

We Will Never Forget

Rise Against

It was less than a year after September 11th
And I was at the Chicago Tribune writing about shootings and murders
And it was leaving me feeling pretty dark and depressed
I've done activism in college
So I decided to help a local group hang door knockers against animal testing
I thought it would be a safe way to do something positive
But of course I have the absolute worst luck ever and we were all arrested
My charges were dismissed
But a few weeks later two FBI agents knocked on my door
And they told me that unless I help them by spying on protest groups
They put me on a domestic terrorist list
I'd love to tell you that I didn't flinch but I was terrified
And when my fear subsided I became obsessed
With finding out how this happened
How animal rights and environmental activists
Who have never injured anyone
Could become the FBI's number one domestic terrorism threat?
A few years later I was invited to testify before Congress about my reporting
And I told lawmakers that
While everybody is talking about going green
Some people are risking their lives to defend forests
And to stop oil pipelines
They're physically putting their bodies on the line
Between the whalers' harpoons and the whales
These are everyday people
Like the protesters in Italy who spontaneously climbed over barbed wire fences
To rescue beagles from animal testing
These movements have been incredibly effective and popular
So in 1985 their opponents made up a new word
"Eco-terrorist"
To shift how we view them
They just made it up
Now companies like Fyser and the Cattlemen's Beef Association
The Third Commission, Ringling brothers
They've all backed new laws to silence their opponents
The Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act turns activism into terrorism
If it causes a loss of profits
Now most people never even heard about this law
Including members of Congress
Less than one percent were in the room when it passed the House
The rest were outside at a new memorial
They were praising Dr King
As his style of activism is branded as terrorism
If done in the name of animals or the environment
Supporters say laws like this are needed for the extremists
The vandals, the arsonists, the radicals
But right now companies like TransCanada
Are briefing police about how to prosecute non-violent protesters as terrorists
The FBI's own training documents on eco-terrorism are not about violence
They're about public relations
Today in multiple countries
Corporations are pushing new laws that make it illegal
To even photograph animal cruelty on their farms
The first of these "Ag-Gag" prosecutions, as they're called

Was a young woman named Amy Meyer
And Amy saw a sick cow being moved by a bulldozer outside of a slaughterhouse
As she was standing on the public street
And Amy did what any of us would
She filmed it
When I found out about her story I wrote about it
And within 24 hours it created such an uproar
That the prosecutors just dropped all of the charges
But apparently even exposing stuff like that is a threat
Through the Freedom of Information Act
I learned that the Counter Terrorism Unit has been monitoring my articles and speeches
Just like this one
The point of all of this is to make us afraid
But as a journalist I have an unwavering faith in the power of education
Our best weapon is sunlight
Dostoevsky wrote that the whole work of man
Is to prove that he is a man and not a piano key
Over and over throughout history people in power have used fear
To silence the truth and to silence dissent
It's time to strike a new note
The way that we do that
The way that we fight fear in the way we move forward
Isn't by placing our faith in politicians and CEO's
It's by coming together in our own communities of resistance
It's no accident that again and again and again
The people on the front lines defending the earth and the animals have come from this
From punk, from hardcore
From basement shows and liner notes and records like this one
From hearing that these laws have no meaning
Past the setting of the sun
I know how bleak and overwhelming this all can feel
I struggle with that darkness every single day
But despite it all I draw power from this
I draw power from seeing handfuls of people
No different than you or I
With no money and no special training
Fight back so fiercely
That it has rattled the most powerful industry on the planet to their core
I heard this interview with Rodney Mullen a while back
People calling him the godfather of street skating
But he said that thing about the Bones Brigade and that era of skateboarding was that
It was so much more than any individual
It's like a match he said
A match only has power because of the atmosphere around it
The air that allows it to ignite and allows the flame to breathe
I'm not sure what the appropriate response is right now
The appropriate response to capitalism's relentless destruction on the natural world
In the repression of those who dare to resist it
But I know that each time we choose compassion over greed
Each time we turn our fear into rage
Each time we refuse to live an ordinary life
That atmosphere only grows
And the brighter every new fire will burn