

Tides of Flame

issue #11 - early december 2011



This is what occupation looks like.

in this issue

HOW TO SQUAT A VACANT BUILDING • FORGOTTEN HISTORY: THE EARTH LIBERATION FRONT • THIEVES LIKE US: AN ANONYMOUS LOVE/HATE LETTER • ANARCHIST NANNY DIARIES • NIGHT ACTION REPORTS • AND MORE.

About

Tides of Flame is a biweekly periodical which is part of an ongoing project of anarchist analysis and practice within the Puget Sound area.

We strive to live lives of joy, freedom, and rebellion, and for this, we are criminals.

*Who will revive the
violent whirlpools
of flame
if not us and those
that we consider
brothers?*

Come!

*New friends: this will
please you.*

*We will never work,
oh tides of flame!*

**This world
will explode.**

- Arthur Rimbaud -

The occupation of a vacant house in the Central District by a crew of autonomous squatters and anarchists is still going strong. Every day, the house comes more and more to resemble a home and active social center. We are quite inspired. And so, in the hopes that more and more people take it upon themselves to challenge the insanity of capitalism and the sanctity of surplus, we provide the following...

HOW TO OCCUPY A VACANT BUILDING!

1. **Scout possible locations.** Depending on the purpose of your occupation, you might want a low-visibility location or a high-visibility location, a large building or a small one. Do you want to make a splash or make a home? Do you want a place to live or do you want to establish a social center? These are important questions to answer before you begin your search. Your answers will give you a better idea of what sort of building you should be looking for.

In the current political climate, it is hard to predict the outcome and legal consequences of any occupation, but it's safe to assume that a smaller residential property in disrepair owned by a bank or absentee landlord has greater long-term potential. A large commercial or residential building on a busy street is likely to be much more controversial and could be evicted quite quickly—but not necessarily. In reality, there are a number of factors that make each building occupation unique. The most important thing is to have **a good crew of people and a solid plan** which includes some basic ideas for neighborhood-outreach and possible future responses to eviction. You should know how many people you have who are willing to be arrested in defense of the occupation. This will have a big impact on the nature of your occupation and how you will respond to eviction.

2. Once you have found your building, you need to **do some research** to find out who owns it and why it's empty. The history of a building is extremely important. The King County Department of Assessments website (<http://info.kingcounty.gov/Assessor/eRealProperty/default.aspx>) is a great place to start. You need the address or parcel number. Here you can find lots of information including the current owner (though this is sometimes outdated) and the permit and taxroll history. Recent permits are a good sign that someone has been paying attention to the property—unpaid taxes likely show the opposite. The King County Parcel Viewer is a good tool to use if you're unsure of the property's address: <http://www5.kingcounty.gov/parcelviewer/viewer/kingcounty/viewer.asp>

For maps and blueprints, you'll need to navigate the bureaucratic channels of the Seattle Department of Planning and Development Public Resource Center or the King County Department of Development & Environmental Services Records Center.

3. **Talking to the neighbors** is a fantastic way to find other kinds of information (like if anyone has been around the place recently or how long it's been sitting vacant), but you might come across as sketchy if you're not careful. It is probably best if you know something about the building's history before you approach anyone living around it—this knowledge will give you some credibility. The neighbors might be cool and supportive or they might be cop-loving yuppie shit-heads. Either way, there's no need to worry the people who could be your greatest allies, so use your best judgment and approach neighbors cautiously and politely. Share only as much information as you think is safe and remember that neighbors might talk to each other.

4. At some point early on in this process, you need to **find a way into the building**. How you do that is up to you, of course, based on the skills and tools you have available and the amount of risk you are willing to take. Some important things to consider are: Is there a back or obscured entrance? Are there security cameras nearby? Does the building have a security system? If you're not sure, it

might be best to open (or “crack”) the building, leave or wait nearby, and come back later. Be creative—you don’t necessarily need to sneak around at night. An orange safety vest and a hard hat (or a suit, for that matter) can go a long way. But if you are entering the building at night, wear dark clothing that won’t snag and shoes with hearty soles, and carry a dependable flashlight (not too bright), some water (in case you can’t leave the building because people are lingering outside), your ID (in case you are arrested), and anything you actually need to use inside the building. Leave everything else at home or in the car. Lastly, you might want to have an emergency phone number memorized or written on your forearm so that you have someone to call if the cops catch you breaking the sacred law of private property and decide to stuff you in a cage.

