

I Was a Teenage Lifestyle Anarchist

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This is just the first draft, so it's still quite bare-bones. After regaining access to the first email account I ever had, I began adding quotes from those emails to an existing timeline I'd created to better understand why a nomadic, anarchist life appealed to me in my youth—and how that path has led me to where I am today.

For a smoother, more enjoyable reading experience, feel free to instead read the essay that inspired this title, *I Was a Teenage Luddite*.

Also, I still consider myself an anarchist, just maybe less individualist these days.

When I was 15 I loved watching Bruce Parry's *Tribe* & Ray Mears on the TV. I asked for the box set of *Tribe* for my birthday, and read books about building log cabins. Plus, 'new age indigenous wisdom' books such as *'Primal Awareness'*, *'Mutant Message Down Under'* & *'The Vision'*.

Age 16, I went to the island of Borneo in Southeast Asia with an outdoor expedition company who came to our school. They encouraged us to get jobs like the paper round to pay for our ticket and I remember fantasizing about running away to live with the Penan in Borneo if my home situation carried on majorly sucking. We planted rice, built bamboo bridges over tributaries that would fill up in the rainy season, and among other things we visited the Orangutan rehabilitation centre. The sanctuary obviously made me sad about it needing to exist to help Orangutans affected by human development, but it also made me hopeful that it could one day only need to treat diseases and fix injuries that occur randomly such that humans could play this existentially positive role as a helping hand to other species.

Age 17, I went to my first Earth First! Gathering and made friends with one kid who was a primitivist & one kid whose biological father had been an undercover cop spying on the movement when he was conceived. I saw footage of tree-sits in Tasmania and listened to Seize the Day sing the song *No one's slave, No one's master*, which had the lyrics; "Mother Earth I was nearly the end of you. Please accept my desire to be friends with you. Now I know just how much I depend on you for life."

For a little glimpse into this head space I was in at the time, I'll quote part of an email I sent to a hippie YouTuber. He was sending out a bunch of free Hare Krishna books to people where the only thing he asked in return was that we answer one question: what would we do if we had 24 hours left to live? This was my answer (assuming I could be certain everything would miraculously work out in my favour):

First chomp down a big root of iboga and get visions of all the people I've done wrong to, go seek them out and make things right.

Gather all my eco buddies to free a load of animals from a slaughter house and lure all the bulls towards a corrupt bank that has loads of money in the arms trade so the bulls brake the door, go inside and take a load of money and bury it underground.

Leave instructions for family to go find it when the heats off, telling them to use the money to buy independence for all the nomadic hunter-gatherer tribes left in the world, so their land will no longer be destroyed.

Go to a school and give a bus driver £1000 of the bank money to lend me his bus, pick up all my friends and family and take them to the top of this special mountain where there's a circle of trees and party the night away with big woofer speakers, watch the sunset, and give a heartfelt speech at the end of the night.

Age 18, I didn't show up to my end of school exams because of nerves and being in turmoil with my abusive biological father. I followed the Earth First! Newswire, thought about going to Coal Action Scotland's forest camp which some people used as a base to sabotage coal company machinery.

Here's a glimpse into how I tried to explain my strength of feeling on wanting a break from full-time education:

I wouldn't go [back to school if] the school was run by us [students] using consensus decision making mediated by the Dalai Lama, and the college was a hundred tree houses linked together by rope bridges in a permaculture forest. I want to be independent and nomadic for a year... Independent as in self-reliant, nomadic as in not having a fixed home ...

Whilst trying my hand at odd jobs and planning my tour of Europe I sent this short email to cavegirl, who wrote the zine Dropping Out:

I'm about to take off round Europe with virtually no moneyz, your zine's a real inspiration so I'm gonna take it with me in my backpack, much love Ted.

Age 19, I went to live at a protest camp in a forest in England trying to block the expansion of an open cast coal mine. The protest site existed at the edge of this huge badly planned urban sprawl from multiple directions, such that the forest likely met the 'planning criteria', for having better amenities like supermarkets than anywhere else around. Because of the way supermarkets have to pop up at the edge of urban sprawl to account for this badly managed city planning. So, we took full advantage anyway in filling up one of the residents van with tons of skipped food every week.

