Burning the Bridges They Are Building: Anarchist Strategies against Police in the Puget Sound, Winter 2011

Cops = Murderers

Judges = Executioners
Introduction

When I moved to Seattle many years after the infamous upheaval of 1999, I found almost no remnants of whatever had existed here. Certainly, I could find other anarchists, but for a long time I found myself in variations of the same conversation: How do we reach each other? What are we doing? Why does nothing happen?

And then, finally, I was with other anarchists in the street—friends and acquaintances, but others, too. Who are all these people? We were all in black masks. This was the first black bloc in Seattle in about a decade. Hundreds of posters all over town had announced a demonstration against police violence in the middle of Capitol Hill as part of the West Coast Days of Action Against State Violence April 8-9, 2010. The size of the demonstration was modest—probably around 80 people—but nearly half the crowd came en bloc.

Anarchists in the Puget Sound* had been inspired by recent events elsewhere: the Greek insurrection of December 2008, the riots following the murder of Oscar Grant in 2009 in Oakland, events elsewhere: the Greek insurrection of December 2008, the nearly half the crowd came en bloc.

The march of February 16, 2010, was the opening of the winter 2011. At the end of January, there had been a convergence of the Puget Sound to Anti-Police Tension

* The Puget Sound is a geographical region that contains Seattle and other cities, including Tacoma and Olympia. The larger demonstrations and actions of winter 2011 were centered in Seattle. However, stronger regional connections developed among anarchists in the Puget Sound during this period, and there was much collaboration between anarchists from different cities. The actions during this time in Seattle were not just the work of Seattle anarchists, but of anarchists from throughout the region.

These were significant to us for many reasons. Anarchists played an active and critical part in all of them; they showed that people can actively resist the violence of police; they revealed that when people act on their rage, they open a space in defiance of the violence of everyday life. In this space, new social relations come to be as the authority of the state and capital are challenged. These distant fires had stirred the flames in us, and we took the streets that day ready for a fight.

But if the mild clashes of April 9 set off any sparks, they didn't seem to catch in the moment. At one point, cops used their bikes as mobile barriers to push the crowd out of the street and onto the sidewalk. As a cop on a horse cornered the group, one demonstrator tossed a paint bomb right at the cop's head. Incredibly, the paint-filled light bulb bounced unbroken off the helmet of the dazed cop, whose only reaction was a look of dim confusion. The paint bomb broke harmlessly on the street in a red splatter. Worse, the blow didn't embolden the crowd. Instead, there was a collective gasp of shock: I can't believe someone did that!

In the end, the police cleared the streets, beating and arresting three demonstrators and capturing two others blocks away after they left. Despite the fact that the police had committed the only real violence, the five arrested faced charges including assaulting an officer and rioting. In addition, the local anti-authoritarian scene was soon parroting familiar
stereotypes: those people ruined the protest for the rest of us; violence never solves anything. I went home having experienced a harsh reminder of where I was. This wasn’t Greece, or even Oakland, or even Portland. I lived in Seattle. The spell of social peace isn’t broken here. Nothing happened.

Less than a year later, anarchists were in the streets in black masks again. But I wasn’t lost in what I wished could happen. Something was happening. The occupied streets, the broken glass of police cruiser windows, the undercover forced out of the demonstration with a blow to the head, the smoke bombs hurled to keep horse cops at bay, the youth chanting “Eye for an eye, a pig’s gotta die!”—Seattle was seeing revolt explode beyond the control of both managed protests and state repression. This wasn’t an insurrection like Greece, or even a series of riots like Oakland. But for a brief period between January and March 2011, people broke years of inertia to interrupt the social peace. And, as in the struggles that had inspired us the preceding April, anarchists played a critical role in fueling the flames.

Violence, Counterattacks, and Counter-Information: A Brief Background to Anti-Police Tension in the Puget Sound

It would be an exaggeration to claim that anarchists are responsible for the most remarkable resistance to the police in the recent history of the Puget Sound. On the contrary, anarchists had no perceivable role in a string of unconnected attacks against police in 2009. For months, any casual reader of the mainstream media could learn that shots were being returned to cops and finding their targets.

Individual armed resistance to the police deserves analysis from anarchists, but falls outside of the scope of this article. I only have space here to mention the two most widely reported attacks: The march of February 16, 2011. At the opening of 2010, Seattle was relatively quiet; but by 2012 it was known as a hotbed of US anarchism.

In the end, the police cleared the streets, beating and arresting people. I would need twice as much time and space to list all the ed attacks against police in 2009. For months, the police had no perceivable role in a string of unconnected attacks against police. Incredibly, the paint-filled light bulb bounced unbroken after it had left. Despite the fact that the police had come to the head, the smoke bombs hurled to keep horse cops at bay, the youth chanting “Eye for an eye, a pig’s gotta die!”—Seattle was seeing revolt explode beyond the control of both managed protests and state repression.

The following is a list of ed attacks against police in 2009. For months, any casual reader of the mainstream media could learn that shots were being returned to cops and finding their targets.

Author’s Addendum, 2012

I wrote this over a year ago, it describes events that occurred over a year and a half ago. The intervening time raises the question: were Seattle anarchists in fact “prepared to feed the flames” of social war afterwards? In fact, to write about the trajectory of anarchist activity since the end of this narrative, I would need twice as much time and space, and I would still inevitably leave out important situations. A list of highlights would have to include dozens of clandestine attacks, the occupations of multiple buildings, the construction and defense of an impressive street barricade during the port blockade of December 12, 2011. Further experimentation with the assembly model, the establishment of a biweekly newspaper, the demise of a social center and the opening of another, the general expansion of anarchist social circles, the efforts leading up to May Day and the riot and demonstrations that day—and, unfortunately, numerous cases of repression and state violence against rebels. Anarchists have continued to constitute a force of their own in Seattle, repeatedly outsizing the police, destabilizing professional and amateur politicians, undermining the lie of social peace, and finding the pressure points to open space for new possibilities.

Furthermore, the actions I once described excitedly are modest compared to what anarchists in Seattle have been able to accomplish more recently. An easy example: the black blocs described in “Burning the Bridges” hit very few targets per demonstration and exhibited a bit of aimlessness and sloppiness in the street compared to the bloc’s effort on May Day, 2012, which wrecked an unknown number of targets (at least twenty) including a federal courthouse, outmaneuvered the uniformed police entirely, clobbered the undercover cops who tried to intervene, kept the media away with words and force, and disappeared expertly before the police regrouped in greater number.

Why, then, when there is so much more recent news, should Rolling Thunder dedicate pages to this old story? What is its remaining relevance?