5. Once you get in successfully, **change the locks** as soon as possible.
6. Next, **secure the building**. This can be done in a number of ways and the methods you choose to use will depend on your intentions for your occupation. Hard or soft? Sustainable or symbolic?

A **hard occupation** is a sealed occupation—no one in, no one out. It says, “We are staying until you drag us out.” In this case, barricades on the windows and doors are in order. These should be in place before the building is outed as an occupation, and people who are willing to be arrested should already be inside when the support crew shows up. This kind of spectacular action is likely to result in police action unless this would result in greater prob

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SEATTLE - There have been two actions against banks since our previous issue. A communique was posted to the internet that read as follows: *On the night of monday the 14th 9 windows of a bank of america where [were] smashed out with rocks. This was a gesture of solidarity for our comrades in oakland and chapel hill. For an indefinite general strike, an occupation of territory and the permanent conflict with the existing order.* The communique was signed by a group calling themselves “some anarchists.”

On the 26th of November, a US Bank

near the University District had almost all of its windows smashed out. The phrase “REVENGE FOR OCCUPY OAKLAND” was spray-painted on one of its outside walls. Despite this very clear message, the reporter from KOMO found it unclear as to what the vandals were seeking revenge for. This action was not claimed and the damage is estimated at over \$10,000.

As anger towards the banks continues, one group of people that are surely benefiting from the recent attacks are the glaziers of Seattle. For them, business is **booming!** 🐉

BLACK DIAMOND vs. YARROW BAY

*But the desk clerk said
“It happens every day”
As the stars fell down and
the fields burned away
On Black Diamond Bay.*

Black Diamond, a small town located roughly ten miles east of Auburn, just voted out its neo-liberal, pro-development city council. However, despite the beauty of our democratic process, the plans to develop the city that were created by the previous city-council are still going to be implemented. A Kirkland-based development firm called YarrowBay is planning to build 6,050 new homes and 1,000,000 square feet of office and retail space.

The residents of Black Diamond, a town with a population of just over 4,000, do not want their town’s size to triple nor do they want the forests that surround the small town to be destroyed. Most of them have put their faith in the broken democratic process only to see the system committed to acting against them. Bob Ross, the CEO of YarrowBay, remains arrogantly confident that his company can buy off the new city-council. He recently told the Seattle Times, *“I think once the new council members dig in to all the detail and have the benefit of all the staff meetings and working with us, we’re going to be just fine.”*

We would like to wish the residents of Black Diamond good luck in their efforts to block the development and protect the forests that surround their town.

FORGOTTEN HISTORY

The Earth Liberation Front

The Earth Liberation Front is a group of multiple cells acting throughout the world with these three objectives:

1. *To inflict maximum economic damage on those profiting from the destruction and exploitation of the natural environment.*
2. *To reveal and educate the public about the atrocities committed against the earth and all species that populate it.*
3. *To take all necessary precautions against harming any animal - human and nonhuman.*

Sunshine. A hippy name, dark hair, fierce eyes. Josephine Sunshine Overaker. She went out one night with her boyfriend in the woods of Oregon, put bombs under a US Forest Service truck and on the roof of the Ranger station.

She spray-painted a circle-A on the side of the building along with the words "STOP RAPING OUR FORESTS." She laughed hysterically as she fled into the woods, the flames dancing behind her in the darkness, a demon beside her, and the future filled with fires and shadows. Over the next ten years, Josephine would transform from a free woman into an exile, living an anonymous life and outrunning her past. We do not know where she is, nor what she is doing, but she has eluded the clutches of the police, this person with the name Sunshine.

She and two other men launched the first attacks of a fledgling Earth Liberation Front (ELF) cell in the Pacific Northwest. The arson described above took place on October 28th, 1996, in Detroit, Oregon. Two days later in Lane County, Overaker and her group of three burned down the Oakridge Ranger Station. All of them had been involved in peaceful protests to stop the devastation of old growth forests in Oregon. They had seen these tactics fail endlessly and had seen Forest Service Rangers brutalize and imprison their friends who were attempting to defend the earth. When these arsons took place, many environmental activists did not know what to think. The most lucid of them were happy, understanding that their opponent had been attacked. Unfortunately, some activists were afraid and wanted to distance themselves from what had happened. They had no idea

of what would come next in the summer of 1997.

