressed by Anna's work and quickly came to trust her. "She was so young, and she wasn't an agent," he says, "but everything she said would happen, happened. I was able to verify every bit of information she passed on to us." Anna, meanwhile, trusted Torres so completely she revealed facts about herself she'd never told anyone: She'd been a victim of sexual assault in college. "Torres was there for me," she remembers. "Toward the end, [he] had arguments with agents about my safety, how far things would go before the whole thing was called off. He was the only one who had my back the whole time." A big reason she stuck with the work, and didn't bail at this point, Anna says, was because of Torres.

McDavid, perhaps feeling rebuffed by Anna, avoided her for the next several months. Claiming he'd hopped the wrong train, he failed to show up at Feral Visions, a green utopian gathering in southeastern Tennessee, where attendees camp out, use compost toilets, forage for food, even start fires by rubbing sticks together. (In one comical episode, Anna saved the day under heavy rain by sneaking in fire-starting sticks bought at Walmart; Weiner hailed her as "the Wilderness Fire-starting Goddess" and passed along news of Anna's prowess to McDavid.) McDavid also failed to invite Anna to a Philadelphia music festival that he attended with Weiner and Jenson. It was at this event, Anna alleges, that Eric discussed plans with the other two to make "big booms" everywhere (Weiner found the word *bomb* too scary, Anna said). This was seen by the FBI as the first initiation of members into a terrorist "cell." Soon, though, McDavid sent Anna an e-mail pouring out his feelings:

Hey, what's up? Feelin, I don't know, nostalgic, I guess. Feel like writin. Totally miss you. You're never far from my thoughts or heart. Guess I've been fighting that last part a bit. Okay, a lot. I truly value the time that I've been able to spend with you.... I can still remember your voice, your smile, and that last embrace in Philly. Giggly chills. Don't mean to trip you out. It's just the way I feel, and it feels good to get it out....

Much love, me.

Anna showed the e-mail to agents, who presented her with a seven-page psychological manual on how to handle McDavid. "They said if he makes another advance, what you need to say to him is to calm him, to mollify him, is that we need to put the mission first. There's time for romance later."

Her relationship with McDavid was of constant concern to the FBI; Anna, clearly insulted, conjectures it's because she's female. "I think

they thought I was weak. They kept saying, 'He keeps coming at you,' assuming that I would eventually fold, that I didn't have the balls or the fortitude to resist him. I kept telling [the agents] over and over, 'It's not gonna happen.'"

When a relationship between informant and subject crosses a line into intimacy, it often leads to small deceptions, jeopardizing the necessary transparency with law enforcement. While Anna was able to fend off McDavid's attentions, she admits that she and Weiner became something "like sisters" over the several weeks she spent in Philly. "It made the job a lot harder. She invited me to an art show of hers. She didn't invite anyone in her family, just me, and I went not as an undercover agent but as a friend." On tape, Anna actually asks Weiner if she's "getting cold feet." "And I was sincerely hoping that she would just pull out of it, stay with her family and move back to New York. But she was determined to go," Anna says.

The cell spent Thanksgiving at McDavid's home while his parents were away, discussing their various roles. Weiner was responsible for tactical materials: the equipment, such as a hot plate, stuff for a chemistry lab, and bomb-making books, including *The Poor Man's James Bond*, which she'd bought with her mother's credit card. Jenson's job was to coach the group in "stealthlike ninja tactics," Anna recalls, laughing. "That was his role, to teach us all how to be ninjas." Anna, the medic, was to get medical supplies, easily purchased at Whole Foods.

She was also asked to track down bomb recipes. "I go to the FBI with this, and they said, 'Well, of course we're not going to give you bomb recipes that actually work, so they gave me about half a dozen recipes that were all missing components—something that would smoke and flash.'" One of the recipes was similar to Timothy McVeigh's, an ammonium nitrate bomb minus the fertilizer.

