

a concrete offensive in the social war. We refuse to run in circles anymore.

To my left there is a swarm of bodies destroying a police cruiser, and to my right, others completely ruining the exterior of a bank. Magically, bricks are removed from one side of the building and returned through another.



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# BECOMING RIOT:



Some accounts and analysis regarding the  
2008 Republican National Convention

compiled by FRIENDS

der prepared quite well for this engagement, arming themselves with every technique at their disposal. The state of exception came to bear as the National Guard was deployed to work in tandem with the police, guarding the jail and attacking demonstrators. But naked force was also complemented by juridical repression. The “conspiracy to riot in furtherance of terrorism” charges are no haphazard application or abuse of the law; they are its logical extension.

Many would like to use the events of September 1st to gain credibility for or to invigorate their historical reenactivist societies, be it recreating the '60s or the anti-globalization protests. It's time to bury the myths of Chicago and Seattle once and for all. The demonstration form is a suffocating cocoon from which we need to break free. We were not in St. Paul for the illusory goals some had swallowed wholesale. We don't give a fuck about a summit, but we can use it as a springboard, parasitically sucking life and leaving behind anemic remains. We were there this time because we do not yet have the force to manifest such conflict outside of the context of mass mobilizations. One of our goals is to take all of the force directed against false epicenters of power and redirect it into social conflicts that have the actual potential to disrupt the flows of this system. We are abandoning the vapid discourse of protest towards

capture the true nature of solidarity. This is because solidarity cannot be narrowly defined within the legal sphere. When any comrade in struggle is arrested, their capture must be seen as a strategy of state repression to inhibit the wide scope of social revolution. Thus, the closer we come to complete societal transformation, the more the state will use draconian laws, like anti-terrorism legislation, to imprison us all. The only way to break this violent cycle is to continue our jailed comrade's struggle to its end. Hence, solidarity means attack, attacking every vestige of the system that collaborated to lock our friends behind bars. These attacks are to continue until everyone is liberated from their cages, whether cubicle or cell. From this perspective, providing the sledgehammers to turn banks into debris is equivalent to filling a commissary with chainsaws for penitentiary revolt. Just like the greatest possible gift to a friend is the destruction of all authority, the best support for a comrade in jail is the destruction of every prison.

On Monday, we catapulted off of expensive cars that propelled us through department store windows. When we finally landed, sneakers-first onto a police officer's frown, the state's precautionary plans were overturned like the dumpsters that crowded the streets of St. Paul. We aren't passive victims, nor are their tactics surprising to us. The forces of or-

# Summary

Four days of anti-government protest concluded with the mass arrest of nearly 400 demonstrators, journalists and bystanders outside the Republican National Convention. The protests opened Monday with, a large permitted march, while autonomous actions were carried out all over the city, with numerous black blocs, lock downs, blockades and a roving anarchist march that clashed with police and left a trail of smashed storefront windows, overturned dumpsters, and trashed police cars in its wake.

Police attempted to intimidate protests by preemptively arresting anarchist organizers and raiding their homes and a protest welcome / convergence center. Law enforcement officers and their informants also infiltrated activist groups and spaces more than a year prior to the convention. Eight of the arrested organizers affiliated with the RNC Welcoming Committee now face conspiracy charges under Minnesota's Patriot Act. If Convicted individuals could face up to almost eight years in prison.

On the streets thousands of National Guard troops and police, some of whom came from

as far away as Texas, Arizona, New York, Florida, and California used teargas, tasers, rubber bullets, batons, and pepper spray on demonstrators. Allegations have surfaced that police tortured some individuals after they were arrested. In all 816 people were arrested around the convention.

“message” lingers momentarily as merely another piece of information to form an opinion about. To act as a social force in the street is not to give the media a clear message, rather it is to purposefully disrupt the chain of messaging that is embodied in the protest-media-audience script. Our message is a code hidden within our form, pressed against the media itself, subverting its smooth capture of our desires. We have neither words nor deeds to be represented, only representations themselves to be corrupted. When the medium destroys the message, our message can only work by destroying its medium.