It is not known why Overaker did not participate. What is known is that her group had grown and six of them burnt down a horse slaughterhouse in rural Oregon on July 21, 1997. The Cavel West slaughterhouse bought wild horses that had been captured by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and turned them into meat. The massive fire they lit completely destroyed the plant. It never opened again. For months peaceful protestors had written letters and children had held signs outside saying "DON'T KILL HORSIES," all to no avail. The ELF managed to destroy a despicable company that murdered the last remaining wild horses in Oregon. The ELF destroyed it in one night and with one action.

On November 30th, 1997, Overaker, her boyfriend, and three others burnt down a Bureau of Land Management wild horse corral in south-western Oregon. Before burning down the facility, the group freed 400 horses back into the wild. Whereas the previous year the cell had focused its attention on the Forest Service, their activity in 1997 was dedicated to free-

ing wild animals that were being imprisoned and slaughtered. The members of the group proved themselves to be against anyone who wished to destroy the wild earth, whether it be a private company or a government agency.

In 1997, different ELF cells that did not know each other carried out attacks in Utah against a fur-breeding plantation



ELF arson of ski resort in Vail, CO, 1998.

and at UC Davis in California against their still under-construction Center for Comparative Medicine. Both of these targets suffered arson at

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Thieves Like Us

an anonymous letter.

The person who sent this to our e-mail told us to make better use of our words.

To our detractors, critics and all those with pretensions of belonging to a counter-culture, to the immobile ones who will not act, to all those who pretend that we are simple:

No one knows who we are. But still we are here. You see us and do not know us. Many will tell you we are dangerous. Maybe they are correct. Many will tell you we are confused. If that is

have watched our communities turn against us and suffered every type of betrayal imaginable. We have traveled the world and seen fire travel across the sky. We came of age in the war on terror and learned to ignore the multitude who called us terrorists. We have hidden ourselves in fear of the society that hopes to eradicate us. We have grown cynical and it easy to understand why.

Thieves like us are burnt at the stake. We rot in cages and live our lives in the shadows. Our dreams are far too incredible to be allowed to roam the earth. The city convulses when we rampage down the streets. The inquisitors grimace when they see us laughing. Our smiles are the heralds of chaos and freedom. The clouds burst when we giggle. The police beat us when we skip joyfully.

When we look to the past, we see thieves like us massacred and incarcerated. We see fleeting moments of freedom and beauty surrounded on all sides by soldiers, cops and judges. The more we glance backwards, the more we see our-

true, then so are you and far more than we are.

We have watched our friends carted off to prison. We have seen buildings burn down on the television. We

selves surrounded. So, please, forgive our hatred and contempt for everyone who talks of peace and love. Every time we have brought these two things into being they have been stolen from us.

Peace and love have become words used to enslave us. Put this paper down and look outside at the peaceful streets filled with garbage, addiction and homelessness. That is all the peace and love you will find in this world you refuse to abandon.

But we have seen beautiful things. We have seen graffiti covered towers sitting beside long rivers, housing radiant, chaotic beings living freely. We have climbed urban mountains and watched police stations burning. We have seen politicians and businessmen run in panic from our frenzies. Our friends have forged train tickets for us, our lovers have smuggled us across borders, our comrades have risked their liberty to free us from captivity.

We do not ask for your help. Our cynicism and distrust prevent it. Perhaps, in the past, we have waited for you to come to our aid when our comrades committed suicide in jail, when our friends were shot in the street, when our parents were tormented by the pigs, when the entire establishment sought to wipe us out. But you were not there, all those years ago, and the memories we carry across the centuries are hard to shake off.

This letter is being written to you as a reminder of our bitterness and anger. It will take more time than you would like for us to trust any of you. While it is hard for many of us to imagine, we would like you on our side, not against us. The world we fight for is a world free of domination and control. It is a world where forests are untamed, we take only what we need from the earth, and our towns are built with our own hands. It is a world free from money, slavery, and bosses. The world we fight for is filled with bonfires, feasts, and love.

In this world, however, we are

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shine Overaker



free.



ELF

◀ CONTINUED FROM PG. 4

tacks for their practices of enslaving, torturing, and murdering animals. At the time, the action against UC Davis was seen as an insane act against a benevolent institution. Now, with everyone obsessed with free-range chicken and green technology, many people might not view the arson with the same outrage expressed in 1997.