In another life I could have tried to be a politician in one of these cities with a button-up tie advocating against continually building out into the green belt further and further. But I genuinely think being a presence there, as a place families could bring their kids to play around on the walkways, and be able to tell that story to people of the comedic situation we existed in as squatters also plays an important role in shifting the culture.

Then, I picked up a call to the site phone to an anarchist dude working on resisting the eviction of Irish Travellers. So, after we got evicted from the coal protest site, I went to live on the Irish Traveller site, then squats in London afterwards. I met some cool & some strange people in both places.

One anarchist put on a documentary about Irish Travellers longstanding separate DNA heritage as evidence that their culture has deep roots, which pours water on some false beliefs people have like that they're 'a mafia of thieves who only took up root after the Potato famine.' Another anarchist somewhat awkwardly put on the film 'Natural Born Killers' for a small group of us sitting on watch at the main gate of the Traveller site.

One anarchist related to me 'you know people get the wrong idea about these Travellers, the sites look a bit shabby from the outside, but inside, the static caravans are like a pristine shrine.' I related back that I quite liked the Travellers not worrying about keeping up perfectly manicured lawns, and how I liked the history of some Irish Travellers carrying poles on their horse drawn carriage to simply live in large benders.

Age 20, I got told about communiques where a row of new cars were burnt by anti-civ anarchists 'in solidarity with the Irish Travellers' I'd lived with. Plus, a primitivist communique about a small bank sabotage action which was done 'in solidarity with Ted K'.

I went to stay briefly at a forest commune that I'd heard about at an Earth First! gathering. They make their money processing a small amount of trees using a steam-powered saw-mill run on wood waste generated by the milling process itself, making and selling apple juice, growing salad for local shops and making crafts to sell at markets.

Age 21, I went to Ireland to help campaign against a potentially dangerous unique kind of gas pipeline the community didn't want building near their village when it could have been built in a more rural location, plus where neither themselves or the country was getting much in return for this climate change causing tech.

Age 22, I bunked into university lectures in Manchester to get a taste for what university student life was like. Plus, I got arrested at a road protest tree-sit. My free activist lawyer beat the charge by arguing it couldn't be proven I wasn't already locked on up the tree before the date I was charged with aggressively trespassing, and so whether I simply needed rescuing on the day in question.

I'd also go for brief stays to live at an anarchist community centre in Cardiff, Wales. Got to know a primitivist dude called Jay more who had been at the coal action camps in Scotland & England, plus the road protest in Southern England.

Age 23, I went to live on the border of the UK & France helping refugees living in squats & tents. Learnt about a cool diversity of cultures and peoples.

Age 24, I went to live on a squatted community farm. The land used to be held in a community trust of tenant farmers, but when the last farmer died, the solicitor sold it at auction without doing his due diligence in tracking down relatives of the community trust members.

Ages 25–28, I was mostly holed up depressed, though I did build an online radical zine library, started writing more and made some video essays.

Age 29, I started playing around with re-structuring books I found interesting. Like I turned a book of prison letters between two childhood friends into a kind of unfinished autobiography of the person in prison, by reorganizing all the memories she would tell into the timeline of her life.

Age 30, I started working on digitizing Ted Kaczynski's book Truth versus Lies with others, so that I could potentially reorganise the most interesting parts into a critical biography of his life.

Age 31, I started contributing to The Anarchist Library and this niche anti-fascist archive called The Ted K Archive.

I wrote a research text dump for the website on Jay who died in Spain when I was 26. Jay wrote a zine promoting groups who perpetrate misanthropic attacks and whose aim it was to kill or maim random people. So, I find it interesting to think about what the radicalizing factors were in his journey and what kind of anti-anarchist Ted Kaczynski fans he may have met up with out there that were part of the reason he travelled out there to live.

Plus, I wrote a research text dump on this wannabe school shooter kid Jacob Graham who got sent to jail after getting lost in a fantasy world where he began to idolize Ted Kaczynski.

Part of the reason The Ted K Archive was set up was to offer people arguments for helping pull people back from ideologies like Ted's, however unlikely the chances of that succeeding may be. It was also set up partly to add to an inter-anarchist critique of The Anarchist Library (T@L). As one of the goals of it's creation was to put increased public pressure on the people who run T@L to delete the Unabomber texts and other pointlessly edgy eco-extremist & misanthropic texts from their archive.