One lone cop, albeit a large one, has the gall to grab one of us. One of them and fifty of us. After countless experiences of being on the defensive at demonstrations or simply on the streets of our hometowns, we will take advantage of any opening we find. A hooligan sneaks up behind the cop catching him with a well-placed kick between the legs and runs back into the loving arms of the mob. As the cop releases a shower of pepper spray into the crowd, another person surges forth, body checking the cop with a flying leap. The pig hits the ground, and our comrade is freed.

Our milieu has always found ways to provide material and legal support for comrades imprisoned by the state. Support in this manner is always commendable, but by itself fails to

saw through this thin veneer and prepared for street conflict instead.

Cameras surround us on all sides, independent, corporate, freelance, whatever. They're all there, snapping away, reducing beautiful moments to trite representations for use by the police or for sale to newspapers and magazines. The joy of vicarious violence is what they seek, either for their own careers or for the public they sedate. After broken windows, smashed cars, and burning residue, like lapdogs they ask, "But what do you want?" The media finds us interesting, but we find them disgusting.

What those in a protest march want: a clear message, written on signs, to be transmitted to the media, which then represents it to the public vis-à-vis the news. What those in a blockade want: a collective message, performed through an action, captured by the media, which then represents it to the public. In both these cases, whether they are symbolic or concrete actions, whether the medium is the transparent screen or whether it is the message itself, the logic of the media is unquestioned. The media is but one weapon in the democratic arsenal of repression. It promises us the ability to "get the message out," to communicate. But this is an illusion. Stuck somewhere between clips from Iraq, quirky news anchors, and human interest stories, our



# The Battle Of The River: A fiction

*WARNING: None of what this author writes is factually true. In fact, it is all a blatant lie. This author is shamelessly fabricating entire events and presenting them as the truth. This author in no way claims to know or have the ability to convey the battle in its totality. The following article is a feeble attempt by the author to communicate her impressions of a place and a time.*

**"Is it by symbolizing we become the symbolized?" - Austin Osman Spare**

l:

The house was brown and shaded by trees. A brick fire pit sat in the backyard, surrounded by boxes of vegetables, extra bricks, pots and other cooking instruments. In this backyard, people cooked food over the brick fire place. It was for this reason and this reason alone that the police found bricks when they raided the brown house. The police made quite a spectacle out of these bricks, along with buckets of graywater deliberately misrepresented as urine. The story was same as Denver. The police began to constantly talk of urine and feces, placing the words in people's minds at every opportunity. After the brown house was raided, Sheriff Fletcher leaned forward for the cameras and proudly displayed the urine he had uncovered. It had been discovered in an apartment in the houses garage that had no toilet. With the flashing lights lighting up his greasy hair, Fletcher displayed his very personal concern for urine. Little did anyone know that Fletcher would soon begin to speak of flying bags of feces.

Sigmund Freud believed that children who are disciplined too harshly while learning to use a toilet can develop an anal retentive personality. According to him, this personality type exhibits the desire to control as much of their reality as possible.

tire punctures. Glee was the foot inserted into the gendarme's paunch. Like we freed our companions from the police's grip, our collective force will rip words from restrictive reference. From here on, beauty, decadence, and orgy can only connote immediate destruction.

The management of Funk the War begins to recognize our intentions of commandeering their decomposing endeavor. Our momentum necessarily severs from any objectives outlined in any spokes council. Aspiring bureaucrats shed tears for their failure to regulate, and the politics of impotency reveals an impotency of politics. With unabashed sincerity and intensity, the dead weight is cast aside, holding only its precarious career and a falsified notion of failure within its palms. The corpse of activism begs for rejuvenation, but to no avail.

The blockades were never enough for us, and judging them solely on their own terms, they were a failure. The delegates weren't blocked and the convention occurred with little disruption. But to even accept the goal of shutting down the convention requires accepting the discourse of power the RNC itself represents. It is a gathering of figureheads, nothing more. It is not a strike against the heart of the system; at best it is a site where we can manifest social war. The overt objective of the mobilization was always a bit banal, and luckily most

ist's toolbox. We are not among them. They'd like to coerce us into this utilitarian relationship through the edifice of politics; we'd prefer not to. The rioting on Monday, despite its limitations, materialized our inclinations as exploited and alienated individuals to gouge at the eyes of both capital and politics. We make these attacks because we wish to improve our conditions immediately and to do so in way that violates the peace treaty signed by the managers of politics.