Anna searched for a place where they could work and scored a two-bedroom cabin in woodsy Dutch Flat. The FBI paid the rent on the place for the month of January, which she explained away as money she'd earned stripping in college. Collecting the collective in one place presented more of a challenge, however, and after various delays Anna agreed to drive Weiner and Jenson cross-country. The FBI gave her a government-issue '96 Chevy Lumina wired with every high-tech gizmo imaginable (she claimed that her own car had broken down). "They could track me anywhere. They could spot me in a helicopter. That's how seriously the government took this case," Anna says.

Through blizzards and over icy roads, the three drove 20 hours a day. Anna did most of the driving, anxious about allowing Jenson and Weiner to operate the teched-out vehicle, with the recording switch on the driver's side door. During the ride, Jenson and Weiner discussed plans and targets, all of it taped. "They talked about blowing up cell phone towers and a Walmart," Anna insists—conversations that could contradict the notion that she and McDavid were running the show.

The group arrived in Dutch Flat and moved into a cabin wired and ready for surveillance. Cameras and recorders were planted in the home's public spaces—the reason Anna slept out on the couch, in the living area, while the others rotated bedrooms. The FBI set up camp in a trailer a ways down the dirt road, near a volunteer fire station. The cabin was hidden complete-

ly behind the mighty spruces and redwoods. "I had five minutes to save my own life," Anna says, as we walk around the area, thick with dry pine needles that could all too easily catch fire. "And there was snow. The driveway was tricky that time of year."

One afternoon, Weiner called Anna back to one of the bedrooms. "Anna," she sang, happily, "I have something for you...." Anna strolled back to find the three of them grinning, Weiner holding a spider the size of her hand. "Look!" Weiner squealed, shoving it in Anna's face. Deathly afraid of spiders ("And they knew it, too"), Anna let out a scream. The agents could hear it but couldn't see what was happening.

Torres ordered everyone out to the SUVs. He pulled out his gun. "He hears this scream, and he thinks I'm being murdered. He thinks my head is rolling on the floor," Anna says. Without missing a beat, she ran out to the front room, where the cameras would show she was safe, and yelled, "That's the biggest fucking spider I've ever seen!"

It stopped Torres, SUV lights flashing, just in time. Anna admits it was good to know her handlers were on their toes, but had their command station been any closer, the investigation would have been over.

Despite the fact that the group had thus far been short on motivation—Anna admitting on tape that Jenson and Weiner had a tendency to "dillydally" and that the drug of choice among the group was marijuana—the team now "moved fast," Anna says.

Cell phone towers make ideal terror targets because, as noted eco-activist Derrick Jensen, one of McDavid's admitted influences, stated in a well-distributed interview, "You can't make a moral argument for leaving a cell tower up. You aren't going to kill people by taking it out. On the other hand, cell towers kill between five and 50 million migratory songbirds every year." McDavid, Anna says, had also talked up targeting what he called the "Tree Factory," or the Institute of Forest Genetics (IFG), responsible for the genetic development of disease-resistant trees. Allowing the government to manufacture trees would put nature's "real" trees in danger, given their contribution to capitalist growth—and the risk that these alien trees might overtake the native stock.

The group also scouted the Nimbus Dam, which holds back Lake Natoma, a 7,000-acre watershed. Gazing up at the 87-foot-tall, 1,093-foot-wide wall of concrete, the group agreed that, if Nimbus were even a possibility, they'd have to test one of their bombs on concrete first. A lot of it. The dam might have made a good ELF target—because blowing up its gates would actually not result in much death or destruction to the city 24 miles below. Jeff McCracken, a spokesperson for the dam, confirms that the water would just "trickle" down the American and Sacramento Rivers, though U.S. Attorney McGregor Scott would later claim, with much bravado, that thousands of lives had been saved by the FBI's investigation, and that if the cellmates had succeeded in their plans to implode Nimbus it would have made "what happened in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina look like a Sunday pancake breakfast."

The group set about making bombs in a wooded area beside the cabin. On December 22, Anna's FBI status was elevated further so she could perform OIA, or Otherwise Illegal Activity, and tape the bomb-making sessions. They tried recipes widely available in arsonists' hand-

books—variations on salt and bleach, petroleum jelly and powdered sugar, plumber's putty, battery acid and those trick candles that don't blow out. The standard bomb: a milk jug filled with a gas-soaked rag. Throw in a cigarette until it burns down and catches. *Boom!* "These are the things you fall back on when the sexier bombs don't work," Anna says.

