



D.I.Y. Getting Started

A guide for the new anarchist
By Yvette, "Selkie"

What follows is an account of my own experiences as an anarchist, and a how-to guide for those of us who are not used to being active or doing "illegal" or less socially acceptable forms of direct action can take small steps.

There are those of us who have long lived as mental or social slaves of the system, and are afraid of taking action. We look for ways, we read the zines, but all of the ways we see are a bit much for first timers! And it only makes it harder if you are alone and unable to get into a group! It can be the hardest thing in the world to start out on your own. So learn from my mistakes and read on...

My advice is divided into sections:

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Ch. 3 Finding Support

Ch. 4 My Story

This zine was written and published by Yvette, aka "Selkie". You can contact me at poi_sonthemonkey@gmail.com, or see my left-wing socialist/anarchist blog at <http://blueinchpin.wordpress.com>. You can also find me at the anarchist forum flag.blackened.net, username "Selkie".

Feel free to contact me for support, questions, or hate mail. :)

I am located in California, U.S.A., so if you are looking for someone near you, I just might be that person!

Some useful websites, forums and zines:

<http://flag.blackened.net/forums/>

<http://crimethink.com/>

<http://libcom.org/>

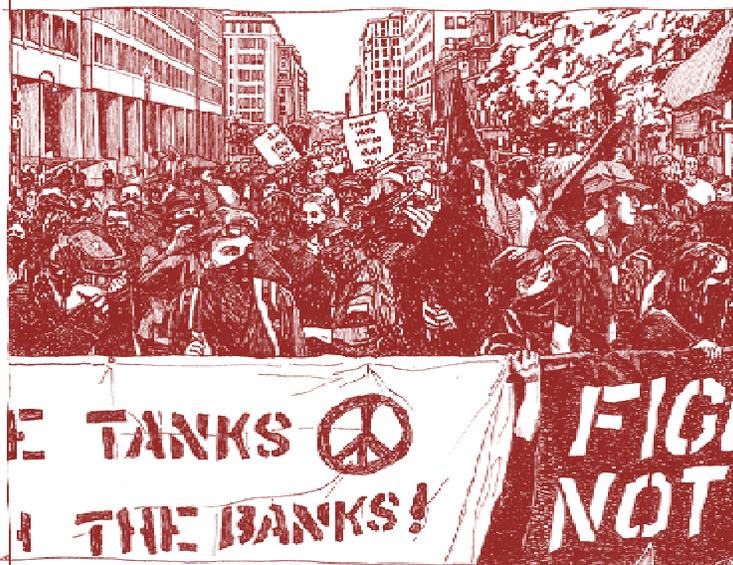
<http://anarchosyndicalism.org/>

<http://www.infoshop.org/>

<http://www.foodnotbombs.net/>

<http://zinebrary.info/>

<http://zinebrary.info/files/smasheverything.pdf>



Ch. 1 Getting Started

This chapter will introduce you to the world of the anarchist, as well as offer some easy and low-risk steps for direct action for the new and timid anarchist.

Who is this for and how will it help? This guide is for those who are in a similar position to the one I was in when I first realized and admitted to myself that I was an anarchist. Unlike most anarchists, I was timid, shy, afraid of breaking rules, terrified of the system, and had no friends I could do this with. Some is my experience and some is from others'.

Huh? I can't possibly answer all of the questions a new anarchist might have, so instead I will reference you to a few articles on anarchists and give some basic information. Generally, anarchists oppose government and support informal, equality based democracy. This guide is focused on anarchists who are opposed to capitalism and believe in mutual aid, mutualism, freedom, equality, etc. But this guide can apply to any anarchists, even those who do not subscribe to my specific beliefs. We may disagree, but we are united by a single desire... freedom.

First Steps. I'll try to give you some tips on how to take your first steps into the world of direct action as an anarchist, as well as offer some low risk and easy to execute acts. Feel free so skip or change whatever you like, these are just suggestions arranged in order of easiness and lack of risk.

- I. Check out some zines online. This is the easiest way to get started and you've already taken the first step, obviously. This is the first step because it's easy and hard to find out about. Unless you have a parent who picks apart your history and cookies, in which case you should use Mozilla Firefox and set it to delete private info.
- II. Check out some books. This has a slightly higher risk and is a bit harder as few libraries or bookstores have much on anarchy, anarchists, communists, etc at least in a positive light. If you're a teen, you also face the problem of getting the book without your parents knowing, and being able to hide it. There's a zine at zinelibrary about hiding stuff, as well as some other great zines you should look at. Don't keep it in your backpack or anywhere else you would keep or hide things normally, parents love to go through their kids stuff and probably look there regularly. Instead, try sliding it under or behind a bookshelf or dresser,

hopefully you have to lift or move it to get to it because your parents won't want to do this to keep you from knowing. Don't put it IN the dresser along with your clothes, this is the most obvious place in the world! That and under the bed.