The critical element of Burning the Bridges is that it describes a starting point. One of the most remarkable considerations when reviewing anarchists’ contributions to social war in Seattle is that none of this was happening only a few years ago. In 2011, anarchists managed to collaborate autonomously in an entirely decentralized manner to create a new means of struggle in an environment where we had previously felt suffocated and ineffectual. Burning the Bridges is the story of the origin of the trajectory that shaped the events listed above. The short period it describes informed and influenced anarchist participation in last fall’s occupations and is still evoked and dissected now in local discussions of how to continue interventions toward insurrection, despite general recognition that we have since accomplished things we considered impossible in 2011. Of course, there are innumerable prehistories to this story—for example, anarchist involvement in the Port Militarization Resistance activity in Olympia and Tacoma in 2007—but anarchists here recognize that something new began in the early months of 2011.

That feeling should be familiar; for the last few years, anarchists throughout the US have been participating in a new wave of activity. I can’t count the number of cities I never imagined had an anarchist population that issue regular communiqués and reportbacks today. Two beautiful texts that say so much have seemingly planted two simple slogans in many anarchists’ minds: “The secret is to really begin” and “Find each other & get going.” These phrases have meant so much to people because, in periods of uninterrupted social peace, it’s difficult to imagine how to “begin” and “get going,” and the longer we postpone that ignition, the more urgent it becomes, and the more frustrated we feel. After experiencing the joy of really beginning, intentionally and with strategic consideration, I wanted to share with other would-be insurgents how Seattle anarchists discovered that secret.

That said, I never intended to write a guide to a “Seattle model” of anarchist activity. Burning the Bridges is the story of how Seattle anarchists got going. I wrote it with the hope that it would help others to get started. But where those trajectories lead us to the rebels who know their cities, their friends and comrades, and their social contexts. This is why there is no “Seattle model” and why there will be no sequel to this essay, which still serves its intended purpose. For a more up-to-date view of the situation in Seattle, consult Pugetsoundanarchists.org.
the best that these assemblies mostly focused on creating space for self-identified anarchists. But for anarchists, the explicitly anarchist as-
seembles, a more open assembly that invited non-anarchists would have provided an oppor-
tunity for anarchists to present their positions directly to others. This would have been more challenging than speaking with people who shared the same politics, but it would have been worth it. Even if differing positions were not reconciled, when the inevitable media back-
lash began many people would already have an understanding of who anarchists are and why we do what we do—derived from experience, rather than corporate media distortions.

As for our own media, anarchists were re-
markably on point. PugetSoundAnarchists.org, a local website, exploded with analyses, calls for action, reports back, communiqués, and leaf-
lets and posters for printing. This provided a central online clearinghouse for these regional frameworks. The mainstream news re-
ported on anarchists, they usually mentioned the website by name. Many people, hearing something shocking about rioting in Seattle, visited the site and read anarchist arguments for themselves. The production and dissemi-
nation of these leaflets was entirely decentralized. Several new leaflets appeared at every demo-
stration. After the black bloc grabbed many demonstrator’s imaginations on February 16, for example, a leaflet appeared that explained, on one side, "Why We Wear Masks"—and on the other, “Tips for Rooting.” At The Stranger’s accountability forum, a leaflet announced "The End of Dialogue." When discourse centered on justice, anarchist leaflets exclaimed “Justice Is Impossible, and So Are We!”

This point is also critical. Anarchists channeled the language of justice and accountability. By setting our sights on nothing less than total freedom, anarchists in the Puget Sound made our analysis inherently resistant to co-optation. Calls for accountability had already been re-
absorbed into the system of domination—see, for example, community accountability forums.

A call for justice is always an appeal to authority. One form of justice would rely on the authority of the state to prosecute the perpetrator—but as anarchists, we must also oppose the justice system and its prisons. The vaguer model of jus-
tice—“social justice”—still relies on the moral authority of society, and remains easy for the state to co-optate. Consider, for example, the official response to the calls for justice following John T. Williams’ murder. The SPD has unveiled the friendly new face of repression—“justice-
based policing,” explicitly aimed at policing more efficiently by rebuilding trust between the police and society.

To act on one’s desire for freedom or venge-
ance is another matter entirely. Such action is direct and predicated on no authority but one’s own. As one reporter put it:

As anarchists we know we cannot find justice under the State and Capital-
ism. Instead, we seek vengeance. Vengeance for those whose lives can never be given back and vengeance for our own lives constrained by the tentacles of social control. We do not want a better system because, in fact, better only means more efficient for those who wish to kill and imprison us. We do not strive to reform those who have the power to see us on the front, but we seek the total destruction of this system of domination, with our feet planted firmly on the ground.

—From Reportback & Statements Re-
garding the February 12th Anti-Police Demo in Seattle

Here in Seattle now, our feet remain firmly
on the ground. We don’t offer this analysis out of an inflated sense of the importance of last winter’s events relative to struggles elsewhere, but in contrast to the dreary quiet of so many preceding gray Northwestern winters. Things are not the same here now. There is more cohe-
sion, more drive, more energy. The frequency of attacks, information nights, and solidarity actions has increased. We’ve learned new skills, tactics, and strategies. And although there is a stillness in the summer air, we know that the social war continues. The next time it flares up, we’ll be better prepared to feed the flames.

—Summer 2011

Further Reading

PugetSoundAnarchists.org

News for anarchists from the Puget Sound
Against the Police and the Prison World They
Maintain: Communiques from the Northwest
January-March 2011
http://pugetsoundanarchists.org/node/595

• On the night of October 22, four Seattle police vehicles were firebombed in the East Precinct parking lot. A little over a week later, on a Halloween night, two officers were in a residential area were ambushed with gunfire from a car. One of the two, Timothy Brenton, was killed, his partner returned fire but the assaulter escaped.

The next week, police shot and arrested Chris-
topher Monfort after a neighbor reported that his car matched the description of the one used in the attack. Police also claimed to have found in his apartment an assault rifle matching the bullets used in the killing and bomb-making materials, as well as other materials linking him to the shooting and bombings.

• On the morning of November 29, a man named Maurice Clemmons walked into a cafe in Lakewood, Washington, where four police officers were working on laptops before their shift. Clemmons opened fire on the officers, killing them, but did not aim at any other customers or the the cafe itself. Police went on to militarize the neighborhood where Brenton was killed a month earlier, using armored vehicles to block roads and a robot to destroy a house where Clemmons was suspected of hiding.

The police eventually found Monsen, in early on the morning of December 1 and shot him dead.