The group bickered over targets and whether to credit ELF with the attack (doing so can carry a higher penalty). The cell members also butted heads over what Anna says McDavid called "collateral damage"—those who die as a result of just being there, in the wrong place at the wrong time. Weiner and Jenson didn't want to risk any fatalities, despite Anna's vocal frustration with their reluctance, the tapes show. McDavid remained silent throughout, until asked his opinion: "Well, if it happens, it happens. It's collateral damage."

A couple of unsettling incidents put already frazzled nerves on edge. On January 11, Anna was pulled over by a California highway patrol officer after rolling through a stop sign on the way to the cabin. "The whole cell was pissed at me," she recalls. "How could you be so stupid, getting pulled over so close to where we are?" they fumed. "The cops will be able to tie us to shit that goes down." The next day, while McDavid was riding shotgun in Anna's car, a recording device tumbled out from under the glove compartment. McDavid picked it up. With typical alacrity, Anna muttered something about the car being a piece of junk, and told him to stuff it back in the glove compartment, which McDavid did. Complicating things, Anna says that during this time, McDavid's interest in her, once seemingly dampened, had picked up.

The infighting culminated in a huge argument the group had that night when a bomb-making experiment fizzled. The tapes clearly present a group on edge. As Anna and Weiner shout over each other, McDavid tries to mediate the situation. Jenson says next to nothing:

M: Take it down a few notches and relax and chill out and maybe come back and chitchat later; that's totally okay.

W: You know, we can all just chill out for the night, like, shit broke down tonight; we, like, stress levels have gone up and fucking down, we've all been tested today, and everyone, I know every single one of our heart rates have been, like, jolted today. Maybe we could all just breathe. I can make pasta.

A: Tomorrow, what were we planning on doing tomorrow? Are we still planning on doing anything tomorrow? Or should I just stop talking about plans?

M: Hmmmm.

W: I would love it if you stopped talking.

A: I would love it if you guys followed a plan! How about that?

When asked about that night, McDavid describes Anna's "meltdown": "She basically had a tizzy fit when the mixture didn't set, kicking at pebbles, yelling, 'Fuck! I'm so fucked!' over and over. Wren and Zach and I are just kind of looking at each other, like, 'What's going on?'" he remembers. "She's flipping out."

He realizes now that, because the project failed, there was no physical evidence of a bomb. And she was running out of time.

After Anna left, "me and Wren smoked a bowl," McDavid recalls. "We needed to take a big time out, see where everyone was when things calmed down." Anna returned from a

two-hour walk, and McDavid suggested that they start fresh the next day, shop for more supplies and try to build something they could test. McDavid offered Anna one of the bedrooms, suggesting that she might feel more relaxed if she had her own space. But Anna insisted on sleeping on the couch for one more night.

Anna had, in fact, left the group to discuss the situation with Torres and the agent in charge of the operation. Arriving at the command center crying and shaking, she insisted she couldn't continue much longer, that the stress level was too high. She reminded the agents about what had happened with the tape recorder that fell into McDavid's hands, and reminded Torres of her history with sexual assault. "I was experiencing some kind of flashback, to being in a situation with a man who wouldn't leave me alone."

Anna was done.

The agents assured her they would make the arrests the following morning.

That night, as Anna slept, she says she was awakened by her cell phone, in her pocket, vibrating against her thigh. Once awake, she later testified she saw McDavid standing over her, waving a knife. "Sorry," she alleges he muttered, and then he returned to bed. Checking her cell phone, the text, a message from Torres, read WAKE UP. She went back to sleep, albeit fretfully.

The next morning, Friday, January 13, the group went shopping for more bomb supplies. McDavid had left the K-Mart with Anna, Jenson and Weiner were still inside the store. "I leaned back on the hood of the car. It was a pretty warm day for January, and I was just chillin', enjoying the sun," McDavid recalls, "and I heard the locks on the door go click, and then click again, locking or unlocking, and locking or unlocking again, I didn't know. Anna had gotten in the car and was on her cell phone."