In Olympia on June 21st, 1998, the group launched a new offensive on the US Department of Agriculture, the greedy overlords of the forests. But on the day before the attack, Overaker was caught shoplifting items needed in the planned arson. After being released from jail, she was told she could not participate in the action. Knowing this was true, she decided to establish a firm alibi while her friends continue onward. The next morning, four members of her cell burnt down a US Department of Agriculture building. Simultaneously, a separate ELF cell burned down another Department building in a different part of town. On one day, the entire Puget Sound area saw fires burning in the capitol.

Despite being far ahead of most people around them (who were busy loving Clinton and “prosperity”), these groups were pursued by the FBI, labeled as terrorists and vilified by large segments of the environmental movement. Groups like the Sierra Club publicly denounced the ELF and applauded the government’s efforts. Nevertheless, true to themselves and their ideas, this Pacific Northwest cell of the ELF proceeded to scope out a ski resort in Vail, Colorado, make their plans, climb up a mountain and burn down a multi-million dollar project that would ravaged the ecosystem around it. On October 19th, 1998, everyone watching the nightly news saw images of a giant ski lodge burning atop a snow covered hill. The arsonists had the remarkable experience of enjoying the true splendor of a mountain before burning a structure that ensured that

same mountain’s destruction.

This was the high moment of the group. It appeared as if they could do no wrong, that the tide would turn, and that people would rise up and escape the stupor of the late nineties. We have focused our narrative around Josephine Sunshine Overaker for a simple reason: she is one of the few who did not betray their friends, renounce their beliefs, or go to jail. She is one of the few who remained free. The saddest part of the story is far off, so for now, please take comfort in the fact that she is free, that not all was lost, and that the struggle continues to this day across the same planet she fought to protect.

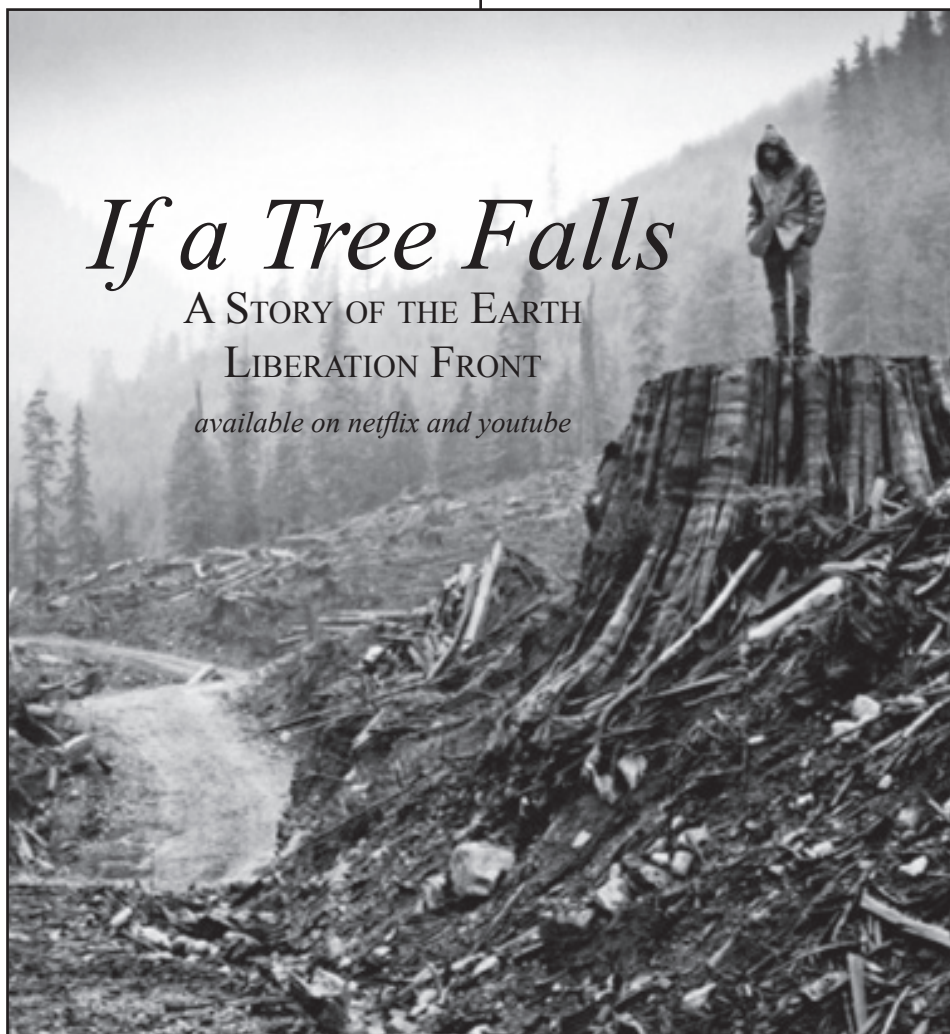
On the FBI wanted poster, where she is described as a terrorist, it lists Overaker’s possible professions as a **firefighter**, a **midwife**, a **sheep tender**, or a **masseuse**. This is the type of person they fear and seek to destroy. 🐦