These shootings took place in the midst of a string of high-
profile instances of police violence:

• In May 2009, Christopher Sean Harris was chased down a street in Belltown by two cops. The court ruled that the men had identified themselves to Harris. Deputy Matthew Paul shoved Harris’ head into a wall and crushed it, resulting in a catastrophic brain injury that finally won Harris a $10 million settlement after it came out that police had lied to paramedics about how Harris was injured. It is unlikely Harris will recover.

• In November 2009, 15-year-old Malika Calhoun was slammed into a wall and punched twice while being detained in a holding cell by King County Sheriff’s Deputy Paul Schene. Schene had already shot two people, killing one of them; the legal system ruled those shootings “justified.” Schene was later acquitted of all charges relating to his assault of Calhoun.

• On April 17, 2010, a group of Hispanic men were pulled over near Lake Union. Officer Shandy Cobane asserted: “I’m going to beat the fucking Mexican piss out of you homo. You feel me?” and stomped on one of the men as he lay complying on the ground. No charges were filed against Cobane.

• On June 14, 2010 Seattle cop Ian Walsh began harassing multiple young people attempting to cross Martin Luther King Jr. Way. When two young black women refused to passively ac-
cept his verbal and then physical aggression, he responded by punching one in the face and then arresting both.

The victims of these assaults were all attacked for petty defi-
ance of authority—such as jawwalking—or without any reason at all. These incidents don’t indicate an increase in the violence perpetrated by the police; the police have always been brutal. Rather, while the corporate media ignore or downplay police violence whenever possible, perpetrators are caught on video. When police are caught red-handed, even the complicit media can be forced to show their true face, lest their legitimacy be challenged by videos websites.

Rather than expose the growing tension between the popu-
lation and the police, corporate media were careful to hide it behind a narrative of individual instances of “bad apple” police violence on one hand, and the supposed insanity of Monfort and Clemmons on the other. In the Seattle Times, a spokesperson for the police called Brenton’s death an “act of terrorism.” A local Fox News affiliate alleged that a confidential source had reported that child porn was found on Monfort’s computer; no other news sources ran this information and the city never filed such charges. The Seattle Times also reported that Clemmons had previously been convicted of a felony child rape charge among other crimes. According to the Times, this was evidence of his deteriorating mental health—the only plausible reason one would take up arms against the police.

Clemmons never got a chance to speak for himself, but there’s no need to speculate about Monfort’s feelings. Monfort used his appearances in court and in the media to present a coherent critique. Despite surviving being shot in the head only to face the death penalty in prison, Monfort was calm, collected, and assertive—not at all the madman the media had presented. In particular, he decryied officer Schene’s beating of Calhoun. In court, he told the court how he watched the video of this event, and in writing, he said, “We’ve had enough. The people will not take it any longer. We will not take it any longer. We’ll fight and we’re everywhere. You can’t see us coming.” He openly invoked the language of war.

The King County prosecutor recognized this, declaring that, in trying him with the arson and shooting, he was accusing Monfort of waging “his personal war” against Seattle police. He wasn’t the only one capable of recognizing the sig-
ificance of Monfort’s transgression. Many people cheer at-
tacks against the police, as a result of day-to-day experiences of being abused by them. Although he was caught, Monfort had accomplished a deed many dream of carrying out. It’s difficult to gauge how widespread this sentiment is; it is often shouted down by the mainstream community who side with the police. On the blog for The Stranger, Seattle’s supposedly “alternative” weekly newspaper, moderators frantically erased any comments that implied an understanding of why people would attack police.

Liberal Reform and Social War

While the forces of order sought to isolate Monfort, anarchists set out to contextualize his acts of violence—to the invisible war hidden by the façade of social

* In some places, authorities are moving to make it illegal to videotape police.
peace. At the previously mentioned demonstration against the police on April 9, 2010, anarchists distributed a leaflet titled “Some People Shoot Back,” which explained:

Almost none of the media coverage about Monfort mentioned the brutal beating of the 15-year-old girl, or the many other instances of police violence that motivated Monfort. This is because the media and the police work for the same power structure: a power structure that demands we all remain obedient while they rob us, exploit us, bully us, and lie to us, and then punish us with the utmost cruelty when we break one of their rules, or fight back. This is a system built on our misery. It is no coincidence that sometimes people snap, and do whatever they can to fight back against the agents of this system.

To win just a moment of justice, a moment of vengeance. They are the bravest of us, the most honest.

Anarchists defended Monfort's act and called for prison solidarity for him, insisting that all attacks on the police deserve support while also articulating that the struggle for freedom does not need more martyrs. The anarchist position of social war differs from Monfort's war, even if there is a connection.

As another leaflet put it,

What we want most is to fight strategically by cultivating our will to be free and then connecting with others committed to the same struggle to create a world where cops are not welcome and where individual or systemic assaults on our friends and communities are met with full, sustainable expressions of our rage [...] We will not calm downs as a war is waged against us. We do not seek to make peace with the police. We bring fuel to the fires.

But the dominant visible sentiment in Seattle did not embrace this. The fervor that followed Brenton's death sent many running back to the side of the police. The Seattle Times ran a photo of pedestrians stopping to put their right hands over their hearts—Starbucks cups still firmly gripped in the left—as Brenton's funeral procession drove by. The political climate of Seattle is largely liberal-progressive and produces much ideological incongruence—in this particular instance, moral outrage over out-of-control cops alongside an inability or unwillingness to understand the inherent brutality of the police, their place in the violence of capitalism and government, and their historical role and development. The liberal critique of police brutality demands reforms and reaffirms the role of authority in the same breath.

This cognitive dissonance was especially apparent in a clash between the union newspaper of Seattle police and the more liberal media of the city. The Stranger ran an article titled “What Some Seattle Cops Think the Problem Is.” The title itself is telling, as it reveals the reluctance of liberals to grapple with systemic violence, focusing instead on the opinions of the individual bad cops removed from their larger context. The article was about editorials written by officers in The Guardian, the newspaper of the SPD's union. These are surprisingly honest: cops refer to the citizens they police as “the enemy,” mocking community accountability efforts as “sideshow[s] that exist only for chiefs and chiefs to provide an illusion of citizen accountability.” Anarchists affirm all of these statements. Liberals and progressives, on the other hand, value these sidehows because they understand the police as a social service. In their view, if public servants run afoul of civil society, they should be better managed. Comment after comment on The Stranger's online article protested, “But you work for us!”