As Jenson and Weiner approached the car, two black Suburbans and two black SUVs pulled up, surrounding McDavid, and within seconds, men pointing AR-15s, in shirts with JTTF printed across the chests, were shouting, "Get on the ground. Get on the fucking ground. Get on the fucking ground *now!*"

"Anna is still inside the car and I'm asking myself, Why aren't they worried about her, why are they leaving her alone? And that's when it hit me," McDavid says. "That's when I knew."

McDavid was handcuffed, as were Jenson and Weiner. Pulling McDavid to a standing position, they searched through the pockets of his cargo pants, McDavid realized later, for a handcuff key. Anna remained in the car.

The three were transported in separate squad cars. According to police reports, Jenson asked the agents, "Are you friends of Anna's?"

As news of the arrest spread, ELF and ALF groups rallied to support the cause of all three, running pictures of Anna on their websites and outing her as an informant. But Weiner quickly turned. In exchange for testimony about McDavid, she admitted guilt to a lesser charge of general conspiracy. Six months later, Jenson made the same deal with prosecutors. After they flipped, they were pilloried as snitches—worse than informants, if that's possible—and green groups withdrew all support.

McDavid, meanwhile, spent a year and a half in a 7-by-11-foot cell in solitary confinement awaiting trial on charges of conspiracy to commit arson against government property. He is

surprisingly chipper, given his long isolation, like only those who are sustained by a belief in their moral rectitude can be. He says he never threatened to kill Anna—"I would never hurt anyone"—and denies the knife-wielding incident, as it's come to be called, ever happened. He has asked to take a polygraph, though the results are inadmissible in court. "Anything. You can inject me with that truth serum; that never happened." (The FBI was unable to provide video of the event nor could they find the "hunting knife.") A sticking point with the jury was McDavid's seeming indifference to related fatalities: "When I was discussing 'collateral damage' with the group, that was a philosophical discussion," says McDavid, arguing that he was making the same case for unintentional loss of life in the war for the environment as President Bush has, many times, for the unintentional loss of life in Iraq.

McDavid's attorney, Mark Reichel, who has defended environmental activists before, fought the conspiracy charges based on the term's legal definition (conspiracy must involve at least two individuals, neither of them government agents). He also tried to prove his client was "entrapped"—in effect, goaded and given logistical support by Anna, and otherwise not "predisposed" to carry out the bombings. Anna was violating the law left and right, maintains Reichel. Guidelines for undercover work are clear: Agents cannot lead, push, cajole, or manufacture—"She admitted [she knew] that on the stand," Reichel says. "What about the part on the tape where she says, 'We need to stick to a fucking plan!' What about that?" But, he adds, it's not her fault. "She didn't know what she was doing. This girl, Anna or whatever, she just wanted to do a good job. It was the FBI's responsibility, when they put her to work, to make sure she knew what she was doing, or, if not, assume the risk when you put someone that novice in such a legally complex situation."

Under cross-examination by Reichel, Torres admitted he hadn't read all of the literature on informants; nor could he recall any specifics about the Attorney General's guidelines regarding political protests. (The prosecutorial team insists that Torres read a condensed version of the document—and besides, they're only guidelines, not laws.)

"If this case teaches one lesson," Reichel says, "it's that we are at the point where the government can say whatever the fuck they want. Do whatever the fuck they want. *Whatever* the fuck they want."

Still, the jury voted to convict on September 27, 2007, and at press time the three defendants are still awaiting sentencing. Reichel believes the prosecution will ask for the maximum in both cases: 20 years for McDavid, five for Jenson and Weiner. Anna says that Jenson is currently delivering pizza in Washington State and Weiner is living at home with her mother in New York.

Jenson's lawyer did not return calls, but Weiner's attorney (and cousin), Jeff Weiner, expressed reluctance to comment on the case. "She's scared to death of going to prison," he says. "She's a naive girl who got involved in something she shouldn't have, she accepts responsibility for her actions, and she knows what she did is wrong." Still, he continues, there are very troubling issues in the case. "This is as extreme a case of pushing as I've ever seen. This girl, Anna-Lauren was completely enamored of her. She was like the sister she never had. This is a very disturbing case."