Our joy and malice intertwine as another crowd fuses with us and becomes-rioting. Desire moves our appendages, and objects are released through the imaginary field constructed between law and order. Someone runs on top of a moving police car and exposes that the state too is made of sinew and fiber. In moments a lonely police car is located, and with force a body stomps a perfect "pop" through its windshield. Each of us sheds our polite veneer, and we reveal the social conflict that is the shared experience of our conditions.

We stress that no one has felt a comparable pleasure in America in the last five years. No amount of bodily fluid, mixed with syrurp, swirled together to the sound of Lil' Wayne's "A Milli" could concentrate the joy felt when stones collapsed bank windows. Ecstasy was the vandalized cop car. Music was the hissing

These anal retentive personalities have not received the stimulation they desperately long for and become tyrants of their own universe. I do not know how Freud would have classified Sheriff Fletcher, but Fletcher is someone who wishes to control all of the actions taken by his sick gang. He personally interrogated people, made a spectacle of himself on television, and stumbled around the streets on Monday desperately trying to figure out what was happening all around him. This perverted creature was determined to completely demonize a small group of people who, in his unforgivable stupidity, he considered the "leaders" of something he did not understand. Some of those people lived in the brown house.

Before the raids began, an infiltrator (one of three and who went by Panda) had worked his way into a community, found something which his masters thought was a group and began to engineer situations in which he could entrap people. He recommended and encouraged the use of very particular things. He made people trust him and exploited the kindness of others. Someone sent this excuse for a human (and two others) into a community in order to destroy that community. They wanted to stop what was coming to Saint Paul. But they did not know how and the community they attacked was stronger than they anticipated.

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In the morning people read of a Barrack Obama headquarters being attacked. According to the news, the building had all of its windows smashed out and paint thrown inside. The media swarmed over the incident like flies and eventually Chief Harrington of the SPPD had to make a statement about it. This vandalism took place on the eve of the first action in Denver at the DNC.

The trickle in was slow at first but it had begun to pick up. People began to arrive in larger and larger numbers as the week wore on. As the events in Denver unfolded, all of the preparation work continued. At night people sat around fires and swam in the polluted river. At night, you cannot tell how disgusting the water is. If you can ignore reality, it feels like you are swimming in a clear, expansive river stretching away in either direction.

A cloud of fear and apprehension surrounded the approaching Critical Mass. Many people believed that the police would attack it just as they had the year previously. When the ride happened it had a large police escort. Aside from that show of force, the police did nothing

It's been far too long since the black mask has corresponded to rioting in this country. Our tried and true tactic, our insidious uniform, has been co-opted by capital, regurgitated as a mere fashion symbol. Something for today's disempowered youth to splay across the internet in their false communities as a false declaration of rage. That day when our festive button down shirts disappeared to reveal the classic team color of the anti-everything squad, the kid's eyes blinked in confusion. The black mask is not something to play dress up in. To take back the mask means to actualize our desires, blood and glass and a street filled with us.

A hammer cracks two windows, and a good citizen dashes from the sidewalk in pursuit. He grabs the young man with his right hand, a "Let Our Soldiers Win!" sign in the other. He wants to be a cop, a hero, but he's made a mistake. This isn't a peace march; this is the thrashing body of a wrecking machine. The man is rushed from behind, knocking him off balance just long enough for someone to slide their arms around him. He receives a swift kick to the side, and his do-gooder momentum is redirected into the pavement, dropping him like a dead weight.

There are those who speak of property damage as a tactic, as an implement in the activ-

A haze still hangs over the events surrounding the first day of the RNC. What is certain: broken windows, smashed cop cars, blockades, and cops and right-wing vigilantes beaten to the ground by black-clad thugs. We took part in these events on September 1st, when at least two black blocs flooded into the streets, shutting down roadways and wrecking parts of downtown St. Paul. Such intense conflict hasn't been observed at demonstrations in the US since at least the start of the anti-war mobilizations or possibly since the mythologized Seattle black bloc. We refuse to let the actions that defined that day be erased or mystified by the media.

