

Wednesday Night
9:00 P.M.
Victoria, B.C.

Dearest Mumsky,

Yes, it is me again. Your charming clean-cut 1st born son. What do I get for being first born? I just flipped a coin to determine if I should fill you in on what happened to me last year after I got dropped off in Cardston, Alberta. I guess I haven't written to you in all these months. Whatever.

I like B.C. – Canada is refreshing in away. Significantly less violence. Strict gun control. Not that you can't have guns. You can – all sorts of them. It's just that there is a definite screening process. I don't think about violence that much up here. So far as I am concerned personal safety wise. One just doesn't feel the presence of random violence like in the States. Especially where you live or anywhere in the Sunbelt for that matter. The pro gun lobby has really screwed things up. Incredibly ignorant to make a gun purchase like buying a candy bar or newspaper. You just don't have the big supermarket shoot-outs that have become so popular since the Reagan Buch team launched their so called war on crime. What a crock. Vancouver had its first random shooting last month. No one was killed. Just a guy shooting at cars. 1st time for B.C. It barely would make the news in the USA unless the assailant comes close to breaking the current body count, which I think was upped last year to 22 or so bodies? I can understand it. Many times in the States – countless times – I have been accosted by armed police for absolutely no other reason than I had a backpack and or long hair. Cops don't like people who know how to travel cheap. They also tend to resent people who don't work 9-5 jobs or who are breaking the mold of the status quo. So how is the status quo? Yuck yuck – seriously – if you ever need a vacation from the Florida massacre you might like B.C. It's quite mild on the coast. It has only frosted lightly this year a couple, few times. Global warming is a total reality for me. Very obvious. They used to get a fair amount of snow around here. Not this year. Zilch. Nothing. Zero. Kaput. Njet. Nada.

I have moved out of the house at Speed ave. I should tell you that if anyone ever calls you up asking about me to be very careful what you tell them please. Ask them questions about me at length before giving out vital info like where I am or what I am doing. O.K.? I am pretty sure that the phone at Speed Ave. was tapped. 3 weeks ago – 2 plain-clothes men came looking for me by name. I wasn't home. Out grocery shopping luckily. I packed up immediately and was gone within ½ hour of returning. They came back a few days later – this time with an arrest warrant. With my name, of course. So – I am at a new hideout and have been laying low ever since. I mostly sleep it seems. But, I also write a lot of letters and do tons of yoga plus I have a guitar to play so there is no problem with boredom. Plus there are kids across the street hockey and football and jump on the trampoline in the back yard. Life is really better in my new place: I have privacy, which I didn't before. I had to quit my carpenter job because I was scared I'd get picked up, a good chance that I would go to trial if picked up. So – things are hunky-dory but the police are after me.

Which is something of a rotten feeling but on the other hand in this day of wholesale assault upon the environment, mega pollution, war machines everywhere – it is also a health indicator that I am living on the right wave length. Right for me at

least. You'll see what I mean in a minute when I tell you about how I am redefining the word defiant.

So – why would the cops be interested in little old me? All I was doin' was tryin' to stop a logging company from clear cutting one of the last virgin forests on Vancouver Island. Big trees. 10 to 12 foot some of them. Diameter that is. 250 foot tall some of them. Big Spruce and Cedar. When I was hitching out this way I asked directions to where the people were hanging out 'cause the forest is an integral part of the life support system of our planet. Must not be raped or we die with it. Our time is one of great mourning as literally 1000 and thousands of plant and animal species are exterminated each year at a rate far surpassing any previous age when great die outs occurred. Right now, this is happening. So that industrialized countries can "enjoy" a more consumer oriented life style. So – I am working to stop the destruction with these folks here in Victoria B.C. right? So – I got up in the trees on a platform suspended amongst 3 trees.

It was my idea. I didn't like the thought of just climbing a tree and sitting on a platform right in the tree. Too accessible, a logger can be 100 feet up a tree in 5 minutes no problem. They do it every day and have good gear. And when they get to you, look out 'cause they may just fire up a chainsaw and start whacking away at the tree you are sitting in! Like one of my friends had happen. So, I wanted more distance from the loggers so I thought why not suspend a platform where you had to crawl out to it hand over hand on a rope for 30 feet or so. Kind of like a big platform swing. Dangerous let me tell you. My first one was 75 feet of the ground. I flipped a coin with this other man Chris and I "won". Took me an hour or more to climb my tree with primitive rope, cinches we made ourselves. When I got up to 75 or 80 feet I rested for a bit. I had a safety line and a harness. Still,... one big mistake and if you're lucky you die. If you didn't die you would probably be paralyzed. Way up in the air. I clipped into the safety and with little more than guts and burning desire I made the first few moves out on the rope towards the platform. Slow going. I had both my legs looped over the traverse line with my hands doing almost all of the work. I knew I could easily die if I screwed up. The mood was pretty tense all the way around 'cause loggers were poised to come any day and cut their way right into the very heart of this fairyland wilderness. There was no time for training or major discussion and experimenting. It was do it or forget it. Maybe 40 people in camp that day. I was one of two willing to get in the air. After several minutes of struggling out across this rope parallel to the ground I finally started to wear out as the rope sagged down and I had to pull myself up to the platform the last 10 feet. I kept my cool. Let one arm dangle and then the other. Back and forth. Then I would pull up some. Minutes passed. My forearms were burning inside and my biceps were kind of numb and shaking as I tried with all my might to gain a hold on the little 4'x3' platform a few feet beyond and above my head. I managed to get one foot up on the edge of the platform and hooked it into the rigging. After a bit, I couldn't get any higher so I tried putting my other leg up there, too. I was just able to hook my toes amongst the myriad lines enough to pull some with both legs and after a final rest period, I gave it all I had with both legs flailing and my arms pulling. I did a sort of pull-up sit-up and with shouts of approval in the distance below I sat in silence trembling like the needles of the big conifers standing all around. I had myself a cry and tried to act like I was O.K. – This was my home for the next 30 hours. Supplies were send up from below. Enough food and water for two weeks, easily. All carefully hung down below the platform on pieces of cord and string. The objective in case it isn't obvious... if hey want to cut trees in the