McDavid is optimistic about his appeal. "I

won't be here long," he says. As for Anna, "she's got her own karma and it's gonna bite her so big. She's dealing with her own crap. She's gotta live with herself."

Four months after the guilty verdict, juror Diane Bennett was happy to hear from me, she says, "because I've been bothered by this ever since that day." Bennett was so upset by the judgment that she marched right out to local camera crews. "I said the FBI was an embarrassment," she says, as other jurors scrambled to unload similar opinions. "I hope he gets a new trial. I'm not happy with the one he got."

Bennett and most of the other jurors struggled with the entrapment issue but said the judge's instructions were confusing. Bennett says it was clear from the start that acquittal was not an option. "There were several on the jury who simply would not acquit, and said so. Our only choices were a hung jury or a conviction. People were tired," she says. "We wanted to go home." Still, in spite of her regret over the outcome, Bennett credits Anna with tremendous fortitude and smarts. "She was the brains of the whole outfit. The FBI didn't know what they were doing. She was very, very bright, brave, and motivated. I couldn't have the courage to do anything even remotely like this. I can't even imagine the stress."

Since the trial, Anna has consulted for the FBI on agent training, though she no longer works undercover herself—for now. Torres, for his part, says the agency would be lucky to have her back, once she finishes her education—a bachelor's degree is required to be an agent. However, he adds, "I think she wants to move on. Understandable, after what she's been through."

Anna says she'd someday like to be a professor—something in social studies or international relations—and is currently trying to finish school, reestablish relationships with family members and friends, even date. I work my way around to asking her about whether she feels bad about what happened to her one-time "comrades." "I'm a big believer in personal responsibility," she says without hesitation. "People make choices. If you want to protest consumerism, or destruction of the planet, don't drink Coke. Ride your bike. Don't eat meat or wear fur. These people chose to make a bomb and blow up government property, and now they are paying the price for that choice."

But then, in a singular reflective moment after I've told her about McDavid's diminished appearance following his hunger strike, she admits she feels bad for his family. "I would see them in court, and I remember McDavid talking about how close he was with his family. Compared to the rest of us [in the cell], he had it great, family-wise. They're nice people." She knows his parents will pay whatever it costs and do whatever they can do to get their son acquitted. I point out that this is what parents do. She says she knows. "But I still feel bad," she says, her voice trailing off.

Bennett, the juror, tells me that the foreman, a male in his fifties, "teared up" before he had to deliver the verdict. "In my mind, these were just young people who got carried away. People whose hearts were in the right place. I mean," she pauses, "you know, at least someone is trying to take care of our world and our environment."

COVER

Dress, \$7,435, **gloves**, \$695, by *Chanel*, at select Chanel Boutique nationwide, call 800-550-0005. **Hat** by *Stephen Jones Millinery*, \$475, visit stephenjonesmillinery.com. **Earrings** by *Neil Lane Jewelry*, at Neil Lane (L.A.), call 310-275-5015. **Tights** by *Fogal*, \$43, at Fogal (NYC), call 212-355-3254.

FASHION NINA

Page 98: Chain, \$6,875, **cuff**, \$9,615, by *Toby Pomeroy*, visit tobypomeroy.com. **Gown, coat** by *Go Green Go* by *3.1 Phillip Lim*, at 3.1 Phillip Lim (NYC), call 212-334-1160. **Clutch** by *Diane von Furstenberg*, at Diane von Furstenberg (NYC). **Flat** by *Repetto x Earnest Sewn*, at the Earnest Sewn Co. (NYC), call 212-242-3414. **Pants** by *Stella McCartney*, at Stella McCartney (NYC). **Page 100: Sets** by *Bella Bliss*, call 866-846-5295 or visit bellabliss.com. **T-shirt** by *Childish Clothing*, call 877-5-CHILDISH. **Clog** by *Stella McCartney*, at Stella McCartney (NYC, L.A.), call 212-255-1556 or visit stellamccartney.com.