A large group leaves the state capitol equipped with PA systems and led by the colorful coeds of "Funk the War." The crowd walks straight into a line of bike cops; it is still weak. They are hosed in pepper spray and stripped of their dignity. We are separated from our comrades and left to wander the surreal territories of a city where the state has materialized. Every block a squad of riot cops—some tense and shaking, others confused and afraid. We find our friends; we are powerful again. Soon after, a black bloc emerges from the crowd, ready to unleash its hate. With physical barriers present we continue to move—within the confines we find mobility.

to the people there. Some of them, strangely relieved, went to the convergence center in West Saint Paul. People were watching movies about Seattle and Genoa on the second floor of the center. Down below food was being served and people used the computers.

At first it sounded like a bad joke. But no one would do something that fucked up. No one would pretend a raid was happening. And then the first pistols came into sight and the sheriffs poured into the building, screaming at people to get on the ground and put their hands in the air. It took a few moments, but soon people began to question what was happening. Some yelled, others taunted. People rationally talked with the sheriffs while others furiously cursed them. The warrant was read to the complete disgust and disbelief of the hostages in the convergence center.

A mother and her son were in the building when the raid happened. The young boy watched men and women with guns tie people's hands behind their backs. After an hour, the police began to release people one by one after getting their names. The people were released into a cheering crowd which was waiting for them. Someone asked a sheriff if they ever had a crowd cheer for them after they were released from captivity. The sheriff gave no answer.

When everyone was released people moved to a nearby parking lot and began figuring out what to do next. Inside, the police began seizing all of the literature on the tables. They did not worry about the computers, as they were set up by one of the paid informants. Outside, the Welcoming Committee released a statement to the press condemning the raid.

The mother and the son who were in the convergence center went to the brown house that night. In the morning, they awoke to another raid. This time it was a swat team with sub machine guns. The police sealed off the house with tape and began looking for what they wanted to find. They found the bricks for the fireplace and dozens of items that every house has in them. They also found graywater buckets which they deliberately mistook for urine.

The young boy who was in both raids is still waking from nightmares, asking if they have guns this time.

**III:**

WARNING: The below description is highly exaggerated and stylized.

They awoke above Saint Paul and looked down on the fortress-like city. They began

# Wrecking You Again for the Very First Time



much, much more.

Do not disparage each other. None of what went on along the river could have been without the help of EVERYONE there. Our lone enemy is powerful enough. We do not need to make more enemies out of potential friends.

Godspeed, you heathens. Our paths have crossed and they will cross again.

Until they do, move quickly, move firmly and, above all, never stop.

Your Loving Friend,

**Annie Nimmety**

their journey into downtown in their best clothing. People in a passing car yelled "Fuck you, Republicans!" at them. Police were all over the streets, but when they got to their sector they found it to be crawling with police. So they decided to come back later when there wasn't so much heat.

At the Capitol, where the main anti-war march was starting, they waited for the Funk The War march to begin. They knew it would be moving and could get them into their sector. After a bit of waiting it kicked off and dove into the downtown. Nothing eventful happened during the beginning of the march and it soon began heading towards the free speech zone. At this point they lost interest and left, not wanting to walk into a cage.

Back in Sector 6 they ran into the Campus Action Network. The two groups joined together and began a roving blockade of their sector. The sound of hissing tires began to be audible. Police cruisers and mini-vans, limousines and delegate buses all had their tires slashed. When the crowd was stalled near the Wells Fargo tower, someone snuck behind a Fox News van and slashed two of its tires. After this, the mobile blockade continued, successfully out-maneuvering the police for over an hour. When the police tried to flank them, people started running. When bike cops tried to move past on the sidewalk, people blocked

the sidewalk. No one let the police gain any ground or any advantage. Reports kept coming in about nearby comrades. Someone heard that the remnants of Funk The War was nearby. Everyone took a collective turn. And then up ahead they saw it.

A bloc was there, in black, carrying metal fences. The two crowds began to jump and cheer and run. The Sector 6 march fused with the bloc and moved forward with them, pursued by a dozen police cruisers. Everyone was ready and everyone was together. At the corner of 6th and Wabasha people attacked a Macy's, smashing out four windows, causing over 17,000 dollars worth of damage. In the actual intersection, people smashed out the windows of police cruisers with hammers. With the glass on the ground, the bloc disappeared.