### The Murder of John T. Williams

“All people seeking to be free find themselves in direct opposition to a system that is inherently violent and oppressive. The police deliberately use violence to control or kill off anyone who seeks to dismantle this power structure—or anyone already marginalized within it. We don't want a friendlier police force. [...] We want to get out of control. We want a world without cops.”

—from the anarchist leaflet

John T. Williams Was Murdered by Seattle Cop Ian Birk

However liberals sought to avoid coming to terms with the unfolding war, one particular event forced their illusion to its limits. On Monday, August 30, Seattle cop Ian D. Birk shot and killed John Williams, a 50-year-old Native American man. Seattle Police and mainstream media initially described the lethal attack as an example of a cop defending himself in a dangerous situation. Williams, they said, was “armed” with a knife and “advanced” on the officer who repeatedly demanded he drop the weapon before resorting to gunfire. This story quickly fell apart. In reality, Williams did not approach Birk at all. He was merely crossing the street on his way home from a park he frequented. He probably did not respond to Birk's orders because he was partially deaf. The knife he was carrying was within the legal limit in Seattle; he had been using it to carve small totem poles—something he and his brothers had done for years. Only 4 seconds passed from the moment Birk exited his car to confront Williams to the fifth bullet he fired. Eventually it was revealed that the knife retrieved from the scene of the crime was found closed. There was no plausible explanation for the police to hide behind.

Anarchists acted with urgency to counteract the corporate media's uncritical validation of Birk's account of the killing. One informal group produced a condemnation of the killing unilaterally. The police had released Williams’ identity. Anarchists organized a rally on September 3 on a high-traffic corner near a college campus and a busy part of town. Participants displayed anti-cop banners and passed out hundreds of leaflets explaining the situation to passersby, many of whom hadn't known what happened or had believed the lies propagated in the media. The rally was followed by a short march to the precinct.

Eventually, the particularly egregious details of Williams' death forced the mainstream media to tell the story of what truly happened. The lies forced the mainstream media to tell the story of what truly happened. The lies forced the mainstream media to tell the story of what truly happened. The lies forced the mainstream media to tell the story of what truly happened. The lies forced the mainstream media to tell the story of what truly happened. The lies forced the mainstream media to tell the story of what truly happened.

Yet anarchists and the new allies they found were unable to keep those moments of rupture open. It's important that we analyze soberly why this happened and what we could have done differently, rather than chalking it up to the inevitable death of temporary momentum. The police, whose hands had been tied by their leaders' fears of further antagonizing the public, regained their ability to use legitimized violence by conspiring with the forces that recaptured social struggles. When Rick Williams took the side of the city government against the enraged demonstrators — when the media set the stage on which the police could portray themselves as martyrs — when reformist and authoritative groups announced that the fight was over or that anarchists were irresponsibly reckless or morally reprehensible, they conspired with the police to exclude the anarchist catalyst from the ongoing reaction.

Anarchists were right to openly oppose those recuperative forces. Had we been content to be a quiet, disident voice—the civil conscience of the social organism respectfully shaking the bloody hand of an apogee power—we would have been lost in the hollow discourse of accountability and reform. Instead, we broke that discourse like a cruiser window, and came out the other side with new friends who, like us, wanted to fight the cops—not talk with them. Nonetheless, the blade cut two ways, and our isolation contributed to the ending of this phase of struggle. By the time we realized what was happening, it was too late to form the connections we would have needed to keep the streets flooded. In retrospect, it would have been wise to hold at least one truly general assembly, open to the public at large.

Our experiments with the assembly form were essential to our success, and it was for
and looking forward to taking a break. Many new faces did show up for the third assembly, promising fresh energy, but the conflict continued and maneuvering than in the past. There seemed to be general agreement that, as the last demonstration had been utterly suppressed, a new tactic must be tried, but the emphasis on concrete proposals for action had been lost. After an introductory summary of the preceding events and a short analysis of recent developments, the dialogue quickly filled with vague recommendations of what people should do. Where are we blocked? What if we occupied a politician’s office? Because these ideas had not been developed before the assembly, and because no one was taking responsibility to actualize them, the assembly ended after everyone was tired of talking without having set any new course. The only proposal was for a demonstration that had already been planned for March 15. It would prove to be the last demonstration of this period.

In the final analysis, the third assembly might have failed to develop a coherent strategy simply because the anarchists in attendance either did not see the situation changing around them or considered it not to be a problem. If we were committed to shunning the media, and they were committed to misrepresenting us, how could we deal with their role in isolating us? If we had not already made the connections necessary to keep ourselves from being isolated, wasn’t it too late to make them now? If the dramatic acts of February 16, 18, and 26 had not inspired a continued street presence in March, what would be the effect of the one on March 4? It was not just the skewed maneuvers of our enemies that ended the period of heightened struggle, but also our inability to counter them. Despite the repression of March 4, many new people still showed up for the demonstration. One woman who had known John Williams was especially angry, holding a black flag through-out the march; yelling at the cops and hanging it on the street in front of them. A few people from Seattle graffiti crews came; despite the heavy police presence, at least one took the opportu-nity to paint anti-cop slogans on the opulent walls of downtown. Still, much of the 15th was a repeat of the unfortunate events of the 4th. Turnout was small, and police simply smothered the demonstration. Black bloc participants had decided ahead of time to play a defensive role, using reinforced banners and sticks to help hold the street when the police tried to push the crowd off it. But when the cops used their bats as mobile bar-riers, anarchists were forced to join the rest of the crowd on the sidewalk. In frustration, most of the black bloc parted with the demonstration before it had even left downtown. The crowd then marched up the hill toward the East Precinct. By now the route had become routine. When it reached the precinct, a line of riot cops was waiting. The march moved up and down some of Capitol Hill’s busier streets, losing more participants along the way, until finally a small group gathered at a nearby park, still chanting slogans.

People felt disparited. It seemed the old Seattle had returned—the Seattle of April 9, 2000, the Seattle where nothing happens. No one bothered to write a reportback about the 15th, and the frequency of callouts and assemblies dropped drastically. Nonetheless, something concrete remained from the period of unrest. Days after the March 15 demonstration, the Seattle Tribune published an anti-cop leaflet scattered on the street, posters adorned the walls of Seattle advertising a benefit dinner for all those arrested during anti-police demonstrations. The dinner was held at the new anti-authoritarian social space in Seattle, Autonomia. The dinner was crowded and new friends spoke excitedly about every-thing they had seen, about the photographs projected on the wall from all the demonstrations, about what would come next and the meaning of solidarity. Perhaps the poster said it best: True solidarity is the recognition of your own struggle in the struggle of those suffering repression and them carried out through the continuity of that struggle; the maintenance of active revolt. The momentum that was born in the streets lives on even in the face of repression. March 15: The Moment of Upheaval Ends; The Active Struggle Continues

Traditionally, the day is titled “International Day Against Police Brutality” but this definition is limiting. We are calling for a demonstration “Against the Police.” The brutality of the police is an inherent part of their role as the guard dogs of the bosses and the rich, it is not simply an abuse of power, but a symptom of power itself.