immediate area (directly above the road being built) they would have to either remove me first or kill me either on purpose or by “accident”.

As the hours started to pile up on that Sunday afternoon the platform somehow got smaller and smaller. 4' x 3'. Felt like a postage stamp. That night I got very little sleep, of course. It was very tippy and moved up and down and around depending on the breeze. I can't fully express my feelings at the time. Way beyond words. Exhilarating, scary, bold, empowering. I felt so tiny in a way up there y myself way up in the deathzone and at the same time little ol me felt something big inside – could feel something big out there in the front and beyond over the horizon towards the sea. I was ready to die. I was crying and laughing all at once as I surveyed my dilemma and the fallen trees below. Vast clear cut areas were nearby and looked as if they had been bombed. Not a single living tree would be left. Not one. Sometimes clear cut all the way up to the edge of he creeks so the soil just washes away in erosion from the near total destruction. Mountains of waste. 2nd and 3rd grade logs strewn willy-nilly as the forest company takes out only the best prime logs and leaves anywhere from 20% to 30% behind I would estimate. It's called “creaming”. Skim off the cream and dump the rest. Similar to the great Buffalo slaughters in the American West where eventually only the tongues were cut out and often times not even that as train passengers were encouraged to shoot from the train just to watch the great beasts drop in a twitching heap. Although much of the wood is actually used – the end result of clear cutting has far reaching and as yet unknown consequences. Salmon spawning grounds are destroyed. Soil washes away. Countless animals are made homeless. All so some kid can watch T.V. and have an ATV and Daddy can drive a new truck and drink lots of beer. A tree faller makes around \$ 350.°° per day. If they are working steady, they make an easy \$ 65,000.°° to 70 thousand dollars a year with 5 to 8 weeks off in winter. Big bucks for a workin' guy. Big cash habit. You get used to that kind of money and are a little short on brains and it's easy to see why people are getting panicky now that the easy picckins have all been had and that the last few pockets of Old growth are being fiercely protected by common or not so common people like me. Not that all the loggers are dunces. Plenty getting out of there own volition because the writing on the wall is so vivid. Written in such big letters. With each new year bringing “labor saving” machinery with the resultant reduction in jobs there is little love for the logging companies even from their own workers as the companies make it clearer every day that their number 1 priority is money and forget about the people. With little or no thought for the environment to begin with... there is nothing there to forget about so you can skip that one. They pay only as much attention to the environment as they absolutely have to by people pressing the greedy bastards up against a wall with fire in their eyes. Figuratively speaking, that is. They like it when all you do is talk; form commissions, do studies. 'Cause they can get their forest as long as you do is talk and obey the law.

So – by sitting in my platform... I was effectively saying “enough is enough”. Or better yet, enough is way too much to bear. However, my actions were greeted by a less than enthusiastic group of loggers and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) although just what is they are supposed to be mounted on wall never made clear: mule? Wall? They blabbered at me from below for some time with various bullhorns etc. but never sent anyone up the tree. This was Monday morning so I had made it through the nite o.k. but was coming to grips with the reality I was living in which simply put in a word –cramped. Seriously cramped. I was feeling pretty rough. With nowhere to go but down and somehow orange helmets and chainsaws are not my idea of a welcoming party.