- III. Try to find others in your area, or even just online, who are either accepting of or in agreeance with your ideals. This can be hard but is fairly low risk, at least in terms of police involvement. I can't offer any tips, as I myself have still not been able to find any other anarchists in my area. Try asking on anarchist forums. The goal is to connect and make friends who can support you and vice versa.
- IV. Go vegetarian! Or at least cut down on your meat intake, and failing that, just *try* some meatless products or eating food that's all veggie for one night. The meat industry is a disgusting, abusive and draining one...it takes up more food than it makes, which could be going to hungry families. Many anarchists are vegetarian, and any anarchist society will almost certainly be vegetarian, or at least hunt for meat instead of raising it.
- V. Small act of rebellion. Now, this really is a pathetic form of direct action...but it can be your first, especially if you are afraid like I was. Lots of people have done this and there is almost no risk (unless you are really obvious about it or leave the door unlocked and someone walks in and sees you...) But the easiest way to spread your message (though not at all effectively) is also the silliest: bathroom stall graffiti! I know, silly. Feel free to skip this step. But if you're like me and were afraid of breaking the rules, this tiny act of rebellion can make you feel free. Don't laugh!
- VI. If you are a high school or college student, you probably see military recruiters spreading their bullshit at school and enticing students into their murderous ways. An easy way to fight back against them is to take their flyers and throw them in the trash, or tear them in half first. Use recycling if possible! Also, if you can, try to do it while no one is looking, and just sort of *push* the flyers into the trash if there's a can next to their stall. If there isn't,

try pulling it over there ahead of time. If you can only take a few flyers without being suspicious, and can't shove them all into the trash, get some friends of yours and do this: go in one at a time (there should be a crowd) and try to grab a flyer without really approaching it with your body. It's tricky but can avoid suspicion. Don't gather together, just go in a cycle, in turns, each of you grabbing on flyer... take your time and don't grab the same thing each time. Don't get caught holding a bunch, throw 'em in recycling or trash if you have to asap. Try "accidentally" spilling some sort of liquid... have one of your friends bump into you while you're looking at the shit with an open container and leaning over a little... don't apologize, just turn around and snap at the friend, and have 'em keep walking. The more people you get in on this the better. This also works with other political pushers. If you're feeling more bold with your comrades (or friends at least) around, try informing the recruiters that no drugs are allowed on campus, while your face is completely serious. Or smile if you can't help it. Even more bold of a mood is outright telling them they aren't welcome there, and to go elsewhere... but this is only effective in groups. Ask them how many people they've killed, or if they would kill a child if ordered to. Anything to make them feel uncomfortable or unwanted.

VII. Grow your own food. There are lots of books and zines out there. Just do it! In case of a revolution or other serious event that will block food, you need to have something to feed you and your family... and the more independent we can all be, the better.

VIII. Independent media. Try Current.com or Indymedia, two great websites that are not corporate news but are independent (or in the case of Current, they are at least user-decided which is more mainstream but also less B.S. and forced down your throat like Faux News)

IX. Steal from the rich and give to the hungry! This is a small, slightly risky method of both sticking it to the man and helping someone out in the process. Depending on your life, you might live in a household where your parents keep out fresh food for

"decoration" (sickening, isn't it?), or you might eat at a cafeteria at your school or work. This food can be cheap and sometimes free, though this act is more effective if it is free. Shove the food into a lunchbag or other container which looks innocent enough and can fit your food. Beforehand you'll want to figure out where you can put the food. Is there a homeless man who hangs out at the corner a few blocks away from your school? Is there a food donation location near you? Is there a Food For Bombs being planned? Failing that, is there a dumpster nearby where you think a homeless person who needs it would look for food? Try leaving it out in the park later at night with a note attached so they know you care.

X. Put posters up where it is legal. This isn't really risky at all (unless someone you know sees you and tries to get you in trouble) but is the first step to being active in your freedom of speech, which is the point of direct action and stenciling, rioting, protesting, wheatpasting, etc. There is one risk with this, however: once you start the "illegal" free speech stuff, it won't take much to make a connection between you and stuff with the same theme. So to be safe, make it about something you won't be "illegally" exercising your free speech about. Be careful. If you can, post it somewhere far away from where you plan to be active.