The callout emphasized that the struggle was bigger than any individual cop. Ian Birk and John Williams were not even mentioned. This strategically foregrounded the agency of the participants against the police. As the poster explained, “talking to the streets on our own terms is a step toward building resistance to the police on a practical level.”

No Justice and No Resolution

The heightening of tensions in Seattle in winter 2011 didn’t constitute an insurrection or even widespread rioting. None-theless, it marked a qualitative break with normality. Those who favored the intensification of struggle faced off against the powerful forces of order. Anarchists in the Puget Sound were able to identify those forces as enemies and confront them as such, opening a space in which social upheaval could begin. Without the strategic involvement of anarchists, the situation would not have developed as it did. The only requirement for attendance at this assem-bly is the desire for the total abolition of the dominant social order that commits violence against the anti-authoritarian social force. To this end, political parties are unacceptable—includ-ing so-called ‘revolutionary’ ones.”

The assembly took place in three stages. First, participants presented projects contributing to the anti-police struggle. Then they analyzed and discussed the situation, fo-cusing on concrete proposals for action, time for which was reserved in the third phase of the assembly. Emphasizing concrete propos-als discouraged vague statements about what “should be done” as well as attempts to develop concrete plans during the assembly. Participants were expected to propose plans for action that they had prepared in advance and that they were committed to carrying out, or for which they had ever else was interested. The assembly closed with informal discussion among individuals and groups attracted to each other’s analysis and proposals—an opportunity to exchange information for future dates to flesh out plans. The first assembly was a success, socially speaking. Anarchists were mobilized and made new connections. However, very few of the plans proposed were carried out.
Meanwhile, the forces that maintain order wasted no time springing into action. John T. Williams, who was even buried
several different entities were enacting schemes to make sure nothing got out of hand. Like anarchists, they recognized that during wild expressions of social rage, a space can open in which the state’s face gapes—their own tenuous grasp on power.

The city’s government’s strategy was defined to confuse defense while granting killer cops impunity. Even the corporate media described the court proceedings initiated by officials as empty gestures. The Firearm Review Board found the shooting unjustified;
the official legal inquest into the shooting that was un答题被截断，无法完整显示。
heard about anarchist noise demonstrations and wanted to create their own. Riot police formed a line in the street, and in the three minutes it took them to get to the intersection, the situation had transformed. The crowd that arrived included a very small group of anarchists with a banner and leaflets that criticized calls for justice and accountability. 

The outcome for the prosecution of Ian Bark for murder— for the power of the law to bring down its heavy hands upon the murderer—reinforces state power. “Police accountability” is a contradiction in terms. The police are the repressive, violent foster parents of the state, and their authority is innumerable ways. They maintain the social order as it exists: all of us below and one percent at the top. They are slave drivers of our everyday lives who uphold the status quo. The revolution that is needed to disrupt the existing order is one of talking points: “But what do you know about communism? Is the Soviet Union real communism? Is China?” He quickly flied the demonstration in exasperation. The attempted management of the protest continued to tire the crowd throughout the evening. The strategy for the march, "What do we want? Justice! The stranger as a discourse to own values and analysis. We don't offer a prescription; we don't seek to control the explosion. We want to lay the detonator."

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The Strategy in Practice: Anarchist Action as a Destabilizing Force

Burning the Bridges They Are Building

"It happens every time an uncontrollable fire breaks out. The cowardly people who will talk with the police and work with the police come out into the light. Some snitch to the cops, some call them for protection, some lead us toward meetings where we can "talk it out." Full of vain dreams that cops can be good, they bow their heads, take the side of the police. They, like all cops, live in fear and are ruled by fear.

They, like all cops, are the absolute enemy." – The Police Are the Absolute Enemy

The risk of calling for an anarchist presence at The Stranger’s police accountability forum was that anarchists might accidentally participate in the proposed dialogue. The forum was

congregate on that corner, walked into the middle of the street and sat down. As one stepped off the sidewalk, another cautiously commented, citing the nearby cops, “Hey, I don’t want to be around here if something is gonna go down.”

His friend replied, “I don’t want to be around here unless something is gonna go down!” Talking to the anarchists, some of the youth explained that John Williams had been a friend of theirs, and that tonight they were ready to fight and go to jail in his honor.

Dismayed at their failure to corral the demonstrators and their anger, BCP members used their bullhorns to announce that this blockade was not the organizers’ intention and that anyone in the street could be arrested. But it was no use. Now passersby were interested in what was happening. Anarchists insisted that the bullhorns be passed around to allow anyone to speak out against the police. One woman came running from down the block and upon reaching the bullhorn announced, “I just want to say—fuck the police!”

Contrary to organizers’ misgivings, no one was arrested when the police arrived. In fact, the cops seemed at a loss. After repeatedly asking people to leave the street, they resorted to dragging people out of the chugged lanes of traffic. Incredibly, folks simply stood up and returned to the places they had been sitting. It seemed that, out of fear of further agitating the population, the authorities had ordered that force should not be used. The best the cops could do was to use their bodies to form a line, allowing one lane of traffic to remain open as the modest intersection occupation carried on for hours.

This showed that people were angry but had been hobbled by the innocuous and manipulative protests of reformists and authoritarians. Sadly, anarchists had allowed those groups to dominate the discourse surrounding police violence. And the hands of the police seemed bound—they were temporarily incapable of the repression they typically could exert. It was time to act swiftly.

The Second Assembly and the Emergent Strategy

While the so-called revolutionary wing of the managers of social revolt wanted to exploit a potentially explosive situation to expand their ranks, anarchists had no interest in exploiting anyone’s death to push a political program. This distinction is fundamental. Anarchists in the Puget Sound sought to act in solidarity with those resisting the violence of the police—not out of moral obligation, but because we recognize that our struggle is the same. We act on our own rage, for ourselves, against the forces of domination in our own lives. We don’t demand “justice” or “accountability”—we want total freedom. If we act according to our values, our actions will resonate with new comrades, whom we trust to act on their own values and analysis. We don’t offer a prescription; we don’t seek to control the explosion. We want to lay the detonator.