ELLE FASHION: THE LOOK

Page 109: Dress, \$15,000, **belt** by *Balmain*, collection at Jeffrey (NYC), Intermix (NYC). **Sandals** by *Giuseppe Zanotti for Balmain*, visit giuseppe-zanotti-design.com. **Bangles** by *Alexis Bittar*, at Alexis Bittar (NYC). **Cuff** by *Marni*, at Marni (NYC, Costa Mesa, L.A.). **Page 110: Bag** by *Fendi*, call 800-FENDI-NY. **Slingback** by *Christian Louboutin*, at Christian Louboutin Boutique nationwide. **Bikini** by *GapBody*, call 800-GAP-STYLE or visit gapbody.com. **Tank** by *525 America*, visit 525america.com.

ELLE FASHION: TRENDS AND ACCESSORIES

Page 112: Bags by *Fendi*, \$6,030 each, call 800-FENDI-NY. **Watch** by *Swatch*, at Swatch stores nationwide, call 866-382-4701. **Dress** by *Emilio Pucci*, visit emiliopucci.com. **Pants** by *Balmain*, visit intermixonline.com. **Shoe** by *Donald J Pliner*, call 888-307-1630. **Bag** by *Roger Vivier*, \$15,900, call 212-861-5371. **Shoe** by *Prada*, call 888-977-1900. **Page 114: Bracelet** by *Bulgari*, at Bulgari stores nationwide, visit bulgari.com. **Shorts** by *Lucky Brand Jeans*, at Lucky Brand Jeans stores nationwide. **Bra, boy shorts** by *Intimissimi*, call 800-888-8200 or visit victoriassecret.com. **Top** by *Gap*, call 800-GAP-STYLE or visit gap.com. **Jumpsuit, tunic** by *Roberto Cavalli*, at Roberto Cavalli Boutique nationwide or visit robertocavalli.com. **Page 116: Bag** by *Fendi*, at Fendi Boutique nationwide. **Bag** by *Hollywould*, at Hollywould (NYC). **Skirt** by *Donna Karan Collection*, call 866-240-4700. **Dress** by *Carolina Herrera*, call 212-944-5757. **Page 120: Rings** by *House of Holland*, call 646-654-0156 or visit sevennewyork.com. **Bag** by *Burberry*, \$22,000, visit burberry.com. **Skirt** by *Harmon*, at Oak (Brooklyn), call 718-782-0521 or visit oaknyc.com. **Dress, belt** by *D&G*, at D&G Boutique (NYC). **Belt** by *Etro*, at Etro (NYC, Manhasset, NY; Coral Gables, FL; Las Vegas; Beverly Hills), visit etro.it. **Shirt** by *Maison Martin Margiela*, call 949-497-1212 or visit anastasiausa.net. **Page 122: Necklace** by *Louis Vuitton*, \$10,570, call 866-VUITTON. **Page 124: Bag** by *Fendi*, at Fendi Boutique nationwide. **Page 126: Wedge** by *Fendi*, at Fendi Boutique nationwide. **Bag** by *Roger Vivier*, \$7,300, call 212-861-5371. **Clutch** by *Stella McCartney*, at Stella McCartney (NYC; West Hollywood, CA), call 212-255-1556. **Page 128: Ring** by *Suzanne Felsen*, \$5,900, at Suzanne Felsen (L.A.), call 323-653-5400. **White gold watch**, \$98,000, **rose gold watch**, \$13,500, by *IWC*, call 800-432-

9330. **Pendant** by *Cathy Waterman*, \$19,650, visit twistonline.com. **Bowl** by *Michael Aram*, call 866-792-ARAM or visit michaelaram.com.