XI. Use your school. Schools are great places for first time posters in that there are lots of spots early in the morning where there is no one (like the bathrooms or hallways) and you can easily put up your posters. Just make sure not to do any real vandalism or graffiti because schools go nuts over that shit. They will shut the whole area down (making it impossible for anyone to see it... later on I'll detail an idea that is higher risk but can also cause a lot of talk). So if you can have a friend watch for you and wheatpaste or tape the posters up... try using really strong tape if possible, but for the most part unless you wheatpaste it doesn't really matter because they'll just take it down, but the point is to do it, and maybe someone will see it and start thinking. Make sure there's no way to track it back to you.

XII. Now you can start doing the seriously risky stuff... find some guides for wheatpasting and test it out several times before you do it. If I had tested my first time, uhm, I would have known about the smell... and that it wouldn't actually work. There's things you'll only learn if you try it and test it out beforehand. There are loads of guides on wheatpasting and other forms of speaking your mind, I suggest checking out CrimeThInc's THE WALLS ARE ALIVE zine. You can find it in the downloads, zines section. I do have some advice though, because if you're a new anarchist you probably don't have an "affinity group" or any friends who are anarchists, so you might be doing this alone. Doing it with friends can be loads safer, easier, and more fun, but doing it alone can give you a huge sense of self-confidence and power... which can help you for the rest of your life as an anarchist. It's something you certainly need. Before you sneak out into the night and do your dirty deed, scope out the area and find *exactly* where you want to put it up... if possible, try also scoping the area you're planning on pasting at and see how many people are there during the night. The goal is to not get caught, and hopefully be able to get a few posters up in the process. If you find yourself unable to get to the area, or surrounded or something, try just putting the posters on the ground (or flyers) or letting them fly into the wind... this is what I did my first time and even though its usefulness was probably none if any, it was my first time posterizing and let me keep that powerful feeling of accomplishment.

XIII. Now that you've done your first wheatpaste, you can move on to more advanced things... stenciling, graffiti, more wheatpasting, rioting, protesting, speaking out in public... as your confidence grows so will your usefulness. However, here's a lower risk but very rewarding job you can do to sort of signify to yourself that you are no longer a new anarchist but an anarchist, and you know what you're doing and can make a difference. Most schools, if any, don't have anyone watching the school at night, though you want to look around and scope it out ahead of time just in case. Buy some spray paint

cans waaaaay ahead of time, failing that try to use some of your own paint, the point is to try to deflect suspicion. Go out on your own (or with a friend or two that you can REALLY, REALLY trust) and either try to get through/over the gates (there's usually some way you can get over the wall, but don't hurt yourself! If it's too high it's too high) or just go near the entrance, or try the sign. Use your paint/spray can (be careful, your school entrance is probably right next to a road and has lights out... and sometimes the fuzz likes to drive around and keep an eye out, so if you can have an excuse and a place to stash your supplies, and if possible have a lookout!!). Do something BIG here with your paint. A big A anarchist symbol and a simple but thought provoking slogan works. Nothing too fancy that will take a lot of time or paint, because during the night shaking a can results in A LOT of noise! Just do something simple and escape. Keep in mind this is VERY risky but also fairly easy (as there should be no one around) and will cause a lot of talk and people to watch the next day. Remember to do it somewhere they can't censor it... like the quad!



What they don't tell you. Hopefully you've done your research like I did when I first started becoming an active anarchist. Sites like CrimeThInc.com are great for those who are new to this strange and exhilarating world. The zines offer helpful information as well as inspiration. It's easy enough to find more anarchist zines and texts, you don't need any help there. However, there's a lot no one tells you that may seem obvious but can be easy to

either forget or not know about for the new anarchist. So I've compiled a few tips as I go along to let you know what most zines don't mention but are fairly important.

-wheatpasting: no one tells you that you have to use the wheatpaste quickly, as within a day it will start smelling horrible and getting moldy! This may seem like common knowledge but if you're like me you know absolutely nothing about cooking and have little of that wonderful common sense stuff.

-anarchists fight a lot: Just look at any anarchist website or forum. Just because you identify as an anarchist, don't expect love from other anarchists. We're still humans. Show some respect and you'll get it in turn, hopefully.