Thieves

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thieves, witches and criminals. So be it. This letter is almost finished. We ask you to stop obeying the petty laws that dominate this world and become heretics like us. Help us burn the churches of capitalism and topple the temples of slavery. We have been carrying the fire for so long that it has singed our nerves and made us immune to all but the most intense and wonderful of sensations. Come enjoy them with us. We have the suspicion that some of you already have.

There is a world to
destroy and a world to
make free. Stop being
so confused. Become
thieves like us.



If a Tree Falls

A STORY OF THE EARTH
LIBERATION FRONT

available on netflix and youtube

My So-Called Life:

An irregular column detailing the misery, banality, and absurdity of everyday life in capitalist society.

I am an anarchist nanny.

I never pay the \$2.25 I owe for the 10 minute bus ride—usually there are a few wadded transfers on top of the piled coffee cups in the trash-can near my stop. I pick them out, smooth them flat, and carefully slip them into my wallet. When I get on, flashing my transfer, I see that the bus is once again full of people who probably don't live in the neighborhood we're all heading towards. I'm guessing they're mostly cleaning women or nannies like me.

I show up at the house 15 minutes early because of the way the bus runs. The mom opens the door and welcomes me in with a warm smile. I'm not sure how old she is—perhaps 35? She could be closer to my age, but I'm getting worse and worse at guessing ages.

Her 5-year old daughter is standing next to her, half her height, grinning up at me. Today she's wearing another of her Disney princess shirts, one I haven't seen before. Every time I come she shows me her impressive collection of sparkly dress-up gowns. I was a girly-girl, too, once. I think it really fucked me up.

The baby eyes me warily. I only see him once per week so he's not quite used to me yet. It feels like we have to get reacquainted every time I come. The worst days are those when he's sleeping when I arrive. He opens her eyes expecting his mom and instead it's me. Immediately, he bursts into tears. I try not to take it personally, but it does make me a little sad.

But today he is awake, crawling around on the floor and testing out his new motor skills. While the mom gets ready to go off to her meeting, I chat with the baby and his sister. I really like little kids, and these two are especially charming. The older child narrates our



adventure: we're in an airplane high above Africa, looking down at giraffes. "How much is this interaction worth?" I wonder to myself. Pro-rated for the time, probably about fifty cents. This is the highest-paying job I've ever had. Except that time I got \$125 to have dinner with a lonely 50-year-old man.

When the mom comes downstairs, I ask her what she does for work. I know she works at a big corporation, but not what she actually *does* there. She tells me she is the glorified secretary for a man who hawks the company's products in "second world markets"—spreading the tendrils of neoliberal capitalism further, I guess. It is boring and only financially rewarding. She studied art and used to be a muralist, but could never make enough money to pay for childcare while she worked. So she had to get a better job, to pay people like me to be her stand-in. She loved painting.

Foolishly, I feel guilty for a moment. Then I just feel sad, remembering Maria, my co-worker at a childcare center in another city. She also had two children, both enrolled in the daycare—she visited them on her lunchbreak. Though she got a small employee discount, most of her tiny paycheck every week went right back into paying for her childcare bill. I could never understand it.

My own mother wanted to be a psychologist, probably because she was so

crazy herself. She developed anorexia when she was only 12-years-old, quite a while before doctors really understood anything about it. When she was 15, she was raped by two men, and her parents blamed her. So she started cutting.

My mom wanted to get well but instead she got pregnant with me. Now she sits in front of a computer all day long, doing work she hates for a company that has created dissident databasing software for the US government. I was raised in daycares just like the one I once worked in, raised by women like me and Maria.