ELLE SHOPS

Page 141: Cuff by *John Hardy*, call 888-838-3022. **Skirt** by *Etro*, at Etro (NYC, Manhasset, NY; Coral Gables, FL; Las Vegas; Beverly Hills), call 212-317-9096. **Sandals** by *Cesare Paciotti*, at Cesare Paciotti (NYC, L.A.), call 310-273-3220 or visit cesare-paciotti.us. **Bag** by *Fendi*, at Fendi Boutique nationwide. **Brooches** by *Tiffany & Co.*, at Tiffany & Co. nationwide. **Page 144: Dress** by *Lanvin*, \$17,625, at Barneys New York. **Sandals** by *Sigerson Morrison*, call 212-219-3893 or visit sigersonmorrison.com. **Necklace** by *Josh Hickey*, visit joshickey.com. **Page 146: Bracelets** by *Tous*, at Tous stores nationwide. **Boot** by *Jimmy Choo*, call 866-J-CHOO-US. **Bag** by *Chanel*, call 800-550-0005. **Vest** by *Emilio Pucci*, at Emilio Pucci stores nationwide. **Page 150: Shirt** by *Undercover*, at Susan (San Francisco, Burlingame, CA), call 650-347-0452. **Shirt** by *Etro*, at Etro (NYC, Manhasset, NY; Coral Gables, FL; Las Vegas; Beverly Hills), call 212-317-9096. **Bikini** by *Shay Todd*, call 323-655-3760 or visit shaytodd.com. **Pins** by *Giorgio Armani*, call 212-988-9191. **Tote** by *Old Navy*, call 800-OLD-NAVY or visit oldnavy.com. **Key ring** by *Mulberry*, at Mulberry (NYC, Manhasset, NY; Atlantic City; L.A.), call 888-685-6856. **Trousers** by *Diesel*, at Diesel (NYC, L.A.), call 877-433-4373 or visit diesel.com. **Page 152: Dress** by *Old Navy*, at Old Navy stores nationwide, call 800-OLD-NAVY. **Ring** by *John Hardy*, visit johnhardy.com. **Bag** by *Escada*, call 800-869-8424 or visit escada.com. **Sandal** by *L'Autre Chose*, at the Shoe Box (Plainview, NY), call 516-931-7775 or visit shopheshoebox.com. **Bag** by *True Religion*, at True Religion Brand Jeans stores nationwide, call 866-427-1119. **Page 156: Cuffs** by *Marni*, at Marni (NYC; Costa Mesa, L.A.), visit marni.com. **Skirt** by *Dries van Noten*, similar styles at Jeffrey (NYC). **Sandal** by *Sergio Rossi*, at Sergio Rossi (NYC), call 212-956-3304 or visit sergiorossi.com. **Tote** by *Salvatore Ferragamo*, call 800-628-8916. **Page 158: Bag** by *Roger Vivier*, \$9,100, call 212-861-5371. **Bikini** by *Araks*, call 212-473-2478 or visit thelittleflirt.com. **Wedge** by *Giuseppe Zanotti Design*, at Giuseppe Zanotti Design Boutique (NYC; Costa Mesa, CA), call 714-979-3300 or visit giuseppe-zanotti-design.com. **Top, dress, belts** by *Alessandro Dell'Acqua*, at Alessandro Dell'Acqua Boutique (NYC), call 212-253-6861. **Top** by *Koi Suvannagate*, collection at Wendy Foster (Santa Barbara, CA), call 805-565-1506 or visit wendyfoster.com. **Wedge** by *Giorgio Armani*, at Giorgio Armani Boutique nationwide or call 212-988-9191. **Page 160: Bag** by *Giorgio Armani*, \$7,995, call 212-988-9191. **Gown** by *Diane von Furstenberg*, call 646-486-4800. **Earrings** by *H.Stern*, \$5,400, call 800-7-H-STERM or visit hstern.net. **Bag** by *Hollywould*, at Hollywould (NYC). **Bikini** by *Pitahaya Swimsuits*, visit vogueette.com. **Swimsuit** by *Emilio Pucci*, visit emiliopucci.com.

BURNING UP

Page 279: Blazer by *Nathan Jenden*, visit nathanjenden.com. **Bra** by *Deborah Marquit*, at Deborah Marquit (NYC), call 212-478-3092 or visit deborahmarquit.com. **Jeans** by *J Brand*, visit jbrandjeans.com. **Hat** by *Stephen Jones Millinery*, visit stephenjonesmillinery.com. **Necklace, ring** by *Neil Lane Jewelry*, at Neil Lane (L.A.), call 310-275-5015.