A few blocks away, a group of people appeared out of nowhere, singing "Give Peace A Chance" and waving peace signs. A few blocks away from this, another group began another roving blockade. It was pretty clear to everyone at that point that the police were spread thin. As this new group moved down the streets, more delegate buses had their tires slashed, some of them right in front of their hotels. A dumpster was pushed out into the middle of the street. Still, the police were barely managing to keep up.

There is no glory to be basked in. Now that we are all back home, let's learn to use what we have instead of being scared of it. The now famous de-arrest that occurred was the perfect example of what I am speaking of. It took a few moments, but soon people attacked the cop dragging away the anarchist. The cop got off lite. And in that situation, people could have done anything. We did what we could on Monday, but we could have done more. We are the only things holding ourselves back.

The people in the Twin Cities are some of the warmest, bravest and most determined people I have ever met. We must never forget them or the community which we were allowed to enter. People need our help out there along the river.

Pretty soon, the trees lining that river will begin to go from green to yellow and orange and brown. The whole area will seem to be on fire with color, reflected in the flowing water below. Let us stand on the banks of the river and watch this change. Let us know that it is indeed happening and that we are a part of it.

I am as lost as you are. The future is indeed unwritten. No one will write it for us. Not me, not you, not anyone. We must not write our future. We must live it. The time for symbolizing is over. We have all that we need and

soil and new battles were begun. Doubt and paranoia gave way to certainty and determination. We are stronger than we have been in years. But do not get me wrong. There most certainly is still doubt.

Doubt in our abilities and strength and, more importantly, the ability of normal people to respond to repression. We have all grown jaded, comrades. I watched countless anarchists leave the Twin Cities after Monday, telling themselves that was the best it was going to be. Our battle is not a show to be jumped into according to our moods. If we wish to fight, we must throw ourselves into it. On Thursday, I watched normal people take the streets, angry and determined and lacking experience.

We have accumulated years, sometimes decades of experience and we need to share it when it is needed. It is most certainly needed on the street, when people are facing off against an authoritarian army they did not know existed. We should all trust ourselves enough to know we are not a vanguard and do not seek power over others. We CAN offer advice. The advice I saw people take during the four days of actions saved many of them from arrest and physical harm.

The battle was a victory for us. So let us burn all of our laurels and get off our fucking asses.

Before this small, roving group broke apart, people realized that for the last three hours they had done what they wanted. Perhaps they did not do enough. But it had been a long time since anyone had the strength and confidence to pull off anything like what had just taken place. And for some people it was the first time. People's own power surprised them. And in my opinion, they were not ready for it.

What went on downtown on day one was just the smallest hint of what we are all capable of.

## IV:

There had been some concern in the community about the video the RNC-Welcoming Committee had released. It depicted a masked anarchist throwing a molotov cocktail into a barbecue. Earlier in the video, the anarchist was seen running past the Seward Cafe and the Hard Times Cafe. Some felt this was enough to bring heat down on these establishments.

After the raids happened, and people they knew were stuck in cages, the community came together. As an outsider, it was beyond inspiring to see a community move beyond its past and begin to help one another in the face of repression. All that mattered was taking care of those traumatized by the night of ter-

ror, getting their friends out of jail, and doing everything that was possible to keep everyone safe, sane and warm.

During and after the raid, the police began picking off certain members of the Welcoming Committee. Some of them were snatched right off the street. In one case, an informant hugged the targeted individual in order to identify them to the nearby police. When that person was apprehended, the informant “escaped” and ran to a friendly house. The informant began to cry, moaning about how they had watched their “friend” snatched away from them. This same informant had also called another of their “friends” and kept them on the line long enough for the police to zero in on their cell phone position.

This informant had been in the anarchist “scene” for over two years and had built up a reputation as being an urban explorer. Exploiting the romanticism of this hobby, the infiltrator was able to insinuate themselves into various circles. This informant is now out. The utility of this creature reached an end for his masters. With his aid, the government is now attempting to criminalize all above ground dissent.