I don't know if I'll ever have any kids. In a different, better world, I would.

This is why I hate capitalism. 🖊️

BE THERE

• Sunday, December 4 •

UNDERGROUND REVERIE

CD RELEASE SHOW

with DJs River Grimm,

Dropacat & Teddy K

HIGHLINE, 210 BROADWAY E.

9PM - 2AM, DONATION

• Wednesday, December 7 •

GHOSTS OF OCCUPATIONS

PAST & PRESENT - 3 FILMS

This is What Democracy Looks Like

Reasons For Rage

The Coming Revolution

6:30PM - 10PM

ROOM 312 OF THE ENGINEERING

BUILDING OF SEATTLE U

• Monday, December 12 •

WEST COAST PORT SHUTDOWN

in reponse to recent attacks on port

workers and occupations

WESTLAKE PLAZA, 4TH AND PINE

1PM MARCH TO PORT OF SEATTLE

#occupyseattle #occupytheport

westcoastportshutdown.org

(206) 424 - 4547

OR BE SQUARE!

How to Occupy

◀ CONTINUED FROM PG. 4

lems for the state in the form of riots, wildcat strikes, copycat occupations, or significant political ramifications. As things currently stand, there is mostly only passive support for occupation in Seattle, so participating in a hard occupation will probably land you in jail. The up side, depending on how you look at it, is that your action could make some serious waves.

A **soft occupation**, on the other hand, allows the flow of people into and out of the building, often through only one guarded and/or locked door. The remaining entrances and street-level windows are often (but not always) reinforced. This is the best choice if you want to actually begin creating something like a social center. You might lose it tomorrow or next week, but the relationships you build and the memory of the occupation's potential will last much longer.

As a third option, you can also just take a vacant building in a humble, unprovocative way, move on in, do your thing, and see what happens.

7. If you're planning a high-profile occupation, **plan a squatting action**. When the house at 23rd and Alder was occupied in the Central District, people did some work beforehand to make sure that a good group of people would be there to participate and to support the occupiers when the squat went

public. Marchers were told beforehand that a building would be occupied at the end of the march but were not told specifically where it was. A supportive crowd can serve as a buffer between occupiers and the police and might decide to join the squatters on the inside. A flash mob could have a similar effect and will probably have the added benefit of less police presence, but the numbers are less predictable. Either way, it's great to have relevant banners draped on the structure (you can even dramatically drop them in front of your supporters) and tools on hand to immediately begin work on improving the building's exterior.

Something that worked particularly well in Chapel Hill, NC, in a recent building occupation was that the occupiers mapped the space and made public what they planned to do with it. It was much harder for the media to spin the occupation as the evil work of some deranged anarchists when the deranged anarchists were intending to devote some space in the building to a library and childcare center. That said, we should never hinge our plans on the mainstream media's representations of our actions—they'll try especially hard to discredit us when we are most effectively challenging the status quo.

8. **Eviction.** Very few of the recent #Occupy-related public squatting attempts have lasted more than a day—the house on 23rd

and Alder seems to be an exception. This is probably due, in large part, to the relatively weak position of the Seattle Police Department after some cops pepper-sprayed an old woman, a priest, and a pregnant woman at an Occupy Seattle demonstration on November 15. But this respite from police violence probably won't last long. The police will eventually find a good excuse to unleash their brutality on us freedom-loving rebels, and we can expect the media to once again provide their paltry justifications.

As such, thinking about eviction response is important but may be difficult to plan in advance. In that case, it is good to know what options you can select from when (and if) the time comes. So, what are they? Well, you might want to stay and fight, barricading yourselves inside, etc. That little "etc." can mean a lot of things—so do your research, look at examples from elsewhere in the world, and prepare yourself accordingly. Another option is to leave and regroup. There are lots of other buildings out there... perhaps one just down the street. Regardless of the specifics, having a **phone-tree or similar method** of alerting your network of friends and supporters is a fabulous idea. Occupation evictions and squat defense have an extremely rich history of igniting revolt and inspiring greater acts of rebellion. So whatever you do, ***don't go quietly!***

Good luck.



pugetsoundanarchists.org
anarchistinternational.org
anarchistnews.org

theanarchistlibrary.org
continualwar.wordpress.com
waronsociety.noblogs.org