So – it was o big deal, really. I just sat there and listened to trees falling in the distance. Long about 2:00 things changed a little. I could hear something coming and right quick now it was right above me. Chopper. Yellow. Noisy. Real noisy. Blowing it was right down at me from maybe 100 or so feet above me. The trees kept him back. Or her. Although it is somehow a bit harder to picture a woman doing this. I guess if you paid ‘em enough and let ‘em they would do it, too. Anyway, I was quick to respond by pulling out a Kryptonite bicycle lock and placing it around my neck and locking myself down to the platform with my other arm reaching around and below. Now then, I kept track of that key! I was shaking I am sure but my fingers still remembered how to close! The reason being that I figured they might bring own some Rambo-geek steroid-dork-brain to try and put the pinch on me. As extra insurance, I had a bucket strategically placed above my head a little bit and hanging from some of the rigging to where I could put my hand in it. What was in the bucket? I’ll give you a clue. It wasn’t hollandaise sauce. Wasn’t salad dressing. It was brown with lumps in it. Gravy? Kind of but not really. Guess again. Here is a big clue: it was drawing flies and smelled like a baby in diaper. Got it? That’s right. We are talking KA-KA, DOO-DOO, BOOM BOOM, NO.2, SEWER-SUB etc. Non-violent resistance pushed a bit beyond what most folks would chart as their personal boundaries. For me, it was simple. Get shitty or get arrested. I’d sooner eat shit than le a cop put their anxious hand on me.

And if it would help save a pre-historic forest, what’s the problem? I don’t even flinch any more when it comes to shit nearby or on my skin. Kind of soothing in a way. But why do it? That is a good question and I am not exactly sure what it is except to say that something in White People’s Culture has given them the impression that shit is repulsive. Can you imagine that? Cops have a tendency to back off right now. Not soon. Not pretty quick. We’re talking NOW!! RIGHT NOW!!! GET BACK!!!!

This is important because the police tend to look after the interests of those people who have demonstrated the greatest aptitude and willingness towards eliminating the Natural World and everything it contains including indigenous peoples and the impoverished underclass of heir own Culture. Not to mention themselves. But, since the process of gradual extermination has accelerated incredibly due to industrial mechanization and is now at a feverish pitch, heretofore unknown, one doesn’t have to look into

The now not-so-distant future to see their own bones rattling the death chant of dominance and submission. Which wouldn’t be so bad if it were only the “baddies” who went broken, got sick and reaped their just deserts. What do you tell a dead bears mate? Or an eagle with no tree to nest in. What do you tell your kid when some mega-rich multi-national corpseoration lays you off after 10 years ‘cause they say they ain’t making enough money and all you got to show for it is some chain saws, a couple of gas guzzlers and a mortgage you can’t pay off. Sure recipe for wife-beating and child abuse. Numbingly predictable. Anyone who is depending on Old Growth logging is staking their livelihood on a losing proposition. They should not get any respect for what they do even if it is highly skilled and dangerous. It is not as skilled and dangerous as saving the big trees, having done some of both.

Back to the chopper. It bugged me for a while and then left and later came back but the 2nd time I didn’t lock down all the way ‘cause I figured it was a bluff to intimidate me either into falling or coming down. I declined both. It left for good and I rested as best I could. Somewhat drained.

I soon realized that my perch was mega-precarious and ridiculously small and I began lowering supplies back down feeling the whole venture was just too crazy and under-engineered. I tried to spend another night up high but with my nerves frazzled and cramps setting in I was easily coaxed to come down by a friend. So – in the dark of late evening, I rappelled down my rope – my only avenue of escape. No problem as my rope just was long enough to reach the ground. Terra firma. It had been a wild ride to be sure, swaying in the trees like that, but I'd had enough.

Much hugging and backslapping ensued as I was greeted by friends after our victorious day. A little victory. I was the hero of the hour and I welcomed the attention. For now, I too, was a tree-sitter. An elite little group of the most daring. We learned that it is possible to spend the night on platforms (although they needed to be bigger) and also gained confidence in my suspension ideas. Problem was, I was so freaked out by the whole experience that I tried hard to dissuade a friend from going up and resuming my place up on that high platform. Fortunately, I wasn't listened to very well 'cause we had a person in the platform for the start of "business" the next morning and we held that platform all week with a total of 3 different sitters including me who had to deal with a new threat. Loggers started dropping trees right below the platform as a way to intimidate the sitter. But he held fast. The chopper came and went several times. No big deal. By Friday, the RCMP started a new tactic. They roped off the area below the platform and put the area under 24-hour watch. But through the use of diversionary tactics including a large bon-fire nearby with loud singing --- the mounties never noticed our man make a wild, virtual free-fall rappel off the end of the rope dropping 10 feet into some downed branches!!! Where they surprised in the morning when no one was in the platform!! But, our victory was bitter-sweet as loggers came in and cut down the 3 trees suspending the platform. Cut down forever. Only a plant. Who cares. "They grow back". End of the high platform. If it were technologically possible to cut every single Old growth tree in B.C. (or the whole planet for that matter) during the course of one working day, I feel certain one could find some captain of industry ready to give the word. Big money has a peculiar attraction towards big mistakes. Mistakes that don't go away like you might prefer.