-riot and protest precautions: There are plenty of precautions you can find in zines today, but here are a few things most don't mention. If you can, have short hair, or try to keep its mass spread, by wearing ponytails or tucking your hair securely away in the back of your shirt... don't wear clips or anything like that, as it can get pretty chaotic and if your hair is grabbed, yanked, or caught on something, clips might get in the way or add to the pain. Police can grab a ponytail and use it to drag you down. The best solution is to wear a hood and keep your hair in a ponytail under it so there is nothing to grab, and keep it tight around your neck (with the strings tucked away so a police officer can't grab those and choke you). If you're like me, you wear glasses... which presents a serious risk at riots or protests because officers can get violent. You risk having your glasses break in your eyes if you are shoved on the ground, punched, hit with a baton, etc... but as most zines will warn DON'T WEAR CONTACTS! As you can potentially lose your sight thanks to contacts holding in tear gas. There's no good way to get around the problem of glasses, so if you can try to go without them, or wear large, strong, sunglasses or plastic goggles over them. You might look goofy but it has the added benefit of protecting your identity.

-you don't have to agree: Few anarchists agree completely. That's the beauty of anarchy. Most ideologies and such, everyone who subscribes to them is basically a clone of each other. Remember you are a unique individual and being an anarchist does not mean you should dress any differently or act different than you usually do (unless you usually act like someone you're not... in that case, be yourself!)

-anarchy is love: there are sadly some anarchists who are very... angry and

hateful. Remember that you are fighting not just for your own freedom but for the freedom of everyone else. Be loving, be empathetic, be respectful, be kind, and remember that anarchy is more than breaking shit.

-criminals: a lot of anarchists are "criminals". Don't delude yourself. Many anarchists are fine with shoplifting, breaking private "property", and feel that change can only come through violent revolution. I personally disagree with this stuff for the most part, but keep in mind that anarchists have a negative connotation because of it. But remember that just because something is illegal does not mean you should do it. Stealing from a struggling small time family is in mine and most anarchists' opinions very, very bad. Stealing from a big corporation however? Not so bad.

-communities: There *are* anarchist communities out there, but they are hard to find. One example is "Christiana" in Denmark. If you feel you don't want to spend the rest of your life working for the man or being hungry, you should look into it. Small communities with mutual cooperation who are self-governed and independent are what most anarchists strive for... try looking for them, they are out there but often hidden or not formed yet. If you have anarchist friends, and they are hard workers, see if maybe somehow you can create your own small "community"... even if it's just a bunch of you living in one house with no one in charge and a shared income. If you aren't willing to live in anarchy, how can you fight for it?

-respect for the law: Few anarchists have it, and this can be a P.R. problem. Try to respect the law where you can, remembering that civil disobedience has a purpose while other forms of lawbreaking will hurt you and others more than help.

Revolution & Violence. This is a controversial subject among anarchists. Some want reform, some want revolution, some advocate nonviolence and some advocate it as a means to an end. This is something you need to decide where you stand early on. Is killing okay to bring about anarchy? Is it okay to prove a point? Decide where you stand... while a violent revolution might be non-authoritarian if the majority of the people are the ones performing the revolution (and not a small minority), then it is imo fair. But remember that pointless violence gets us nowhere and will only serve to distance the general public from you, when you should be holding out your arms to embrace them and whisper your

truth... so consider now where you stand on this issue and how far you will go during a riot, a protest or even a revolution. Would you throw a Molotov cocktail at a police officer who is simply standing in your way? What about one who is beating up peaceful protesters? Would you punch back or accept the violence against you quietly, as a martyr? All important questions only each of us can answer for ourselves. Also consider that revolution in the U.S. may be nearing... many are speculating that this year (2008) Bush will declare a state of emergency and refuse to allow an election, and keep his presidency, causing widespread riots and protests. In this case, as the anger becomes more and more profound... the military would become more and more violent towards citizens and eventually use legal force. It's only a matter of time in this scenario that soldiers begin to turn against the military, unable to continue killing innocent civilians, and from there a revolution could arise. Either way, as an anarchist you should be prepared in the event of a revolution or a riot. If you live alone or with someone you can seriously trust, you may want to keep a gun (BUT NOT IF YOU HAVE KIDS!), a large supply of food and water that can last you and others several months, first aid kits, power generators, etc. Revolutions may take time and during that time, little will get produced or distributed. Don't be selfish and if this happens, share it with those in need fairly. You should also keep a garden and protect it with good fencing. If you have kids, make sure you have enough in a garden to take care of them too, and a place to keep them safe, like a basement or a relative's house out of the city. Learn how to make some primitive weapons and keep supplies on hand, just in case: Luck favors the prepared.