The idea being to say there's this other archive that hosts the texts now in a more responsible way with disclaimers, and distanced from the ideology of anarchism by not having anarchist terms in the domain name or header. So, T@L can go ahead and delete them now without the concern about serious researchers having no place to read the texts.

Ages 32–33, I also started contributing to The Library of Unconventional Lives & Steal This Wiki. Plus, created blueprints towards hopefully helping set up a bunch more online radical archives:

- A blueprint for a future bonus Communalist Library using AmuseWiki software
- A blueprint for a future Radical Anthropology archive using AmuseWiki software
- Radical texts that could be split off to create new archives

Age 34, the present day, I can say I've definitely been down a rabbit hole for the last few years archiving philosophy of technology texts by everyone from primitivists, to luddites and transhumanists. Plus, warning about the stochastic terrorism some neo-Luddites try to promote.

I helped the author Sean Fleming with research for his essay Searching for Ecoterrorism by getting 2 busses to my national library to make photo scans of Green Anarchist magazine from the 90s using my phone, and then made a research text dump where I marked the different editor eras, etc.

Sean's piece, together with an essay called Religion, violence and radical environmentalism examines the egalitarian politics and nature-based spiritualities that run through much of the environmental

movement and argues that these influences makes bodily harm violence less likely than in some other political movements.

I've digitized some old book photo scans I found online that Atun-Shei Films appreciated for being able to search through them easier when researching for his video essay *Did Native Americans Really Live in Balance with Nature?*

I put together a research text dump on the Green Scare that pulls together a range of sources. First, it includes texts critical of the corporate- and government-driven narrative—for example, there are claims Ted Kaczynski attended a radical environmentalist gathering and may have drawn inspiration from it in choosing his targets, but an ad I found in the *Wild Rockies Review* suggests it wasn't an especially radical event where everyone sat around a darkly lit table twiddling their moustaches. Plus, I found and archived a note by Ted K showing he hid his contempt for anarchists for 19 years while trying to convert us to his reactionary ideology. Second, it includes primary source reading on the people who helped fuel the Green Scare, along with a timeline they put together of radical environmentalist direct actions. It's pretty laughably anti-environmentalist, but still useful—if only to show that these kinds of actions were already happening back in the 1950s.

Finally, here's a fairly embarrassing collage of news & activist press release clippings I was involved in and some of the life goals I emailed myself at 18:

- <www.toleratedindividuality.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/rap-sheet.pdf>

For a laugh:

- Tell a judge “you want the truth? You can't handle the truth”
- Get chased by a security guard for stealing a security tag.

To be nice:

- Bury treasure at the beach for an old metal detector guy
- Carry a sign round saying free hugs for a day
- Donate blood 3 times every year until they won't let me anymore
- Make a big donation to survival
- Plant Scots pines at the circle of trees and look after them
- Rescue a farm animal
- Volunteer at an old folk's home and listen to their stories

To travel:

- Backpack across America
- Go dumpster diving with freegans
- Go to boom festival
- Go to burning man
- Go to some really big traditional flea markets
- Ride the Hiawatha bike trail in northern Idaho

- See a whale slap the water with it's tail
- See a meteor shower
- See the Biggest waterfall
- Stay at Faslane peace camp
- Stay with a tribe in the Amazon for a month
- Stay with nomadic Mongolians
- Stay with the Penang for at least a month
- Street perform and make a £100
- Throw 10 message in bottles off a ferry
- Swim with or see dolphins in wild
- Visit stone henge at the winter solstice
- Work with food not bombs

To learn a skill:

- Bushcraft
- Foreign language fluently
- Longboard
- Circular breath on the didge

Just want to:

- Build an amazing link tree house and live in it
- Find a squat house and organize a squat party
- Get a hippie bus
- Get a husky from a rescue centre
- Grow a tequila plant, bamboo, miracle fruit
- Hitchhike somewhere far on my own
- Make homemade cider
- Study deeply into enlightenment
- Try DMT, iboga, and peyote
- Try every vegan innocent smoothie recipe
- Write a book on anything
- Write a cookbook for myself

- Write a travel diary for every day on the road this year out
- Be part of a black bloc
- Do a tree sit for at least a week
- Destroy a speed camera that isn't needed
- Organize a slow-down at work if needed

The Library of Unconventional Lives

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