Like the forces of order, anarchists recognized the opening of a gap between police and the rest of society. In contrast to them, we sought to deepen the divide. But we were unsure how to proceed;
people out of the streets, but the demonstration proved capable of defending itself. This was partly due to the increased preparedness of the black bloc, but also because non-anarchist demonstrators were adopting black bloc tactics. While anarchists had previously been the only ones seeking to escalate things, on the 18th many others arrived with plans and masked faces. Many brought their own black flags, so they were spread throughout the crowd rather than concentrated in the black bloc. One group of youth came wearing bandanas over their faces representing different gang affiliations but marched in a bloc, symbolizing their dedication to overcoming divisions in order to fight the police together.

At first, the demonstration passed through parts of downtown that previous protests had not visited. The crowd walked against traffic through streets clogged with cars, making it difficult for police to follow. Journalists tried to approach the black bloc with cameras but were chased off. The night was alight in the eerie red glow of the street flares carried and thrown by some demonstrators.

The mob didn’t wait for a line of riot cops like the one from two nights earlier to strike. Some masked demonstrators, not in black bloc attire, lobbed bottles at the police. Police reported that they had an undercover in the crowd near one of the bottle throwers, but he was afraid to act due to the militancy of the demonstration. Indeed, the undercover was discovered by members of the black bloc, struck in the head with a stick, and chased out. A rock shattered through the back window of a police cruiser. The officer inside it jumped out in a panic, leaving the car to drive into the police van in front of it. The crowd cheered, some jumping up and down in celebration.

The police tried to cover their shame with a torrent of pepper spray, but the crowd wouldn’t relent. As cops on horseback began to charge the demonstrators, smoke bombs flew from the black bloc. The horses reared back and retreated; they wouldn’t cross the smoke. Demonstrators took advantage of the confusion to scatter and evade the police. Despite scattering, they were far from through.

The youth marching in a bloc separate from the black bloc took it upon themselves to lead a charge back through downtown toward the jail, snaking around blocks to avoid the police. They had been inspired by the stories they had heard. One person was arrested and charged with the breaking of the cruiser window; but without any evidence that he was involved, it seems unlikely the charges will stick.

Hundreds of people took the streets once again two days later, in February 18. If anything more eager for confrontation, organized precisely to invite the enraged to shape their rage into a civil, contained commentary; to present it to the panel of cops and politicians who would, in turn, repugnate it as a new, improved justification for policing. Citizens would return home gutted of rage, knowing they tried, hoping they’d been heard.

There were two ways to avoid this trap, to present our call for the abolition of all police as something completely alien and hostile to the conversation unfolding within City Hall, and—with any luck—to destroy that conversation. We decided to try both.

The night of the forum, an explicitly anarchist manifestation gathered outside City Hall with banners, black flags, and leaflets. The banners read Cops = Murderers, Judges = Executioners, and Police Violence Is Not an Accident—All Cops Are Bastards. The leaflets were uncompromising, articulating the media’s role in defending the function of police in the violence of capitalism. This group openly shunned dialogue with the police but communicated with other forum attendees.

Meanwhile, a handful of anarchists donned their best court costumes and attended the forum with the intention of disrupting it. As the chief of police began to speak, one sharply dressed person after another stood up to interrupt him, bombarding him with epithets. The moderator meekly tried to quiet them, but couldn’t. After this, many more from the audience who were not anarchists also refused to politely wait their turn to speak. Again and again, objections from the crowd detailed the panelists. Many people walked out and encouraged others to do so. Banners and signs were displayed across the stage calling for the resignation of the chief of police.

The rows of uniformed police in attendance watched, powerless, as the fragile bridges to society their leaders were trying to build went up in flames. While anarchists were not behind the acts of violence, their unhesitating defiance set the tone for the whole event.

The anarchists gathered outside decided to move their banners, chants, and leaflets inside. Bandanas went over faces, but the main banner hung high—white rice was spread thickly on the floor, the closest thing to a public square in downtown Seattle and so as to be as open to as many people as possible without coming in contact with the police. As cops on horseback forced their way in, the protesters hurled rasps, clouds of pepper spray and paint. One was deployed to create a black bloc to block an exit to City Hall. The crowd wanted to break through the line and swarm the police. One68  Interventions  Issue Ten, Summer 2012  Birk’s Resignation Means Nothing

But jail, snaking around blocks to avoid the police. A charge back through downtown toward the jail, snaking around blocks to avoid the police. They had been inspired by the stories they had heard. One person was arrested and charged with the breaking of the cruiser window; but without any evidence that he was involved, it seems unlikely the charges will stick.

In addition to coordinating open revolt, anarchists in the Puget Sound also carried out clandestine attacks. While it takes a confident black bloc to break even a few windows at a demonstration and arrests will likely ensue, in the dead of night a handful of friends can wreak havoc on a target with relative ease. Public acts have advantages that covert acts lack; for example, a tactic is more likely to spread if it is demonstrated

A CHRONOLOGY OF ATTACKS AND SOLIDARITY ACTIONS

"Anarchists, now is not the time to fear the haton of a pig and slink into hiding. Now is the time to muster up courage, scheme evil plots, and seek revenge. This was not simply an attack against the police, this was a call to make every one of those motherfuckers pay dearly! Not just for beating a fellow rebel, but for the everyday management and misery these spineless bastards heave upon our backs. In the coming nights it is our deepest desire that others will take it upon themselves to launch a greater surge of aggression against the swine that fill our streets."

– from a communiqué claiming an attack on two police cars and a police station in Olympia, WA, in solidarity with anarchists in Seattle

* Seattle Solidarity Network is not explicitly anarchist but was founded by anarchists and operates on anarchist principles.

Many people brought their own black flags, so they were spread throughout the crowd rather than concentrated in the black bloc. One group of youth came wearing bandanas over their faces representing different gang affiliations but marched in a bloc, symbolizing their dedication to overcoming divisions in order to fight the police together.

At first, the demonstration passed through parts of downtown that previous protests had not visited. The crowd walked against traffic through streets clogged with cars, making it difficult for police to follow. Journalists tried to approach the black bloc with cameras but were chased off. The night was alight in the eerie red glow of the street flares carried and thrown by some demonstrators.

The mob didn’t wait for a line of riot cops like the one from two nights earlier to strike. Some masked demonstrators, not in black bloc attire, lobbed bottles at the police. Police reported that they had an undercover in the crowd near one of the bottle throwers, but he was afraid to act due to the militancy of the demonstration. Indeed, the undercover was discovered by members of the black bloc, struck in the head with a stick, and chased out. A rock shattered through the back window of a police cruiser. The officer inside it jumped out in a panic, leaving the car to drive into the police van in front of it. The crowd cheered, some jumping up and down in celebration.