It is now 3:30 A.M. – I have been watching T.V. at my new hideout. A mother and her college age son live here. He does that is. She lives with her lover and so this duplex has her empty room full of stuff and the basement, which has a makeshift bedroom. So, I get the basement room. Her son knows my situation fully SHE DOESN'T YET IN ANY WAY or as fully as any of us. All we know for sure is that somebody wants me locked up. Just how bad is somewhat hard to tell. No one knows how they figured out where I was living before. It's hard for me to imagine what exactly motivates the authorities. They must not have very much to do. Or they know more about me than I am aware. Very possible they have gotten in touch with the F.B.I. who, by this time, have some kind of file on me for my efforts to stop the nuclear reactor/bomb building industries. Governments tend to frown upon people who demonstrate an ability to think for themselves or for the greater good. Justice is government's biggest fear. Big government, that is. Empire government I am looking forward to that inevitable day when Uncle Sam falls down flat on his tightly pinched flabby ass. I would feel better if I felt you and Dad were out of harms way 'cause I can feel it coming and have the gut feeling that when the U.S. Empire starts falling – it's already started – even George's little war couldn't bring the economy up – I feel like life could and likely will get very uncomfortable for you in Mouse Town.

I guess it's eat, drink and be merry while you can. We live in such different worlds. Not that you and Dad are throwing wild parties—you might benefit from it actually.

I'm pretty tired. Will finish this tomorrow, perhaps. My new name is Bill. I feel pretty safe here most of the time. I am very careful.

Next day, -- Thursday 3:30 –

Back to my story. Some time passed. Loggers would come right down to our camp of 40 people and start cutting big trees right in front of our faces. Real nightmare. Seems there will always be those willing to shoot the last elephant or rhino or cut the last tree of a species or whatever. They figure around here that a few little “representative parks” is enough. But it isn't and even if it was I'd still try to stop them 'cause I like beauty and loathe ugly. Logging is extremely ugly when done by the clear-cut method. They could selectively log like in Europe but it takes a bit more time and effort. Also takes more labor which means more jobs and the industry is committed making fewer jobs every year if possible.

In early September, a bunch of us decided to do mayor action. I acted as facilitator in the group discussion of about 20 people. I felt somewhat uneasy in this position because I hadn't done it before and it involves basically directing the meeting and makin sure everybody gets to say their piece. After a couple of hours of intense debate and semi paranoia (cops might show up and bust our meeting) we decided to go with one woman's suggestion of putting up two platforms one of which would be a blockade of the road as well. We started with the tree platform. 3 tree climbers on their own trees with me on the ground directing as best as I could. I had volunteered to sit in the platform directly above an established logging road where the trees had not been clear-cut yet. A creek of good size was 200 yards below the edge of the road. Mountainous terrain covered with forest. Old growth forest. After 2 ½ hours of spine tingling, nerve wracking work that saw two – no three near accidents where people almost fell – we had the platform up in the air. But only 40 feet high. Best we could do. Some folks from GreenPeace came by and helped us hoist the new 4x8 platform. It was heavier than the high platform and hung way down below the safety line making the traverse out to it much easier.

DRAWING

This will give you some kind of crude idea of what was happening. 40 feet may seem pretty high but not in this “business”. You fall and you pay. Big time. My friend Kathy fell and broke her back, her leg and her pelvis. Been in a body cast for quite a while now. 4 months. She's walking pretty well. I talked her out of a back operation and it turned out to be crucial correct advice. At least so far her back is doing O.K. Her leg was really mangled. Broken femur. Had to operate. Brave woman. She just wasn't experienced enough. None of us really was of the 8 or 10 tree sitters. Her number came up when she tried to rappel and her rope came unclipped from her harness. She tried to slide down the rope and burned her hands real bad then free fell for 45 or 50 feet. She has been recovering quite nicely. Much to everybody's joy.

Anyway, we got three platforms up by 3/00A.M. in the dark, which is partly why we almost had a fatal accident. I try to use my voice to calm people down and get them to think correctly and not panic. A few weeks earlier I had done a 3-hour rescue of a young would-be sitter who got stuck about 45 feet up a tree in the dark. Had to lower him down after climbing up behind him. Are you getting the picture. Life and

death hairy situations on a regular basis? No wonder I am getting grey hair. On the other hand, I got the spring in my step and something in my eye can't nobody put their finger on just quite.

My turn to almost die was yet to come. I tried to catch some sleep long about 4:30 or so. I was really wasted 'cause I hadn't slept the previous night either. While I slept, the blockade went up. They picked a very narrow spot with an 80 to 100 foot near vertical drop on one side. Turned a big log sideways blocking the road and then they hung a platform off the other end of the log, which stuck out into space above the 100 foot deep ravine. No place for amateurs but there we were. Have to stop them somehow or they, the greed leads everywhere, will take it all... Every last tree. Some areas they cut them all and take only ½. Loggers cut down the 2 oldest known living trees in Canada. Left them lying after 1600 years of life. Left them to rot. Didn't take either one. Little too much soft wood inside? Maybe they were tired. Maybe the trucks were full and never came back. Don't know for sure.

So – can you picture this blockade? If they try to move the log out of the way maybe the person sitting in it will get jarred loose and fall out which is what the loggers would sort of like but it makes for bad P.R. and we had notified the press that we were going to do a major action so we had to have people in place.