Ch. 2 Overcoming Obstacles

The new anarchist faces many obstacles before they can even begin their direct action! These obstacles can be more frightening to the new anarchist than to the experienced one, and there are more obstacles in general... Let's review a few common obstacles:

- Parents & Work
- Neighbors (if you live in Suburbia especially)
- Police
- Friends
- Lack of knowledge
- Lack of supplies
- Fear

Parents

Many anarchists start out young, some because they truly believe in the principles and some because it's "cool" (which ironically is a system anarchists often fight against).

Let's say, like me, you are a teenager who's parents would never accept you being an anarchist. If, like me, you are in the worst case scenario: you can't even go outside on your own late or without permission, someone your parent trusts and chaperoning. This is how it was and is for me, but I managed to overcome these obstacles and so can you!



One of the big problems if you're in this situation is it seems that the only direct action you can take (according to all the great zines out there) involve getting loads of supplies and going out for hours after dark, and possibly facing arrest. This can be scary for the new anarchist who has controlling parents. Can't you help without risking your parents' knowledge and arrest? Yes, you can. Later on, I'll detail how to take very small, low-risk steps... these you can do without your parents knowing and they are both easy and liberating, especially if you have lived like me: always in fear and afraid to break the rules! But let's look at some solutions. First, if you plan to sneak out (later down the line after taking the easier steps), MAKE SURE your parents do not know. I can't stress this enough. If you think it's too risky, don't go, even if it means blowing off your friends (if you do have anarchist friends you are working with, that is). Parents might call the police or go looking for you, or wait up for you and when you come walking in with whatever your supplies are they *will* search you and they *will* destroy any chances of you continuing your direct action while you are under their rule.

Sneaking out. Make sure you are wide awake first of all. You are going to need to stay up and not fall asleep, so try to have some good coffee on hand, or anything to keep you awake. This might result in you needing to go to the bathroom a lot, which can be a problem if you can't get to the bathroom without waking your parents up, try some energy bars or something. Anything to make sure you are awake and alert! Stay up until you are absolutely sure your parents are asleep... try "camping out" outside near their door, to listen and watch to make sure they are asleep. If you want to really stick it to them and make sure they go to sleep and stay asleep, try these tips to make them exhausted:

-crumble some sleeping pills into their drinks or food (offer to cook! They'll rest easier...) but BE WARNED: THIS IS POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS SO MAKE SURE YOU FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS AND UNDERDOSE BY A BIT JUST TO BE SAFE!

-like above, but safer, feed them something very sugary...offer to bake them a cake and put as much sugar as you can while still making it edible...put sugar in their drinks and a bit in other food you give them. They will feel energized for a bit but then crash, but you have to make sure they crash

in their room with the door closed! Wake them up and make them go upstairs if needed -"accidentally" leave a bunch of linens (towels, blankets, clothes, heavier the better) just outside their door... this will help block any light or sound you produce, I use it well and often... in a pinch it can also stall them from opening the door and has saved my ass countless times. Great precaution, but can potentially create suspicion or annoyance.

In case your parents wake up and go to check on you for some reason and you don't have a lock on your door (like me, I can't even begin to say how much of a disadvantage this is), you need to have some back up precautions. First, don't make it obvious you were sneaking out, so you can feign innocence: creating those silly "fake sleeper" things under your blankets are a red flag that you snuck out. Don't make it look like you are trying to hide it. That way, if your parents catch you, you can tell them something that might get you in trouble but a lot less: that you were just going for a walk to clear your head, that you heard a cat fight (real cats, not girls! Shame on you!) and wanted to go make sure the cats were okay, that you just felt like looking at the stars, let the cat out and claim you were looking for it... something innocent that explains your absence and why you needed shoes, jacket, and to be quiet (didn't want to wake you guys up, you were tired!)

As a further precaution, scope out the front of your house for a hiding place like a bush where you can easily hide your supplies and they won't be found... you may have to settle for the yard or even toss them in the trash can (just make sure it's not trash day tomorrow!) because if your parents see you walking in late at night with your supplies, you are fucked. *Some other tips:* if your door makes a lot of noise, oil/grease the hinges. If the handle makes a lot of noise, wrap a cloth around it. If you're still afraid of the noise, try running the dishwasher... or just ignore it! If you've dropped linen in front of their door, they might still hear it but it will be more muffled... so if they hear it consciously they may think it's something else or outside and not think anything of it.