But it does not help us when it is acceptable to joke about setting things on fire. Militant posturing will get us nowhere and will only give the government exactly what it needs. Those who choose to carry out certain actions should do so on their own with people they would die for and with. We should never trust those who awe and sway us with their stature in a scene with a vague social hierarchy. These people can capture us in their palms and, just like Panda did with many people, throw us into a cage.

People like him and Sheriff Fletcher seek to destroy all rebellion. It does not fit with their ordered view of the world. Something made Panda look at his “friends” as numbers to be canceled out. Something made Fletcher into an anal retentive, feces obsessed, fascist commander. These people are desperate and scared and willing to do anything. They will create fictions about feces and urine. They will also manipulate people into fitting their idea of a terrorist. The government creates terrorists, very literally. We must never help them. We are not terrorists.

## IX:

I watched the energy flow all year towards Saint Paul. New warriors emerged from the

No one, not a single person, had actually seen this take place. When I asked individual police if they had seen it first hand, none of them said yes. All they said was that just because they didn't see it doesn't mean it didn't happen. To date, no one has come forward with any evidence of this alleged shit and piss flinging. It is obvious to me that this threat of excrement was fabricated, along with many other things.

One of the informants, just like Anna, had driven someone to various stores and helped them make Molotov cocktails. That person is now facing lengthy jail time. That person was entrapped by an agent of the government. The authorities create these "threats" and then neutralize them. Without the informant, there would have been no Molotov cocktails. Why was this person trusted? Was it because of their urban exploration skills? Was it because of their perceived status in the anarchist "scene?"

The government only knows how to lie. The more bankrupt their system becomes to the general population, the more they are required to lie. The more appealing a world without hierarchy becomes to the general population, the more they will attempt to repress anarchists. As we have seen, they will resort to any tactic, even blatant entrapment.

**V:**

During the second half of day one, a contingent of people marched down to the river. Their stated reason for marching was to try and enter the city to help their comrades who were at that time being gassed. At the front of the march were two large black and red shields. There was no real plan and no coordination, only a desire to aid their friends who were being brutalized. They marched along the sidewalk, with the river to their right. At the end of the river, a hurricane was approaching land.

At this point the whole of downtown had been sealed off. The only entrance point into the city was Jackson street. While they were marching on the sidewalk, a convoy of police mini vans had sped past them. When the march reached Jackson, those same police were there. When the front of the march, carrying their shields and their flags, began to move onto the street, the pigs opened fire.

Thus started a long, relentless push backwards. The pigs fired gas, marker rounds and concussion grenades into the crowd. In the panic, one mainstream media member began pleading with the occupants of a nearby car to be let inside. As the police continued their advance, more and more people were swept up

into the retreating crowd. The vast majority of these people were not anarchists or protesters. They were merely people trying to get across the river to a Labor Day music show.

When the police had finally pushed everyone back to where they started, the people stuck along the river were encircled. Everyone caught inside was arrested. Many of them were charged with riot. Most of them had never been arrested and had never seen police act in this manner. Across the river, police had begun arresting and detaining people at the music show, an event where multiple families were in attendance.

When the sun went down on the first day of action, the police had shut down two of the bridges from Downtown to West Saint Paul. One of these was the High Bridge, the most direct way to get to the convergence center. As the lights of the skyscrapers lit up under the darkness, Downtown had been completely shut down. No one was allowed inside as the National Guard patrolled the empty streets.

On the bus the next day, I met an employee of the Xcel Center. We talked briefly of the events of the day before. He then said, "You know you guys shut that shit down?" I replied that I did not know that. The man then went on to explain that he had been stuck in a stairwell for over forty minutes as the building was

whatever weapon they had. This was sport to them. I have never seen such a sick display of power on the street. These pigs did all of their damage from a distance, much the soldiers in Iraq. Some of them had powerful scopes mounted on their weapons, enabling them to hit a target from over a hundred feet away. Dozens and dozens of flash grenades were thrown into the crowd. Clouds of gas, pouring out of cans launched at retreating residents, traveled into the nearby housing projects. Everyone in the area was herded like cattle onto the Marion Street bridge. The police did not care who was there. 400 people were made to sit on the bridge with their hands on their heads, trapped, helpless, waiting to be processed. Protesters were nearly outnumbered by residents on the bridge.