I started up my tree at around 7:00 A.M. not exactly fresh but I was doing all right. After 2 full hours I started traversing out to the platform. No sweat compared to the high platform of 3 weeks earlier. Meanwhile the mounties were trying to unravel the blockade.

They used a bucket truck with an extendable arm to reach out and lower a separate platform down to the protestor. He was locked down to the platform. So they had to cut his lock off from around his neck I think with a torch somehow. After 4 hours they were through with 10 or more vehicles headed in my direction. I was waitin'. You can bet yer sweet bippy that I had plenty of shit on board in case any mounties got fresh with me.

I had on a mask of course and a hat pulled down and by now I had rigged a little tarp up for some bit of shelter + privacy such as it was. About noon some 8 loggers pulled up and a couple trucks with mounties. Mounties began what would turn into a 53 hour round the clock watch. Make that 55 hours. Each hour was like a day, some were like a week in length. They had a buck truck with them. From the ground, they tried to converse with me which was a drag 'cause I really had little or nothing to say and it would have been so nice if they were further below me like at the High Platform. As it was, they were right there and bless their hearts and all that 'cause they think they are doing the right thing I'm sure to help the loggers clear cut this unimaginably beautiful place of lakes and waterfalls and huge trees. What can one say? So some people like me end up with shit in a bucket to protect the last trees and the RCMP ends up with shit between their ears for trying to cut them down. "Just doin' my job". "It's the law". Power has no intrinsic morality – Power oppresses. And power bestows privilege on those who suck up to it.

Couple of mounties got in the bucket truck and were raised up about 30 feet just below my platform. I saw them coming so I dosed up my arms and legs with shit in case they got too close. But they couldn't 'cause the truck wouldn't go any higher. So, one of these peckerheads grabs one of my buckets of water and dumps it out. ½ my water. That was a drag and I said so. Wasn't his water. My other bucket was safe. I was emptied to place a well aimed turd square on his empty noggin' but my inner voice of non-violence told me not to do it. I could have easily hammered this numb-nut. Easily. Absentmindedly. I did kick a little hunk of shit off my platform and it fell

on theirs between the two guys as a sort of a warning. They blabbered on at the mouth for a while and then left. Later some higher ranking, old guy came up with a softer approach trying to kind of coax me down. I didn't want to talk 'cause I figured they might be taping my voice. As he got closer, I started to act more upset and unstable which was partly true. Soon, he too left and I was alone with a couple of mounties for the night. It was not to be peaceful. After dark, the spotlight went on, of course. Plus, they began to run their siren in an effort to rattle me and break me down. I thanked them and took it as a lullaby. Really... it was obnoxious but I made it through the night all right. Kept catching myself fantasizing about shooting loggers and cops. Next day was more of the same. Plus a T.V. crew came in and some cop was taking notes as I started to talk a little. The cop goes "You know, you are going to stand trial for this" – I started to laugh a little as he described how I would get my fair shake at a trial and I yelled back about how I doubted some senile white guy sittin' on a pack of hemorrhoids was going to be able to grasp the situation but there wasn't really much debate. Some people jus don't get it that other life forms have a right to live. Lots of people just cannot grasp a fundamental statement like that. Just ignorance: That's all.

No sirens the second night. Wednesday morning came along and things were pretty quiet. I was getting thirsty 'cause my remaining water was tainted with shit 'cause while I was jumping around up there so they couldn't see me good, a little bit got in my bucket. Not good. But I had to drink something. The mounties wouldn't let my friends give me more water. The mounties wanted to give it to me. The mounties refused to allow my friends to attach the water container to the line I wanted to haul up. My friends could make all the arrangements and fetch the water from the spring but the actual hook-up onto my line.... Sorry... nothing doing said the mounties.... We will tie it on the rope, not your friends. Sensing the trap for my personal power, I declined the mounties offer and continued to conserve my polluted water. This may seem trivial. To me, it was crucial. I needed every bit of personal power I could master for this bizarre struggle.

I was told by a mountie that this would be "my last day". Regardless of just how, I was coming down "one way or another". He turned out to be right later in the day. I did a head count. 8 loggers and 7 RMCP. 9 vehicles including 2 bucket trucks one of which could easily reach above my platform. One mountie was doing videotape off and on all afternoon the same as on Monday + Tuesday. A T.V. film crew showed up (a 3 hour drive from Victoria) but were asked to leave the area, which they did. In my opinion, this was done for one reason. If the mounties screwed up and hurt me or killed me which they proved willing and able to flirt with, they wanted to be able to present their own probably sanitized version of what happened since they had already demonstrated a willingness to wildly distort the truth by claiming I "hurled " feces, excrement at various mounties. Boldfaced lie. They know it. In fact, I went as far as warning them at length that I had a shit bucket and waved them back before I tossed a single sample down they could examine without getting plastered. Not that I have some big problem with this image the mounties created of themselves getting plastered in shit. I found it amusing. It simply never happened. Perhaps they deserve it or would like that in future, I don't know.