Differing views. Parents also prevent a problem because despite ourselves we always want approval and love from them, no matter what we say. And when their viewpoints are so radically different from our own, and they expect us to have the same viewpoints, it can get hard, especially if you

otherwise have a good relationship with said parent. Most parents will absolutely FLIP if they find out you are an anarchist, even if you don't plan to do any direct action besides maybe a protest. Parents have this image in their head of anarchists being rebellious, violent teenage criminals... they will probably blame your friends and try to drag you to church and forbid you from seeing them. You can expect all of your RIGHTS (they like to call them privileges as we all know) away because they see anarchists as evil. So lesson: **DON'T TELL YOUR PARENTS** unless you are absolutely sure they will be accepting and tolerant. Some parents will but not most. However, if you can open the minds of a parent... that can be the best direct action possible. Assuming your parents are working class, if you can convince them even a little bit of your ideas, they have far more standing than a kid unfortunately (thanks, ageism) and can perhaps pass the word on to coworkers... they may even start fighting back against their bosses! This is of course wishful thinking... but we are anarchists, we are in the business of dreaming for better things.

What to do if your parents find out. It happens. It's scary as hell when your parents find out about something you've been doing "wrong", and even scarier when they find out you've been doing something "illegal" as they might call the police and this can turn a family dispute into a serious "legal" problem which WILL go on your record and which will come back to bite you. But don't be afraid! Let's deal with the family issues, first.

What not to do. **DON'T** become aggressive or sulky, don't cross your arms, don't glare, don't be difficult... I know this sounds weird, but you need to work with your parents. Stay calm and cry if you need to, it is a scary time and it's better if you let it out. Let them know this is what you believe, that you believe in a world where people help each other out and no one goes hungry. Be an idealist. Let them see the beauty of your ideals. More likely than not, they will still disagree with you but they will see you less as an angry, violent criminal teenager and more as a caring teen who is frustrated with the system and wants to help. If you can, bring up how bad their bosses treat them and how angry it makes you, this can be a great tool for forging a path of understanding between you and your parent or parents. Empathy is the key. If they know about you doing more "illegal" activities like graffiti, let them know you don't understand why property is valued

more than life and free speech. Speak as an idealist in a calm and gentle manner. They will be expecting an angry and resentful teenager, and they are just as frightened as you. Ease their fears and prove them wrong. Compromise if possible (can I protest instead if I stop putting up posters/doing graffiti/whatever the problem is?). They will see this as mature, and they are right, it is mature and it will help a lot. Police call your parents? Now, this is a bit dishonest, but at a time like this you want to sound and look SCARED, like you are coming to your parents for comfort and for help. Use some of the above tips. Don't fight the police or give them any reason to see you as anything more than a scared kid. They may take pity! And that can help. Be respectful to the police and say "thank you" and "please" even if you hate it. They are people too and they are in charge of a lot right now, and it is critical for you to play along with their games to get out of the night unscathed.

Your parents crack down. Maybe your parents don't react as well as we'd hope, or maybe you're afraid they will react badly and want to know what to do in case it happens. Be forewarned: parents might kick you out if you get in trouble or they find out. Seek out a friend ahead of time, or a family member, who you can stay with... or try reading one of the many anarchist zines on vagrancy and just hang out on your own for a while. Hopefully you know where they keep the key and can sneak in during the day for some food. You may be able to seek a teacher for help, but overall just keep some money and supplies tucked away in case you need to make some phone calls or be on your own for a while. But take this from someone who took her friend in on a moment's notice. **BE GRATEFUL** to the person letting you stay in your home... do their chores and be respectful, respect their rules and be friendly. Don't take their gifts and give nothing back, because that just makes you a **CAPITALIST!** If instead of kicking you out, your parents crack down and ground you... well, be thankful they didn't kick you out. Try to use the time to plan, catch your breath, and spend the time with your parents! Don't be resentful, instead talk to them and try to hang out with them... use this opportunity to get you on their good side.

Work

Sorry, I can't offer much advice here. You're on your own as far as I'm concerned. There's a great zine over at libcom, though, about dealing with bosses and sabotaging and

striking. Read it, it's a great article. And recognize the wonderful Sabotage Cat.

Neighbors

If you live in Suburbia, neighbors can be one of your biggest obstacles. I myself live with very very NOSY neighbors across the street/next to us (we live in a cul-de-sac) who have several flood lights on every night and all night, making it very hard to sneak out unseen! There are always those who like to watch constantly for any suspicious behavior. While it's great that communities are depending on themselves to protect their members, they love to go to the police instead of dealing with the problems themselves...and they will also go to your parents! So it's necessary to remain unseen. Even if someone who sees you doesn't say anything, they will be more alert in the future so can still present a problem. Here are a few specific problems neighbors present.

