

Editorials

Violence is as American as cherry pie.

—H. Rap Brown

VIOLENCE AND EARTH FIRST!

Editorial by Dave Foreman

One could expand Rap Brown's comment to this: Violence is as human as the opposable thumb. But the question we as Earth lovers must face is whether violence is ever justified in defense of Mother Earth against those who would destroy her for their *short-term material profit and power thrills*. As I said to the slimy little suppository representing the Mountain States Legal Foundation during a panel discussion in Denver last fall, "If you come home and find a bunch of Hell's Angels raping your wife, old mother, and eleven year old daughter, you don't sit down and talk balance with them or suggest compromise. You get your twelve gauge shotgun and blow them to hell."

Many environmentalists, however, say violence, whether against machines or people, merely perpetuates the whole violent, destructive cycle, that Earth rape is due to our violent nature, that the only way we can break the violent cycle is to step out of it ourselves, to use only passive resistance against those who would destroy Earth and us.

This, of course, is the approach advocated by Ghandi and Martin Luther King. I admire it. Unfortunately, I am still an animal; still a caveman despite my Levis and boots. I can not turn the other cheek. That just seems to me to be a good way to get a sore face. If you could protect an old growth Douglas fir forest in Oregon from logging by spiking a few trees, would you? If you could save the last of the blue whales from extinction by ramming a pirate whaler, would you? If you could save the Washakie Wilderness from roads and oil rigs by sabotaging a rig or bulldozer, would you? If you could stop an acid rain polluter in Ohio by dumping human sewage over his desk, would you?

Just as most of us have our price (I'll sell out for a hundred grand a year, if anyone's listening), most of us have a point of no return where we'll fight back. I think many of us have already reached that point.

EARTH FIRST! does not advocate violence or monkey-

wrenching. That is an individual choice. And in a diverse society there are many choices. Some of us may choose to fight for the Earth by wearing high heels and lobbying for the Sierra Club in Washington, D.C. Some of us may choose to engage in nonviolent peaceful protests such as blockading the route into a wilderness area in order to bar oil rigs. Others, with a thinner veneer of civility, may chose another approach. I can respect and understand all of these people. I wish them well.

Violence against machines is a personal decision. No one can make that decision for anyone else. EARTH FIRST! is, I hope, large enough to contain all this diversity.

If we report on the activities of monkeywrenchers, it is not because we want *you* to do it, too. But there are people out there trying to save their Mother from rape and their story must be told also.

—Dave Foreman

Editorial— Bart Koehler

The first paragraph of the Wilderness Act states in grand terms that:

"It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an *enduring resource of wilderness*."

That may be the stated policy of Congress, but it certainly is not the policy of Ronnie Ray-gun and his "goon squad": James Watt, John Crowell and others. Those snarling faces want to add a few words after "wilderness"—"until the year 2000, then kiss it good-bye."

A recent chain of events has placed this "enduring resource of wilderness" in extreme jeopardy. Designated wilderness and those lands from the Forest Service RARE II and BLM Wilderness inventory that deserve wilderness protection have been caught in an incredible endurance test.

James Watt said recently, "A battle is going on, and James Watt has become a lightning rod and a symbol of change..." It has become very clear that lightning can strike in the same place twice, three times, four times and more. Watt must be protected by his Coors belt buckle.

This self-proclaimed "symbol of change" started his deadly business by proposing to open up wilderness areas for oil and gas