The overall tone was changing fast on this the start of my 3rd and last day in the air. 2 of the loggers were especially equipped to "rescue" me. They climbed all those trees and attached steel cables that held a net below the platform. I watched them closely alternately crying and shaking. In the near background were two large, prime cedar trees. Both were 6 or 7 feet in diameter and straight as could be. So close together that one could almost touch them both at the same time. An awesome vitality

there. A month later, both had been cut down one on top of the other so as to shatter the top one. Big mistake, I suppose. While the safety net was being rigged I watched one logger cutting the branches off one of my trees as he ascended. The branches fell in a sort of pile right near the base of this leaning tree. Leaning some 10 or 15 degrees off of vertical right at the edge of a steep slope that led down to the main creek in the general vicinity. That “creek” was often a raging torrent after heavy rains. That day, it had only a couple feet of water in it.

As the loggers started to raise the net I got my knife out very slowly where no one could see. I had sharpened it before going up. Standing up on the edge of the platform with one arm holding on to the safety line and my other hand hiding my knife, I watched the loggers jockey the net into position. When it was almost touching the platform, I swooped down with my knife and with 2 swipes cut one corner completely free collapsing the net. “Cocksucker” was the response from below for undoing an hours worth of their work.

After 4(5 minutes the had re climbed the trees and reset the net. This time it was lower. While this was going on a new player entered the scene. Corporal motor mouth. The mounties had apparently sent out for their “expert” in “psychological warfare”. “Where are your friends” he kept calling out. “ Your friends have left you... left you holding the bag.” This is like trying to convince me that George Bush is sincere in wanting a “kinder, gentler America”. Here I am in a platform my friends have risked their lives just to set up and all I get is this grade school clown approach. “Take your mask off and face me like a man”. Yeah, right. He was wearing some sort of raincoat in case I unloaded a turd in his direction, I suppose. On and on he droned. 3 You know, you are in our custody.... There is no escape, now.” “Give up, and make it easier on yourself.” He actually helped me by providing some comic relief especially at one point when I asked him “ere you born this slimy or did you develop it along the way”? Standing 12 or 15 feet away in a bucket truck at the same height as me, he takes his hat off, smiles real big and says 3 I was born this way”!! I cracked up. What a nut.

My attire at this point consisted of my safety harness and mask. That’s all. So you could say I was naked. My tan needed freshing up, anyway. I had scraped most of the brown surprise from my arms and legs by this time (a painful task) and was more or less waiting to see what would happen next I looked below and noticed a mountie almost directly below me. I waved for them to move since, by this time, the net was set and a logger was trying to get my anchor lines untied and that could mean trouble for the red-lipped mountie below. Red-lipped? We got a female here. One of two female mounties I noticed. She refused to move. Just stared up at my beautiful body. Something about red lips and blonde hair got me to thinking in a new direction. I turned around and faced towards my tarp for a little privacy and spit into my left hand and took hold of my tube-steak. I’ll admit I was feeling pretty shriveled up. My fate looked bleaker and bleaker by the minute. I just stood there calmly stroking my little dong trading in those red lips below for some more promising women I know and fantasized about them. I also let my eyes rest on that leaning tree with the pile of branches near its base. Something special about it. – After a minute or two of this left-wing massage, little dong disappeared altogether. Drum roll New player on the scene. Enter Big-Dong. Pointing straight up to heaven. I spun around and cut loose with the longest, most intense scream, I could. For probably a minute, I did this repeatedly. Below was stunned silence. Then, quick as a flash, 2 male Mounties rushed up below the platform and grabbed onto hot-lips and hustled her out of the picture thus shielding her from any possible love potion that might rain down from

above, I suppose. Not that she had anything to worry about since I had been carefully avoiding getting any body fluids or solids on any of the loggers or mounties for over 2 days. Maybe she realized this or maybe she just liked the view 'cause she was right back in her old place in no time. Just kept staring up at me. I think she was truly concerned about my well-being. Big-Dong had turned the table.

Meanwhile Mr. Net-Rigger was busy and had one of my two main lines untied. The leaning tree kept coming to mind. And I wondered to myself: how would it hang if I cut one of the ropes from the platform to the leaning tree. If it was hanging straight down with a good weight on it, would there be any space between the end of the rope and the base of the tree? And how much space, if any. I felt sure there would be at least some.

Mr. Net-Rigger hollered out: "I'm going to cut your rope; get ready for a jolt." It was here that the amateur nature of this arrest began to show itself more clearly. Unable to untie one of the two ropes, this logger was going to cut it and hope that the other one held me and the platform aloft. The "safety net" was hardly big enough to really do anything since I could easily have jumped clear of it and hit the ground. They simply risked my life to proceed with my removal. Chop, chop and sproing... sproing... the platform dropped 2 or 3 feet and then settled in its new position.