Lights & Being Seen. Not sure how to deal with that light problem? It can be difficult, since it can highlight you for everyone in the neighborhood to see...and there is almost certainly someone watching especially if you live in Suburbia. Later I will talk about deflecting suspicion and interest but first is the matter that these huge flood lights are making you a target for the world to see...so how do you deal? First of all, make sure all of your supplies are safely and inconspicuously tucked away. Try to keep the bag you are carrying in innocent-looking...use a backpack or shoulder bag, not a duffel bag. Hang it over your shoulder so its not on the side with light. Better yet, stash it at an earlier time in a safe location away from the light. If you are planning on wearing a mask, keep it off...it looks very suspicious. If you think you can, keep your hood down and face turned away from the light. Look like you are looking for something. Try patting on your knees like you're looking for a cat or dog. Turn your head around quickly and bend over, so you're harder to recognize and if your hair is long enough it will cover your face while making it look as if you are looking desperately for your pet...walk in circles if you think someone is watching and look in bushes...as suggested earlier, if you can let your cat out and you'll have a decent excuse. The bag might not help your case.

Your Neighbors Know. What happens if your neighbor sees you and knows what devious things you are up to? There are a number of things they might do...they might call the police, knock on your door and tell your parents, talk to you or ignore it. More

likely than not they will talk to your parents, but if they talk to you, make sure you keep a calm and soft voice, and don't show any anger or give them any reason to raise their voice or get angry themselves. If you were wheatpasting, refer to them as "political posters"...tell them you're embarrassed about your political ideals but you want to exercise your right to free speech. Explain your ideas and politely offer them a poster (hopefully a mild one!). If you were doing stencils or graffiti, be honest about it and let them know it was political, nothing violent or gang related. Hopefully you were doing stencils with themes like "love yourself" or "free yourself". Let them know you know it is illegal but you feel you don't have a political voice and you need to express it. If "love yourself" was one of the things you did, you can tell them you think no one knows how beautiful they are anymore and you're trying to fight society telling people they are ugly. Be honest if you can and offer once you've finished explaining yourself in calm terms that you are willing to do some work for the person confronting you, like dishes, cooking, yard work, etc. Let them set the terms and be very friendly about it. Besides, this is what anarchy is about: mutual cooperation! If they know you're an anarchist now, tell them that, and that you're happy to be doing it.

Police

This is one of the scariest things for a new or timid anarchist to deal with. People love to call in police for situations that can be dealt with. However, there are plenty of other zines and guides located all over the internet for how to deal with them...and it's not a subject I'm experienced with, so it would be a bad idea for me to advise you on it. All I can offer is this: police officers are people too, and even though most anarchists hate them vehemently, it's important to remember that they too are victims of the system. Be polite if possible and know your rights. Remember that anything you say can and will be used against you.



Ch. 3 Finding Support

This is the hardest and yet most crucial action for a new anarchist or scared anarchist to take! There's not much you can do without real people next to you and willing to take a hit for you, willing to stand up for you, willing to lie to keep you safe and willing to have your back at all times. This might sound like some sort of anarchist "gang", and it's not.

One of the first and easiest ways you can get connected with other anarchists is via a forum. The internet provides a wonderful, ANARCHIST (yes, that's right: the internet is an anarchist structure!) means of communicating with others. There are several forums out there for anarchists, the one I use is the one at flag.blackened.net. There are also plenty of anarchist blogs/journals out there, and this can be a great way to connect with a thoughtful person. You can even use wordpress.com and create your own blog (if you like, you can contribute to my collective anarchist/communist/etc journal, it requires less maintenance, work, and attention, all you need to do is write or post links, pics, vids, stories, opinions, etc whenever you like. A great way to get more readers without any work. It's at <http://writtenired.wordpress.com>, or you can email me, I just need your email to make you a writer, and then you can write your heart out!) if you feel a desire to speak your mind and you can't. However, the most important thing is getting real life buddies, offline. How do you do this? Well, it's hard to say. I'm unsuccessful.

Hopefully you already have friends who you know have your back and can be trusted. Hopefully they already agree for the most

part with your views and would have some fun helping you out. That's best case scenario. Failing that, look. There's not much more advice I can offer than that. Try using forums to connect with people in your area, but as always with the internet BE CAREFUL as there are some creeps out there, and these people might not be the best people to trust right away. Instead I'd suggest finding some protests to go to, or a Food Not Bombs near you. Make friends there, they'll likely be anarchists especially if they are participating in Food Not Bombs. If they live close enough to you, you can be active with them.