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most simply filed out, tossing the remaining leaflets into the air behind them.

The anarchist critique had not appeared as merely one of many political viewpoints rationally competing for speaking time and new adherents, but rather as a weapon. When their enemies began to flinch, those anarchists aimed this weapon, took a deep breath, and lodged it deep in the throat of dialogue itself. The conversation stuttered, gurgled, and collapsed. In the next week’s print edition, the editors of The Stranger didn’t so much as mention the failed attempt at conciliatory communication: they had tried to orchestrate. Their competitors announced that the forum had been a “failure.” The head of the police officers’ union later complained in The Guardian that “people refused to be quiet!” Now, anarchists had to move to take advantage of their winded opponents—to deny them any opportunity to regain an air of dignity.

A Home Invasion and a Noise Demonstration

We have nothing to lose and everything to gain; them, quite the opposite. If they want to be silent, we scream! If we are fed up, we push back. If they talk, we yell! “Chris Monfort was right!”

As the demonstration came within a block of the precinct, a line of riot police came into view, blocking the way. The police were clearly scared of what might happen if hundreds of enraged demonstrators reached the station. The crowd didn’t try to change course, instead swelling into the intersection in front of the rows of shields, clubs, and helmets. Tension rose.

The crowd roared louder and louder, individuals fighting to the front of the mob to scream in the faces of cops who tried to maintain calm but visibly winced as some demonstrators yelled, “Chris Monfort was right!”

The crowd wanted to break through the line and swarm the precinct, but no one seemed prepared to do this. This was one error anarchists made that night: there were many flags, but not enough projectiles. If the paint bomb hurled on April 29, 2010, had gone off, who knows how things could have been an explosion. To be sure, this lack of material preparation was not only the limitation that kept the situation simmering rather than boiling over; few in the crowd had any experience fighting cops in the street. But many people were waiting for the first brick to be thrown.

Instead, the stalemate withered the energy of the mob, and different tactics were pursued. Some demonstrators were splitting off and looking for busier streets to march down or other ways to approach the precinct. Ultimately, a dwindled march returned downtown and reoccupied the same intersection that had been keyed by a few people in January. People remained in the street at midnight approached; no one was arrested.

February 18:
Birk’s Resignation Means Nothing

Whatever the limits of February 16, it was unlike any protests in the recent history of the Puget Sound. This brief flash of activity could not be the conclusion of the struggle. We felt compelled to maintain pressure on our material preparation. Now that we knew there were sparks of discontent, we moved to lay tinder around them by setting a time and place, inviting as many people as we could, and staying off the extinguishing flames. We had some success of earning a situation again—but this time bring gas to the flames.

An opportunity came immediately: the same day demonstrators had swarmed across the city, Ian Birk announced his resignation from SPD. Anarchists responded quickly with another anonymous and open call for a demonstration: “Another Rally at Westlake—Birk’s Resignation Means Nothing.”

Although no one really had time for a demonstration on February 18, the crowd was fiercer and more prepared to fight. The cops, too, seemed reader to clear
As the bloc moved in on the precinct, officers stood by to guard it. Suddenly, an individual stepped forward and began banging a hammer on the windows of a parked police cruiser. It bounced harmlessly off the rear window; the next blow shattered the driver’s-side window. The attacker then moved back into the bloc. For a second, the police stood still, in shock. Then, they came running in to snatch the window smashers. But as they closed in, several received quick jabs to the head from the sticks bearing black flags and fell back, stunned. More cops moved in, and the bloc dispersed.

February 16: No Charges for Birk

The individual who attacked the cruiser escaped, though the image was dramatically captured by a local photographer and quickly proliferated throughout blogs, print, and new media. Although anarchists in the Puget Sound were critical of attempts to work with corporate media, the prominence of the image ensured that the shattering of the police window was heard by many who hadn’t attended the demonstration. Anarchists had loudly announced the end of passive protest. But would anarchist action become only another spectacle, with most of those who cheered remaining on the sidelines? What could mobilize the rage of a dormant population?

In only a few days, anarchists got an opportunity to find out. On February 15, reports circulated that the next day the city prosecutor would announce that no charges were to be filed against Birk. If there was a moment for large-scale anti-police revolt, this was it. Anarchists needed to act quickly to announce a time and place for a large gathering that could tap into any direction as the night unfolded. Any hesitation and the moment of conflict would be framed and constrained by the forces invested in maintaining social peace. At the time, there was much talk of the use of Facebook to spread the popular uprising in Egypt weeks earlier. Anarchists in the Puget Sound are understandably skeptical about social media tools; nonetheless, they decided that Facebook might be the best way to reach large numbers of strangers quickly.

The callout was posted to Facebook anonymously as an event page. It was carefully worded

1 Officers did manage to grab two demonstrators at random.

Both were charged with misdemeanour obstruction; the charges were later dismissed.

To everyone’s surprise, about fifty people gathered—a larger crowd than the anarchist presence at any of the preceding demonstrations. As the late hour passed, the crowd increased, and the only sound was the sound of flag poles banging against walls and street signs and the screams and chants of the crowd. Nonetheless, the roar that assailed the concrete walls was tremendous. It was around 10 p.m.—lights out in the jail—but on several floors, the silhouettes of hands could be seen in the windows, waving back enthusiastically.

One cop car appeared. As the occupant exited the car to approach the mob, individuals ripped apart the grating of the jail guards’ parking garage, flinging the bolts and hunks of metal at him. He returned to his car to call in backup and await instructions. As the noise continued, people began to smash nearby surveillance cameras.

Another police car arrived and tried to box the crowd in, but the demonstrators effortlessly walked around it, the cops inside afraid to face the group. The demonstration circled the jail a few times while more police cars arrived. Another officer attempted to approach the demonstration; a metal trash can was hurled at him and smashed. After half an hour, the demonstration suddenly dispersed, leaving the cops in their cars waiting obediencely for orders. No one was arrested.

The three who had been beaten, threatened, and arrested were released the next day. The charges against them were dropped at their first court appearances.