I was sweating pretty heavy. Trying to think about something other than that leaning tree and pile of branches. Because it looked like I could cut on of the lines on that yet undisturbed rigging and swing over their heads, past the leaning tree the rope is tied to and then, at the end of the arc, -- simply drop down to the waiting pile of branches the logger had left for me.

I considered turning myself in. Trespassing, resisting arrest, public indecency, lewd + lascivious behavior... who knows what all the trial would be about. Not very appealing. I pulled out 5 coins and decided to throw them for the best out of seven flips. I only needed one toss. It said 4 to 1 to go for it!! This made me feel even more exited and apprehensive as I began getting dressed for the rest of the show. Mr. net-rigger slowly played out the one rope on the opposite side of the road from the creek. Little by little I was getting closer and closer to the leaning tree and the creek. And the ground.

Corporal Mote-mouth kept giving me "one last chance" to give myself up since escape was now "impossible". He insisted he "knew what I was going through" since he had protested a traffic violation once. This guy was something else.

Meanwhile, hot-lips had started to get vocal. Don't do anything crazy", "Don't jump", "I'll walk you to the paddy wagon and I'll hold your hand" "Just you and me". I figure she was trying to avert a possible violent scene on the ground. Some of the mounties were acting vocally aggressive with name calling ("asshole" etc.) and were probably more than a little eager to get their hands on me after taking a look at my erection and shit covered arms and legs in the previous 2 days. I kept telling them to "get out" --- I said "I am doing this for the children". Kept yelling it occasionally. I was doing it for myself and the trees, too. A forest with no road in it. Now that's something worth living for. Worth fighting for. Worth dying for if need be. I was ready.

I put on my sweater and shoes and ants. One last thing. A woman friend had given me her Bible for up on the platform. Ignoring the feelings of pain and resentment I felt towards the book, the Bible, I put it under my sweater right next to my stomach. Somehow, it was a comfort as I stood there sweating and occasionally crying, slowly coming down, Leaning Tree coming closer.

I re-tied my harness to the rappel line I would need when I let go to land in the branches. One thing hasn't changed since these moments on the platform in September and this moment as I write; I am sweating. As I relive it.

Corporal motor-mouth got in a bucket truck with another person as did 2 others in the remaining bucket and both teams began rising from the ground now a mere 20 feet away. Within seconds they were at my reduced height. The sight of them closing in on me shocked me enough to raise my leaden left hand and easily slice the 10 M.M. rope I was now rigged to. A foot or two of slack in my rigging was absorbed by my left arm, partly dislocating my left shoulder with my hand above my head. The platform fell away into the net. Some one, a male yelled out "There he goes" as I swung past the base of the tree Maybe 12 feet off the ground, my rappel line hanging down just above anybody's reach as I had cut it short on purpose. 8 or 10 feet past the tree, I looked down wondering about the pain in my shoulder and noticed the tree limbs piled up directly below me. Crucial good fortune. I let go of my rappel-brake hand (?) without a thought and dropped off the end of my rope like a big snowflake. A soft landing in sitting position was enough to relocate my shoulder!! This good fortune allowed me to continue since I would have been helpless with my shoulder halfway out of place above my head.

I leaped out of the branches immediately and hurled myself down the steep embankment, mounties and loggers hot on my heels, somersaulting and rolling, desperate for some breathing room. With no exercise for the past 2 ½ days, my legs were shaky with no chance of running for the bottom. I was too weak + and exhausted so I just let myself roll and tumble sometimes freefalling short spaces arriving at the bottom prone, bruised and lumpy. But I was conscious and no broken bones!!! Hooray!! I jumped up and lumbered towards the creek tripping and falling after just a few steps. I got up again and felt the Bible slip out from under my sweater. I spun around to retrieve it from the sandy flood plain. I stopped cold in my tracks and did a 180° forgetting about the Bible. A logger was within 50 or 60 feet of me! Mere seconds behind.

I pressed on, moving as if half-drunk. I hit the creek at a half-run but too fast to stay on my legs and again fell, this time face down in the shallow water. Expecting to feel a hand clamping down on me I kept running and stumbling for the opposite bank. A voice yelled out "You must really want to get away". It was the logger on the other side of the creek. I think he stayed put perhaps figuring they had me in the bag; perhaps unwilling to take me on one on one... probably a little tired himself. I forced myself up the opposite bank, less steep, and hustled along as best I could my clothes half-soaked and very heavy dragging me down.

I stopped for 10 seconds to strip. I could hear the mounties yelling just a stone throw away still bent on my capture. Naked now, I ran freely and within a minute or two had gained some ground on my assailants. Suddenly, I was at the edge of a precipice. Steep but still climbable. Seeing bushes below, I jumped off and down 50 feet or so of loose dirt + rock. And I got quiet. Under the bushes and ferns threading them into my hair.