Ch. 4 My Story

If you're bored or at all interested, here is my story:

Once upon a time there lived a girl named Yvette. She grew up a single child in a family that was very traditional, Christian and conservative. Her cousin, who was a boy, was showered with gifts by her entire family, while she had to argue just to get some basic necessities like clothing, food, and school supplies. While her cousin became spoiled and popular, she became lonely and isolated, and found it harder and harder to make friends. She became insufferably shy and timid, afraid of causing even the slightest commotion. Because she didn't like causing conflict, she simply 'went with the flow' and did what she was told and didn't think about what she was supposed to believe. She smiled at church and pretended to sing along, and followed through all the steps awkwardly. Her father would rant endlessly about liberals, non-Christians and environmentalists. He always made sure she agreed with him, though she never really understood what he was talking about, her mind as well as her body went through the motions and she found herself hating gays, liberals, non-Christians and environmentalists. Her father brought her to protests in support of Bush when she was eleven, and she joined in his carnival of hate without thought.

But then one day, something changed. Her parents had been divorced for some time, and now she had found out that her father was remarrying. She was angry and resentful, but simply stayed silent and plodded into the house of her new stepmother to meet her new family for the first time. She met her stepmother, her stepsister, and her stepbrother. Her stepbrother would change her life forever. Steve was an outgoing and friendly young man, and immediately took the girl in. She slowly relented to his

kindness, and soon the two were making beaded necklaces and walking together outside. He would chatter away and she would feel comforted that for once she was not alone. Then, shock: Steve was gay. It turned her world upside down. Her father was furious and refused to speak to Steve. Steve had never liked her father from the start, and enjoyed teasing and baiting him. Yvette was shocked to find this out and wasn't sure what to think. Weren't gays all sex-crazed demons? Weren't they evil and filthy? That was the day Yvette's mind opened and she



slowly began to think for herself. Over time, Yvette slowly became more liberal, less Christian, and more humanitarian... she frowned at her father when he hoarded food at company meetings, taking it home when the leftovers would be going to the homeless. She met more of Steve's friends, who were all mostly lesbian, gay or transsexual, and was surprised

to find herself feeling at ease and liking these people. She started questioning her values, her beliefs, and her opinions, and it took years for her to form her own. Even at the age of seventeen, five years later, she still had not fully formed her own thoughts. She had only just become atheist and had in the last year begun to agree with communist and socialist ideals. She slowly distanced herself from her more cold-hearted friends, becoming a vegetarian and donating what money she could. She started a blog to speak more freely about her ideas, as she couldn't at home and was too afraid to in other ways. As she neared her eighteenth birthday, she met her future fiancé, a young Belgian man who shared much of her beliefs and was surprisingly accepting of her more radical ones as they slowly continued to form. She was still afraid and timid, but slowly feeling more comfortable with herself. She graduated early, after transferring to a school where she was completely isolated in a sea of, well, idiots to be quite frank. She spent six months reading and forming her beliefs more completely, and soon after her eighteenth birthday realized herself to be an anarchist. She had long denied it to

herself, and when she told her fiancé what she felt herself to be, the acceptance and support she was given gave her the confidence she needed. She was terrified, still, of breaking rules, and lived with her parents who were still very controlling. She was still not allowed to go outside without permission or protest/be active for any idea they did not approve of. But it was killing her, not being active. She wanted to DO something, to speak somehow, because she had been silent for too long. One night, she read how to wheatpaste... she printed up some posters while her parents were outside and added her own touches... while cooking for her parents, she also made her first wheatpaste and pretended it was a failed attempt at mashed potatoes (she was a terrible cook). She waited several nights, knowing she'd have to do it on her own because no longer did she have any friends beyond her fiancé (her parents had cut her off after transferring her to a new school), and she had no way of finding others... Finally one night she got up the courage to go and try to wheatpaste. She got her container, her poster, her hoodie... she snuck out into the night and looked around for a spot in the dark, realizing that she didn't really know any good places and didn't know her way around the area. Oh, and the neighbor had that floodlight that kept her up at night. But undeterred, she continued on, making her way around to a walkway with fences. She set her things down, barely able to see, and opened the container... and almost threw up. The smell of the old wheatpaste was nauseating, and in her inexperience and sloppiness she hadn't realized that the damn stuff would MOLD or whatever the fuck it was doing. She tossed the flyer into the wind, hoping someone would see its bright red coloring and read it, dumped the disgusting stuff in a bush and ran inside... disgusted, exhilarated, terrified, but knowing she had at least tried.