Many anarchists talk about hypothetical situations where the population of a city begins to willingly partake in a struggle. On September Fourth, the citizens of Saint Paul had been pulled into the struggle. Meanwhile, the anarchists who had made Monday into what it was were gone. I have never seen such a lost opportunity in my life.

## VIII:

I began to ask around. Was there anyone who had seen either urine or feces being thrown?

people in the crowd. An especially despicable one, dressed as a street medic, was chased up to a police line. The police pushed everyone back besides him and did a horrible job of fake-arresting him. He was one of many who had their feeble covers blown.

After a while, the crowd began to march towards Downtown. The plan was to march without a permit to the Xcel Energy Center. The city would not grant them a permit for the march that would allow to be outside when McCain was speaking. Defiantly, the organizers decided to march anyway. They found that all of the bridges heading over the freeway were blockaded by police.

The march lingered at two of the blockades for over an hour and a half before returning to the Capitol. Tired and frustrated, people began to march again, this time with no clear direction or intention. The mass of over 600 people left the Capitol and walked towards the Sears parking lot, chanting and taking up all of the street. As the mass moved towards University, people jumped into the march from off the sidewalk. The number grew and grew. At University, though, some people began pleading with the crowd to take a left and not a right. No one listened. And a few minutes after taking a right, the police closed their trap.

Every cop in the area began to rapidly unload

on lock-down.

With the first day at an end, I wandered away from the convergence center with many others to the police barricade set up at the top of the High Bridge. We looked down on the city we had brought to a standstill with wild grins on our faces.

We had won that day.

## VI:

When the Welcoming Committee unmasked and announced they were going to have a press conference, the police closed the High Bridge again. While everyone was waiting for the media to arrive, I walked down to the bridge. A local resident, leaning against his car and smoking a cigarette, looked at me. We both shook our heads. "Can you believe this?" I asked. He said it was just funny. He said he lived here and had just been watching everything unfold. But, he said, we obviously had the police scared.

The day after the convergence center raid, during the general spokes council, a mass of people were in the alley behind the center. Suddenly, a convoy of police cruisers and vans attempted to enter the alley. At first people began to walk away, but others implored

them to stay. A dumpster and a trailer were dragged into the road and a bloc of people stood in front of the impediments. When the police approached they were told to go fuck themselves. The police said they needed to clear the alley. The people said that if the police backed up and left, then they would clear the alley. Once the police had obeyed the anarchists commands, a group of nearby residents began cheering. At first I couldn't tell what they were cheering about, but then I clearly heard a man with his fist in the air scream "Anarchy!"

A friend of mine was stuck in jail on September Fifth, wearing orange, waiting to be released. In the holding cell with him was a man who had been picked up with him on the last day of action. This man said that on day three he had gotten pulled into the protests. At first he was nervous about speaking in front of the cops, but soon he was telling the pigs what he had "always wanted to say to them." By day four he had grown fearless and acutely aware of his own power to influence people with his words. He had made one girl cry in joy. This man was a cook. He had done two years in jail in the past, overcoming various drug addiction while incarcerated. This was the first time he had been in jail since then. But it was worth it to him, he said. This was about standing up to a fascist government. They just cant do this to people. We're all Americans, he

said. This was about standing up to a fascist government. They just cant do this to people. We're all Americans, he said. And he hoped, he wished, he prayed that when he got out there would be a million people on the street, ready to stand up for themselves.

He was one of hundreds of random, everyday citizens who were pulled into the struggle during the course of the protest. The widest variety of people participated in and saw the manifestations of their own power. I could not go anywhere in either Saint Paul or Minneapolis where people were not talking about what they seen and what had taken place.

## VII:

On September Fourth, the final day of action, people gathered at the Capitol for an anti-war rally. During the rally, police arrested someone suspected of breaking the Macy's windows. The police had been desperately trying to pin the window breaking on whoever they could. They even went so far as to publicly accuse someone who was in jail at the time of the vandalism.

After the arrest, the police withdrew but remained nearby. In the crowd, dozens and dozens of undercover Sheriffs walked back and forth. Soon, they began to be outed by