My heart was pounding like a jackhammer going full-bore. Moments passed like hours. Maybe I was praying. I wanted my little freedom. Bad. Real bad. I heard rustling and then footsteps, voices close and right above me. 3 He is probably playing possum around here, right now." My lungs and muscles on fire and my heart about to burst I laid there like a dead possum as the voices and footsteps slowly faded away. Crouched, actually. I stayed that way a long time. Longer than it would take you to read this for several times. And then I still stayed put. An hour passed. And another. I

made no sound. Darkness fell. Still I held fast. After 3 hours, I slowly changed over to my left side to ease some cramps. Waiting. Wondering. With only a timepiece and a bandana. Did I hear voices or was that just water running in the distance? I couldn't tell. But I couldn't stay where I was either. They'd surely be back in the morning. This time maybe with dogs like earlier in the summer.

As quietly as I could, half expecting a flashlight to explode in my face, I inched up the embankment careful to hold any loose stone in place. 50 feet took a half-hour. A "snail's pace" or perhaps a slug? I crawled for an hour in a forest so dark I could not see my hand in front of my face no matter how close I held it. Overcast. Good fortune. Little by little I crept up the mountain sometimes crawling onto a fallen giant tree as if it were a finger on the hand of a beautiful and grateful goddess. Make that Goddess. Grateful for my courage and daring. Feeling like a new-born baby, I let the cool dark silence carry me along like a large animal heading up the bush. Away from Death.

I crept along up and away for most of the night only resting occasionally, rising when I would shake too much from the cool, moist air. As daylight revealed the trees, I picked up my pace to a fast walk wondering if the previous night's sweeping searchlights and prowling 4x4 would be replaced by a pack of dogs. I knew they would be back after watching them on the distant road every half hour or so all night long. Groping and groping for me.

Soon, I found a giant cedar with a hole at the base. I kicked it open a little more and dropped in under the big tree. 5 to 6 foot across, easy. I rested up here, thankful to be alone with no mounties pestering me. A good place for me, as soon the yellow chopper appeared flying directly above me but not slowing down. I guess they didn't notice the two little possum eyes way down there looking up out of that hole. I crawled a little deeper under and found one more similar sized chamber just big enough to allow me room to turn over and stretch a little. I rested some more. The great spirit seemed to be nestling me closely. Now, I live my life worthy of casting my spirit into that mystery. Perhaps, I have.

When I felt ready, I emerged from under the big cedar tree. I hope I thanked it for the shelter. I ambled on eating berries as I went. Lots of berries. Drinking the pure surface water the loggers and politicians hoped to pollute some day soon. At times, I walked on logs to ease the way for my bare feet. Ever walk over a 100 foot, along a fallen tree? It gives me reason to live. And the strength to risk my life for that right. For hours and hours I walked along eating berries as I went. I hope to regain that feeling again some day. Naked. Alone. Silence. Primeval forest.

By dusk, I was approaching a place I hoped to find friendly faces. Over 24 hours after cutting myself loose, I was awarded a hushed intense welcome home. Some food and later some sleep but not before I told my friends the basics of what happened. Before dawn, I was on the move once again. A long hike later, I was in a truck driving away from the Walbran Valley.

These days, I am basically the same. Of course. Something I couldn't use got peeled away in the Walbran Valley last September. Inordinate pride? 75 tree-hugging, wilderness advocates let me into their world. We pulled together to save the priceless resource. I feel cleansed, blessed and grateful for my good fortune. The pitiable, myopic fools that were running the B.C. government have since been resoundingly thumped in an election. The new government has pronounced (on location in the woods with suit + tie, etc.) an 18 month moratorium on parts of the crucial valley from the ripping of chain saws. As well as a few other critically stressed watersheds with some Old Growth trees remaining. As the government attempts to trump this up

to the public as a big move, it is really precious little. It is something, though. I am glad to see movement in the direction of roadless wilderness. If that is what it turns out to be. For the sake of the forest and its inhabitants as well as the men, women and children currently dependent on its destruction for their mega-consumption lifestyles. Cutbacks in logging Old Growth are coming. Period. Either now with a few puny, but still vital, essential watersheds fairly intact or in the immediate future as vicious, high speed clear-cutting snuffs out the last few little pockets of this unfathomable beauty. Do not believe that when they say “There is plenty left” or this slack-jawed swill about “share our forests”. Rapacious logging has already decimated well over 90 % of B.C.’s original Old Growth trees, countless thousands undoubtedly still laying whole and in pieces right where they were cut as the two oldest known trees in Canada lay at present in early 1992. They lay rotting like the hordes of Buffalo slaughtered over a 100 years ago. First for food, then for hides, then for tongues and finally for nothing more than the thrill reserved solely for the demented.

An exaggeration, you say? An unfair comparison? So to a clear-cut, then. See for yourself. Talk with informed European people whose forests have been under siege for centuries, where clear-cutting is banned in favor of selective logging ‘cause there is virtually no true wilderness and the people’s souls ache for it. Were it possible to sell an intact B.C. watershed and ship it abroad intact, I daresay the bidding would get fierce as people pulled together trying to reclaim the wild magic that once saturated our world.