For such attacks to spread, it is important that they be easy to imitate. Anarchists have carried out clandestine attacks in this region for years, but the frequency of these increased through February and March 2011. It’s impossible to tell, but this seems to indicate that new people were taking up this approach. Covert attacks also serve to strengthen existing connections between anarchists, preparing them for future acts. Anarchists put it, “These acts of sabotage not only allow us to lash out at the symbols of domination in our lives, but also serve as a means to forge bonds of trust and experience acting with one another.” Another communiqué added, “It is our hope that our struggles, and further, the struggles of all anti-authoritarians, will be mutually inspiring. The police have always used violence to uphold the institution of capitalism, and for that they should expect nothing less to be attacked.” The geographic distribution of solidarity actions shows that comrades around the country felt inspired by what they saw here. When Seattle anarchists faced repression, destruction followed: new acts of sabotage—spreading the retribution further and helping to stave off fatigue in Seattle.

It’s interesting to note that the timeline of attacks lags behind the timeline of demonstrations. It isn’t until after the largest demonstrations against the police that the attacks began. As the ability to pull off inspiring acts openly in the streets began to recede, the number and intensity of clandestine attacks increased. One should be careful not to confuse correlation with causation, however. It is not the case that anarchists in the Puget Sound, faced with repression, have withdrawn from public activity to focus on desperate underground acts. On the contrary, the number of public actions and events has also increased since the peak of the anti-police struggle. The distinction between open acts and secretive attacks has also begun to blur, for example, on April 22, a group of anarchists attacked a bank in daylight in a busy commercial street. They smashed all its windows, leaving leaflets, and disappearing before police could respond.

-February 18, Seattle, WA: Police report over their radios that a precinct must be evacuated because a gas line has been opened. The timing of the discovery coincides exactly with the starting time of that night’s anti-police demonstration. Because no action claim was made, the mainstream media did not report on the event, it’s unclear whether this was sabotage or mere coincidence.

-February 18, Seattle, WA: Following the large street demonstration, arson is used in an attack against a police substation in Seattle. This substation was a frequent target of anti-police vandals and was subsequently closed.

-February 27, Portland, OR: The windows are smashed out of a police substation.

-February 28, Portland, OR: Two banners are dropped in high-traffic areas, reading, “History tells us that the police faced with repression, have withdrawn from public activity to focus on desperate underground acts. On the contrary, the number of public actions and events has also increased since the peak of the anti-police struggle. The distinction between open acts and secretive attacks has also begun to blur, for example, on April 22, a group of anarchists attacked a bank in daylight in a busy commercial street. They smashed all its windows, leaving leaflets, and disappearing before police could respond.

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For the Attack:

Subverting Submissive Protests

The crashing of the accountability forum heralded the end of dialogue with police and their apologists. The noise demonstration had forged new connections in the street. The next step was to set a new trajectory for the coming demonstrations. Following the second assembly, the first opportunity was another protest called for by the October 22 Coalition on February 12. Anarchists intended to take the streets and hold them, to find new comradely in struggle, to shun symbolic protest and actually attack the despised police; to push the tension in the city toward a point of rupture. This succeeded on all counts. Inspired by the second assembly and by the previous week’s noise demonstration, many anarchists attended. The black bloc gathering at the starting point of the demonstration grew until...
are the real criminals—stop them” and “The police are legalized terrorists—stop them.”

-February 28, Tacoma, WA: A police department building is attacked. All its windows are smashed out and its façade stained with paint.

-Early March, Seattle, WA: Several Stranger newspaper boxes are burned.

-March 4, Seattle, WA: A Chase bank has its ATMs glued and its windows splashed with black paint. A communiqué explains, “This act of revenge was done not simply against the bank but against the police who protect the tortuous coils of capital.”

-March 4, Olympia, WA: Two police cruisers and a police station are smashed up.

-March 14, Tacoma, WA: A police cruiser is vandalized with paint and glass etching cream.

-March 15, Olympia, WA: A police substation is firebombed.

-March 15, Santa Cruz, WA: A police cruiser is attacked with glass etching cream and its tires slashed.

-March 15, Vancouver, BC: A probation office is vandalized with anti-cop and anti-prison slogans. Pre-tourism signs are also obscured with paint.

-March 17, Montreal, Québec: Several vehicles belonging to the Public Security Ministry of Québec are doused in paint stripper and have their tires slashed.

-March 18, Philadelphia, PA: A bank’s windows are smashed.

-March 20, Portland, OR: The windows and ATMs of a bank are destroyed and anti-police slogans are painted across the building. This is done in the presence of a police officer, who chooses not to engage.

-March 21, Montreal, Québec: Windows are smashed and paint is thrown on the walls of two security companies.

-turning paint: the march of February 12, 2011, which witnessed the first smashing of a police cruiser window.

For such attacks to spread, it is important that they be easy to focus on desperate underground acts. On the contrary, the number and intensity of clandestine attacks increased. As the timeline of demonstrations. It isn’t until after the largest destruction flared up elsewhere—spreading the revolt further what they saw here. When Seattle anarchists faced repression, the number and intensity of clandestine attacks increased. The march moved quickly through downtown Seattle, heading first to the Pike Place Market, Seattle’s busy open-air market. Anarchists had it numbered between thirty and forty. Many participants carried black flags draped from thick hardwood dowels. The same anarchist banners reappeared, emphasizing that the events about to unfold were aimed at police and the justice system in its entirety.

This time, O2a organizers didn’t have time to argue for demonstrators to stay on the sidewalk. As soon as the march began to move, the black bloc took the streets and others followed. Police had been quick to push around a similarly-sized bloc at the April 13 demonstration in 2010, but this time they kept their distance. While the April 13 bloc had seemed unsure of itself, on this day the black mass was animated by a palpable rage, screaming, “Hate! Blat! Blat! The Hate inside of me! All cops are Bastards! A-C-A-B!” The rage was visibly reinforced; many in the bloc were carrying clubs of their own.

* The march moved quickly through downtown Seattle, heading first to the Pike Place Market, Seattle’s busy open-air market. Anarchists had brought leaflets emblazoned with the headings “Police Are the Absolute Enemy” and “Justice Is Impossible—and So Are We.” These were distributed by the thousands, both by passing them to people and by tossing them into the air. As it was a windy day, they span like confetti around the demonstration, caught by the currents and carried far off. Some of them remained glued to the sidewalk by Seattle’s regular rains, so the anarchist message lingered in the street days after the bodies in the demonstration had moved on.

The demonstrations moved from the market through downtown and up Capitol Hill toward the SPD’s East Precinct. As they advanced, people ran to join from the sidewalks, grabbing anarchist leaflets and black flags to carry. Some announced that they had been friends of John Williams, aiming their rage against the rows of bike cops following along.

As the demonstrators approached the precinct, police cars fell in behind them. People dragged newspaper boxes and other debris into the street to hinder them. As at previous demonstrations, the momentum increased as the crowd moved toward the police station—but this time, it wouldn’t be stifled.